INSPECTION REPORT

Wolverhampton Adult Education Service

10 June 2005

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged 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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Wolverhampton Adult Education Service

Contents

Summary

Detailed inspection findings

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Wolverhampton Adult Education service (WAES) has undergone recent changes since a strategic review in September 2004. The senior management team is made up of four people comprising the head of service, the deputy head of service, a senior manager for curriculum development and quality, and a senior manager for administration and common services. There are also 20 service managers who have responsibility for co-ordinating curriculum areas and support functions.

2. The adult education service reports to the chief lifelong learning services officer and is located in the service group for children and young people. The quality of provision is monitored by the senior management team and the cabinet for lifelong learning.

3. The service is contracted by the Black Country Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver adult and community learning in the area. In 2003-04, 6,789 learners were enrolled on courses. All the provision is directly delivered, with 50 per cent of it being further education accredited and 50 per cent adult and community learning non-accredited.

4. Wolverhampton is a multi-racial city with a population of 240,500. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 22.2 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS   Grade 4

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate.** Leadership and management are inadequate, as are its arrangements for quality improvement. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. In family learning provision is good. In information and communications technology (ICT) and English, languages and communications, provision is satisfactory. In hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts and media, and foundation programmes, provision is inadequate.

6. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** It identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses which were identified by inspectors and sufficiently involves managers and tutors.

7. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** One area of learning is good and there are areas of good practice in the provision which are not currently being shared. The quality improvement procedures and policies are comprehensive, but are not fully implemented. The recent significant restructuring of the service has yet to impact fully on the quality of learning.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR WOLVERHAMPTON ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning

- establish and refine initial assessment
- improve curriculum management
- make better use of management information and targets to improve provision
- make greater emphasis on identifying and sharing good practice
- fully implement the quality improvement system

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

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

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Using IT		*3*
Adult and community learning	841	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Leisure, sport and recreation		*4*
Adult and community learning	1,082	4

Visual & performing arts & media		4
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Arts		*2*
Adult and community learning	434	2
Crafts		*4*
Adult and community learning	756	4

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Languages		*3*
Adult and community learning	887	3

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		*4*
Adult and community learning	513	4
Literacy and numeracy		*4*
Adult and community learning	343	4

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		*2*
Adult and community learning	489	2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. The inspection took place over one week and involved 14 inspectors. The six areas of learning inspected and graded were information and communications technology, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, English languages and communications, foundation programmes and family learning. Provision in humanities, health and social care, business administration, land-based programmes and science and mathematics were not inspected.

Number of inspectors	14
Number of inspection days	70
Number of learners interviewed	510
Number of staff interviewed	166
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	69
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	17

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Retention rates are very good in sport.** Achievement rates for accredited courses are good in sport but poor on some accredited courses in ICT.

10. **There is good development of learners' personal, social and learning skills in ICT, arts and crafts and family learning. Learners in modern foreign languages have good speaking and listening skills. Foundation learners develop good literacy, numeracy and speaking skills,** which increases their self-confidence and personal effectiveness.

11. **The standard of learners' work on access programmes in art is very good.** The

standard of learners' work is satisfactory in ICT and sport.

12. **Attendance levels are low in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)** classes and some language classes but satisfactory in other occupational areas.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
English, languages & communications	1	11	5	3	20
Family learning	0	6	1	0	7
Foundation programmes	0	4	14	6	24
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2	3	9	8	22
Information & communications technology	0	6	10	0	16
Visual & performing arts & media	0	10	7	5	22
Total	**3**	**40**	**46**	**22**	**111**

13. **Overall, too much of the teaching across the provision is inadequate.** This particularly affects the non-accredited sports courses, craft courses and the foundation programmes. Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory in ICT and English, languages and communications. **Teaching is very good on access courses and in family learning.**

14. **There is good use of specialist resources at the main sites for ICT.** Resources are generally satisfactory in the rest of the provision.

15. **Initial assessment is weak across much of the provision,** particularly in ICT, sports, English, languages and communications, and family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) programmes. Initial and diagnostic assessment are also inadequate in foundation programmes.

16. **There is a good range of programmes which responds to community needs,** with special taster days for potential access learners in art. The development of provision in response to local need is also good in English, languages and communications. In literacy and numeracy, good action has been taken to extend the curriculum. The range and availability of ESOL classes is good. Older learners and those with specific needs are effectively targeted in sport.

17. Support for learners is satisfactory in most areas of learning. Advice and guidance related to progression is good in family learning.

Leadership and management

18. **Strategic leadership is good.** WAES has clear strategic aims and a vision for its future development, which staff from across the service share. WAES also has good partnership arrangements.

19. **WAES has weak curriculum management and planning in several areas of learning.** Curriculum management and/or planning are weak in foundation, ICT and crafts, but are good in family learning.

20. **WAES has a comprehensive management information system**, but currently managers

at all levels in the organisation make insufficient use of data, particularly with regard to retention and achievement rates. However, in English, languages and communications, successful actions have been taken to improve the retention and achievement rates.

21. **WAES has appropriate policies and procedures for quality assurance, but is not ensuring their full implementation across the provision.** The quality improvement arrangements are weak, including observation of teaching and learning, sharing of good practice, internal verification and development of the self-assessment report. They are insufficiently developed in sport, English, languages and communications, and arts and crafts.

22. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory in most areas of learning. The service has particularly good strategies to support learners with identified additional learning needs.

23. **There is insufficient attention to health and safety in sports.**

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic leadership
- good partnership arrangements
- good strategies to support learners with additional needs

Weaknesses

- some weak curriculum management
- inadequate use of management information for target-setting and improvement
- insufficiently rigorous observations of teaching and learning
- inadequate implementation of quality improvement

Information & communications technology

Using IT   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills
- good attainment on word-processing courses
- good use of specialist resources in main venues

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on some accredited courses
- weak initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficient curriculum planning

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation *Grade 4*

Strengths

- effective targeting of provision for older learners and those with specific needs
- good achievement rates on accredited courses
- very good retention rates

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to the health and safety of learners
- insufficiently developed quality improvement processes
- ineffective assessment practices
- too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning on non-accredited courses

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts *Grade 2*

Strengths

- very good standard of work on access programmes
- good personal and social gains
- very good teaching in access programmes
- very good range of programmes responding to community needs

Weaknesses

- incomplete implementation of quality improvement

Crafts *Grade 4*

Strengths

- good personal and social gains

Weaknesses

- too much inadequate teaching
- poor curriculum planning
- weak quality improvement

English, languages & communications

Languages *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good speaking and listening skills for foreign languages
- good development of provision in response to local need
- successful action to improve retention and achievement rates
- good support for tutors

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment
- insufficiently developed quality improvement processes

Foundation programmes

ESOL *Grade 4*

Strengths

- good development of speaking and reading skills for many learners
- good range of provision to attract ESOL learners from deprived areas

Weaknesses

- low attendance and poor punctuality
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- weak curriculum management

Literacy and numeracy *Grade 4*

Strengths

- good development of personal effectiveness
- good actions to extend the provision

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient planning of individual learning
- weak curriculum management

Family learning

Adult and community learning   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- very good teaching
- good support for progression
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment on short FLLN programmes
- insufficient use of literacy, numeracy and language accreditation for FLLN learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WOLVERHAMPTON ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE:

- opportunities to meet new people
- 'learning new skills and being proud of myself'
- 'these courses are the highlight of my week'
- good support for learners with disabilities
- good range of courses
- 'learning to make things for my family'
- supportive tutors

WHAT LEARNERS THINK WOLVERHAMPTON ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE COULD IMPROVE:

- the materials and resources
- the information on what progression routes will be available next year
- the access to computers - it should be more regular
- the car parking at city centre sites
- the single-level classes - there should be more
- the advertising of courses

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Provider	Provider	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges.
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher/ Trainer	Tutor

Mentor | Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them |
| Learning goals | Main learning goals

Secondary | 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 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 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.
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 self managing, sustainable communities.

Active citizenship	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 4

Strengths

- good strategic leadership
- good partnership arrangements
- good strategies to support learners with additional needs

Weaknesses

- some weak curriculum management
- inadequate use of management information for target-setting and improvement
- insufficiently rigorous observations of teaching and learning
- inadequate implementation of quality improvement

24. Strategic leadership is good. WAES has clear strategic aims and a vision for its future development which staff from across the service share. Strategic planning is good, with a comprehensive development plan for 2003-06 and a recently revised development plan for 2005-08, clearly linked to Wolverhampton Council's community and corporate plans and LSC targets. Supporting the development planning is a clear marketing strategy, an information and learning technology strategy and well-established policies and procedures for quality assurance and equality of opportunity. Early in 2004, WAES began a detailed strategic review of staffing and management structures and significant changes were made to the overall management structure and roles and responsibilities. The structure comprises a senior management team of four supported by 15 service managers each of whom have teaching or information, advice and guidance commitments of 400 hours and 17 co-ordinators each of whom have teaching or information, advice and guidance commitments of 600 hours a year. A key management role was also established in marketing from September 2004 to provide more focused leadership in this area. Significant developments in marketing include a well-developed marketing strategy, a useful analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, a clear and comprehensive marketing development plan, good links with the council's marketing processes, improvements in internal and external communication through good use of newsletters and the intranet, and some initial training of service managers. Further activities are planned.

25. WAES has good partnership arrangements which are well supported by Wolverhampton Council, with active involvement in the work of the service by the key cabinet member, regular scrutiny of the provision by the council, and financial support. The local authority provided the land to help create the innovative City Learning Quarter, with the extensive refurbishment of the existing WAES buildings and the adjacent new build, in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton College. This is an ambitious, well thought out and effectively implemented project, which establishes a high profile for learning in the city centre. It provides good accommodation for learners and is a very good example of successful partnership working. This collaborative working is continuing, with advice and guidance easily accessible on the Old Hall Street site and jointly staffed by City of Wolverhampton College and WAES. The good partnership arrangements between

WAES and the college are also apparent in the development of learning opportunities in the community, with WAES taking the lead on first steps learning, and the college the lead on progression opportunities. Good partnership working is also evident in the impressive development of the city centre foyer building with a local housing association. WAES also has good working partnerships around its Pendeford site, which provides learning in the community in the north of the city, a significant basis for continued neighbourhood renewal and the engagement of learners who traditionally have not accessed adult education. The cabinet member for children and young people chairs the Pendeford campus group. Productive links exist with local neighbourhood management projects, with joint development of the local learning plans. Well-advanced plans are in place for further developments on the Pendeford site, with a current bid for lottery funding for sport, development of the school as a centre for business and as an extended school. Productive partnership work involving the Wolverhampton learning partnership is providing funding for the development of a multimedia suite for 14 -19 year olds and for adult use at the Pendeford School. Well-established and productive partnerships are also in place with a good range of community development groups, to help identify learner needs and to support regeneration.

26. A clear staff development plan is in place and good opportunities exist for staff development across the organisation. The career and personal development of staff is also well supported. Good opportunities exist for volunteers and part-time staff to progress to more substantial positions across the organisation. However, there is currently an insufficient focus on improving teaching and learning and quality improvement. Only 78 per cent of full-time staff and 66 per cent of part-time staff have an appropriate teaching qualification. There are differences in appraisal systems being used within the organisation and not all key staff are appraised on a regular basis. A new council performance review system is being introduced and the head of service has been appraised using this new process.

27. Internal communication is satisfactory. The intranet is being developed and most staff make good use of e-mail. The head of service holds weekly briefing meetings, and minutes are e-mailed to all staff. Better use is being made of staff newsletters. Support for ICT is satisfactory, with a clear strategy and rationale for development and maintenance of ICT across the service. Literacy, numeracy and language support is generally satisfactory. However initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and language needs is weak in ICT.

28. The curriculum management and planning are weak in several areas of learning. There is insufficient consideration of teaching and learning and retention and achievement rates in the recently developed meetings with senior managers and service managers. Senior managers provide insufficient direction in some areas of learning, to ensure that service managers are clear on key priorities, particularly concerning quality improvement. The latest self-assessment report identifies that some service managers are inexperienced in business planning, managing budgets and using targets. Insufficient curriculum planning is taking place for the effective development of the curriculum in ICT and in visual and performing arts and media. Curriculum management is weak across foundation programmes, with examples of ineffective mentoring in literacy and numeracy, some ineffective management of the ongoing programme and insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. However, curriculum management is good in family learning, with good monitoring of the provision and meticulous use of systems to support improvements in teaching and learning.

29. WAES has a comprehensive management information system, but currently managers at all levels in the organisation make insufficient use of data, particularly with regard to retention and achievement rates. Enrolment data is the predominant focus of managers. There is an over-reliance on externally produced data from the LSC or the Wolverhampton learning partnership. Managers do not make sufficient or timely use of their own data for analysis of learners, learners' progress or to identify areas for improvement. For example, in hospitality, sport and leisure, no targets are set at individual subject or department level, to measure performance in relation to the service's priorities. Service managers have insufficient direct access to the data on the system. They can request information from the management information system officer, but this is not usual practice. A training need on the use of management information by service managers is identified in the self-assessment report, but this training is not planned to take place until September 2005.

Equality of opportunity   **Contributory grade 3**

30. The service has good strategies to support learners with additional learning needs. The equality and diversity training has focused almost exclusively on disability matters. In the past two years, over 130 staff have attended disability awareness training and 45 have attended dyslexia awareness. A new service manager and support staff were appointed to promote and co-ordinate support for learners across the service. Support for learners with additional learning needs is offered across all the provision. Referrals can be made by tutors at any time. Learners can also disclose a need, on the enrolment form. Many referrals pass through the information, advice and guidance service. Two-thirds of this service's advice to learners takes place in community locations. The number of learners receiving some kind of additional support has doubled in the past year to 144. The support ranges from having access to assistive technology to having a support worker in classrooms. The range of specialist equipment available is extensive and includes special chairs for back support, hearing loop systems, talking computers and Braille printers. The service has productive links with a number of community organisations that work with specific disability groups. Two of the service's main centres have good crèche facilities. The service also has a well-used mobile crèche, which offers childcare on a flexible basis at a number of community venues. One hundred and six learners have benefited from the crèche provision since September 2004.

31. WAES has a sound policy for widening participation. The service has a good presence in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the borough and is a key partner in the city council's neighbourhood renewal strategy. It is involved in the development and delivery of local learning plans through its community-based staff. The service's work in priority areas has increased the overall numbers of new learners.

32. WAES has satisfactory policies for equality and diversity. The city council has made an appropriate response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It has a satisfactory race equality scheme and has supported the WAES in producing an equality assurance impact assessment report. The service has produced an equality assurance standard, an action plan intended to resolve the key issues identified in the impact assessment report. It has an equal opportunities policy which is a short statement of intentions, but which has no reference to recent legislation and no implementation plan. The disability policy is a clear document written in a format which is easy to understand. The service's response to the requirements of Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 is adequate. An audit of premises was carried out over two years ago

showing that three of the four main sites are fully compliant and accessible. The fourth is scheduled for work to improve physical access. A rolling programme of risk assessments of community venues is carried out by site managers at the rate of 10 a term.

33. Promotion of diversity in the classroom varies. In most areas of learning there are no or few examples observed in classes. In family learning, some good examples were observed, but they were not part of a systematic sustained approach. Learners' understanding of harassment also varies. In ICT, sports, languages and foundation, learners have little or no understanding of how to deal with harassment. Learners in visual and performing arts and family learning have a clearer understanding.

Quality improvement   **Contributory grade 4**

34. The system for the observation of teaching and learning is insufficiently rigorous. It is an established system and staff who carry out observations have been trained. Observations are carried out by a member of the curriculum team, but not necessarily by a subject specialist. The procedure for observations states that every tutor should be observed once a year, but this is not taking place in all areas of learning. Feedback to tutors does not always clearly identify strengths and areas for development, and precise targets are not always set. In some instances, observers do not have sufficient current knowledge of the area of learning to make sound judgements. Where good practice is identified there is no mechanism for sharing this across the service and some curriculum areas do not share good practice within the area of learning. The service has identified the need to improve the quality of feedback to tutors in its self-assessment report.

35. Most areas of learning have some weaknesses relating to quality improvement. WAES has appropriate quality policies and procedures, but is not adequately ensuring their full implementation across the provision. There is insufficient focus on the quality of teaching and learning at senior management and curriculum team levels. Meetings are held regularly for curriculum managers, tutors, and the senior management team, but there is no forum for sharing issues which may affect the whole service. Arrangements for internal verification are not consistent across the provision. In some areas of learning the procedures are not used and feedback is not well recorded. Internal verification is particularly weak in foundation programmes. Individual learning records are not consistently used to record attainment for learners in non-accredited provision. In some cases, individual learning records lack a starting point for learning, are not well used or are not used at all.

36. WAES uses data to compare performance overall with the national profile, but does not use it to analyse strengths and areas for development within the service, nor to plan provision by targeting under-represented groups.

37. The service has produced a comprehensive handbook for tutors, outlining policies and procedures. Most new tutors have a mentor when they start their employment.

38. Feedback from learners is satisfactory. Regular meetings are held for curriculum managers, and tutors in area of learning teams also meet formally and informally. There is a learners' council which meets to discuss concerns which are fed back to the service. Learners are informed of the council by tutors and through written information, but some are not are aware of its existence. The council is well attended and an annual general meeting is held which is open to all. The provider responds to points raised in the

meetings. Formal meetings are minuted. Feedback is collected from learners and analysed to form judgements in the self-assessment report. However, much of the information is too generic to form a basis for the planning and revision of teaching and learning. There is strong feedback from learners through the service's complaints, compliments and suggestions system. There is a procedure for responding to these which is usually effective.

39. WAES has produced four annual self-assessment reports. The current report was compiled by curriculum managers from information gathered from tutors' records, data and feedback forms. It identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors, but many strengths are no more than normal practice and some weaknesses have not been identified. The service has identified the need to involve tutors, learners and partners directly in the self-assessment process.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology   **Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		*3*
Adult and community learning	841	3

40. WAES currently offers 52 courses in ICT with 841 learners, 74 per cent of whom are women and 34 per cent are from black and minority ethnic groups. Twenty-two per cent are aged 60 or over. Programmes are delivered at two of the main sites, in the City Learning Quarter and at Pendeford Community Learning Centre, and at a range of community locations as part of the widening participation strategy, including Stowheath Computer Centre. The programme includes a mix of accredited and non-accredited learning through open learning and taught sessions. ICT is managed through the three separate teams of City Learning Quarter, Pendeford, and Community.

Using IT   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills
- good attainment on word-processing courses
- good use of specialist resources in main venues

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on some accredited courses
- weak initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficient curriculum planning

Achievement and standards

41. The development of learners' personal and learning skills is good. Most learners have not attended formal learning for several years and the development of their skills contributes to an increase in their confidence and self-esteem. Some learners make use of their new skills at home, to help their children or clubs they belong to. Others use their new skills at work or to help voluntary organisations in the community by producing posters or using spreadsheets for accounts.

42. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but there is wide variation between courses. Learners in word-processing classes have developed particularly good presentation skills. Many obtain distinction grades in their external examinations. Some have progressed from entry level courses to success in stage 3 examinations, and a few have gone on to pass specialised modules in medical or legal word processing. Although retention rates have improved to 85 per cent for 2003-04, achievement is poor on some accredited courses. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Achievement remains poor for 2004-05. For example, in one main centre,

approximately 30 per cent of the learners are on a basic computer course and the module achievement is 22 per cent, with 94 unit accreditations achieved out of a potential 460 for this stage of the course.

The quality of provision

43. There is good use of specialist resources at the main sites of the City Learning Quarter and at Pendeford. Specialist screens, keyboards and tracker balls are well used by key workers to support learners with visual, motor and speech difficulties. An audio loop is currently being installed. At Pendeford there is a comprehensive range of audio and Braille translation equipment fitted to the ICT workstations to enable blind and partially sighted learners to complete modules of an examination-based computer course. Learners are well supported by key workers and value the facility for enabling them to achieve a high degree of independent living. For example, learners can scan incoming letters, hear the content by audio translation and reply directly without receiving any support.

44. General ICT resources are satisfactory with up-to-date hardware and software. Accommodation and staff qualifications are also satisfactory. Most full-time tutors have a teaching qualification and all full- and part-time staff have an ICT qualification.

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All tutors use schemes of work and lesson plans. However, some of these are generic and do not always match the workshop nature of the teaching. Most tutors effectively plan individual activities for their learners, despite, rather than because of, these lesson plans. In good sessions, tutors make clear the planned outcomes for each learner in individual coaching and discussion, and then help the learners to reflect on what they have learnt, at the end of the session. Learners with prior experience are often encouraged to take external examinations as soon as they feel ready. One learner achieved a level 1 examination-based qualification in less than a month with the support of their tutor.

46. There is an over-reliance on printed workbooks to support learners in workshops. Most learners are satisfied with the quality of these materials, and are able to take them home for further practice where they have access to a computer. However, they are less useful for those learners with language or literacy needs. There is very little use of technology in teaching, such as computer-based training to develop keyboarding skills or projectors or interactive whiteboards for demonstrations.

47. All learners have an individual learning plan, and a learning diary which is intended to record their learning aims and objectives. The quality of these documents varies greatly. The best plans record in detail what learners need to achieve to meet their objectives, with target dates, and the diaries are used to reflect on what was learnt and what needs to be practised.

48. The range of provision is satisfactory with a clear progression structure from entry level to level 3. The 'older and bolder' non-accredited course is focused on providing opportunities for elderly learners. The well-motivated and enthusiastic learners have a strong sense of community and produce a variety of projects including photographic albums accompanied by commentary and music.

49. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors provide effective vocational guidance during the sessions and also provide support outside of the formal programme, including e-mail

contact so that learners can ask for advice off-site to support individual study. There is also some helpful discussion of options and progression routes.

50. Initial assessment is weak. Tutors interview new learners and record their discussion on standard forms. Much of this discussion is focused on previous information technology (IT) experience, current status and general aims. However, there is no standard method to ensure that learners' literacy, numeracy or language needs are identified, and few tutors have been trained to recognise potential support needs. Most learners on accredited courses are working towards time-limited external examinations where speed in using a keyboard is a critical success factor. However, many do not have keyboarding skills and few are aware of any methods for improving their skills

Leadership and management

51. There is insufficient curriculum planning. The self-assessment report recognises a number of weaknesses in managing ICT, such as poor success rates and weak planning and review systems. The service is working to overcome these weaknesses but progress is slow. Strategic planning in the curriculum area is inadequate. The service has recognised the need to review its current offering but has yet to implement its plans. There is no clear curriculum strategy to improve retention and achievement rates. Although retention has improved there is little understanding by staff of how it was improved. The poor use of management information is recognised in the self-assessment report. Co-ordinators do not have direct access to relevant curriculum and learner data to support decisions, and are not trained in the appropriate use of the management information system. There are no clear performance targets for staff, and no formal curriculum review over the whole provision. Although there is use of information learning technology in other curriculum areas, there is insufficient attention to extending it across ICT. A virtual learning environment is being introduced, but it is in the early stages of development. Communication is effective within curriculum teams at the City Learning Quarter and at Pendeford, but there is insufficient co-ordination of ICT provision across the main centres and the community provision.

52. Quality improvement is satisfactory overall. Observations of teaching and learning produced a profile of lesson grades which closely matched those given by inspectors. Comments recorded on internal observation forms sometimes lack sufficient detail. The link between the observations and any subsequent action-planning or staff development is unclear.

53. Staff had some involvement in the development of the self-assessment report which recorded most of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.

54. Equal opportunities is satisfactory, with the proportion of black and minority ethnic learners greater than that in the community. There is specialist provision for learners with a disability and the provision of key workers to support them is good. Although learners enjoy a safe and non-threatening environment, there is little promotion of equal opportunities.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel   Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		*4*
Adult and community learning	1,082	4

55. At the time of inspection there were 62 courses and 1,082 learners. In 2003-04, there were 1,189 enrolments. In 2004-05 to date, there are 1,227 enrolments. Ninety-five per cent of the courses are non-accredited and these include yoga, tai chi, self-defence, swimming, Pilates and keep fit. Accredited courses are offered in keep fit, sailing and swimming. Most classes are mixed ability and offer progression opportunities. Some courses are targeted at specific groups, including the elderly, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and minority ethnic women. Courses are mostly offered during the day and evening on weekdays at 31 venues, including schools, sports centres, community centres and residential care centres. Eighty-six per cent of learners are women, 10 per cent are identified as having a disability and 21 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. There are 34 part-time tutors who generally work between one and nine hours a week. There is a designated learning manager who is supported by an administrative technician.

Leisure, sport and recreation   *Grade 4*

Strengths

- effective targeting of provision for older learners and those with specific needs
- good achievement rates on accredited courses
- very good retention rates

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to the health and safety of learners
- insufficiently developed quality improvement processes
- ineffective assessment practices
- too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning on non-accredited courses

Achievement and standards

56. The retention rates are very good. In 2003-04, the average retention rate was 97 per cent. The retention for the current year is 98 per cent. Achievement on the accredited courses is good. On keep fit courses the average achievement rate over the past three years is 91 per cent, and on swimming courses the average achievement rate is 89 per cent. On the sailing courses the achievement rate is 100 per cent. Accredited courses make up 8.5 per cent of the overall provision. Attendance is generally satisfactory. Attainment levels on most courses are satisfactory, with learners maintaining and improving fitness, developing confidence and competence in swimming and exercise.

The quality of provision

57. Older learners and those with specific needs are effectively targeted. Forty-eight per cent of learners are over 60 years of age and 67 per cent are over 50. Some sessions for older adults are attended by many with mobility problems and are held at community venues. Several sessions are specifically for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, and this reflects 10 per cent of all enrolments. These sessions are accessible as they are held at day centres and community venues. There are also five classes targeted at Asian women. Older learners in particular report significant benefits to their health, including increased mobility, reduction in pain and discomfort, and general well-being. Many learners on yoga courses also report significant improvements to mental and emotional health. Learners receive social benefits from attending classes.

58. The range of the provision is satisfactory. Courses are offered in a range of subject areas, including yoga, Pilates, swimming, fitness, martial arts and sailing. On non-accredited courses there are few opportunities for learners to progress to a higher level, and over 50 per cent of learners repeat the same course. Some learners have done so for several years. There are progression opportunities to accredited courses. Courses run during term time only.

59. Pre-course information and advice is satisfactory. Learners find out about programmes through prospectuses, the internet and newspaper advertisements. There are individual course leaflets available to learners, and some are able to try the activities before they enrol. Progression opportunities are not clearly identified. In some centres there is a hearing loop which is used to support learners with hearing impairments.

60. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning on non-accredited courses. Thirty-six per cent of sessions were inadequate. There is too much tutor-directed teaching, with little interaction from learners in many sessions, and little variety in the teaching and learning methods used. Many tutors spend too much time performing exercises themselves and too little time on thorough observation of learning. Learners are not given sufficient alternatives and adaptations to allow them to work at the appropriate level and many learners are not sufficiently challenged. Insufficient attention is paid to correct posture and exercise technique and there is insufficient individual correction, assistance and specific feedback to learners. In many sessions there is little reinforcement of key learning objectives during and at the end of classes. Tutors who work with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities have had little formal training in working with these groups and do not adequately identify individual learning objectives. In these classes, tutors often have to deal with a variety of disruptions, which affects the continuity of the lesson and there are periods of inactivity for many learners. Tutors do not routinely identify and refer learners with literacy, numeracy or language needs to other support within the service.

61. Assessment practices are ineffective. There is very little initial assessment of learners' aims or their health and fitness levels. In many classes, specific, measurable, and time-bound targets are not set for learners. Individual learning records are used by most tutors, but these focus on tutor-prescribed goals rather than individual learner objectives. There is an over-reliance on learners self-assessing their own progress, which is often not effective. Many learners and some tutors do not value the current mechanisms for identifying and measuring learners' progress. In most sessions, learners receive very little individual, constructive feedback about their performance and progress.

Leadership and management

62. Tutors are well supported by the curriculum manager. Many tutors have attended staff development events and have also completed external professional training which has been supported by the local education authority. For example, tutors have attended training on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and where this has not been possible, they have received a CD-ROM and follow-up support from the curriculum manager.

63. Quality improvement procedures are insufficiently developed. Management information data is not systematically used for planning, and there is no analysis at individual subject level to identify targets for improvement. There is no development plan for the area of learning which reflects how the department is going to deal with the strategic priorities of the service. New courses planned for 2005-06 include additional accredited keep fit courses and Egyptian dancing. There is insufficient consultation with external agencies and communities to identify possible new courses. The self-assessment report action plan does not have specific targets. The service's observations of teaching and learning do not identify many of the weaknesses identified during inspection, and do not place sufficient emphasis on identifying and improving learning. There are few opportunities for tutors to identify and share good practice. Learners are consulted about their views on how the provision might be improved, but they receive little feedback on actions taken.

64. There is insufficient attention to the learners' health and safety. Pre-activity health screening is ineffective as learners are not required to inform tutors of their health status before participation. Most learners complete a consent form before participating in physical activity, but in some cases this has not been carried out. Some tutors are unaware of whether risk assessments have been completed for the activity they are teaching. Not all staff who have a responsibility for carrying out risk assessments have received the relevant training. Learners do not always receive safety briefings at the start of their course. In one keep fit class, learners were allowed to use the swimming pool unsupervised. Some centres have poor ventilation and windows that do not open. The changing room floor in one centre contained puddles of water presenting a safety risk and possibility of wet clothing. Several centres had rooms that were cluttered with tables and chairs and which required their removal by tutors and learners before starting the class. In one session the fire exit was blocked by stacked chairs. In several centres the rooms used for activities are too small to safely accommodate all of the learners on register.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts		*2*
Adult and community learning	434	2
Crafts		*4*
Adult and community learning	756	4

65. At the time of inspection there are 1,190 learners making 1,711 enrolments. Of these, 65 per cent are in crafts and 35 per cent are in arts. In crafts, 11 per cent of learners are men, 20 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, 9 per cent have a disability and 72 per cent are over the age of 50. In art classes, 39 per cent of learning are men, 6 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, 13 per cent have a disability and 63 per cent are over the age of 50. In the week of inspection, 124 classes are running, 88 in crafts and 36 in arts.

66. Courses are offered during the day and in the evening at three main centres and a further 17 community venues throughout the city, including schools and community centres, and many are in partner venues. Courses generally run for two hours a week over 30 weeks. A summer programme of taster courses is offered during July.

67. Accreditation is available as an option on most part-time art and craft courses. These include courses in general art, life drawing, art for health, silver jewellery making, embroidery, patchwork, ceramics, dressmaking, hat making, lace making and soft furnishings. The access to higher education in art and design course is run in the city centre and learners are able to attend either full time or part time to suit their needs. Some art projects are run to meet specific community needs such as the public and community art project.

68. Courses are planned and managed in two separate departments. Art and design has one full-time manager and one curriculum co-ordinator. Fashion, textiles and craft has one full-time and one half-time manager and one tutor responsible for the development of e-learning. There are three full-time equivalent technicians for art and one part-time administrative assistant for fashion, textiles and craft. Twenty-seven part-time tutors are employed in art and design while 21 part-time tutors are employed in fashion, textiles and craft.

Arts   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- very good standard of work on access programmes

- good personal and social gains

- very good teaching in access programmes

- very good range of programmes responding to community needs

Weaknesses

- incomplete implementation of quality improvement

Achievement and standards

69. Learners produce a very good standard of work on access programmes. They produce expressive and confident results with bold use of different media. They make large-scale ambitious sculptures and are willing to experiment and use unconventional materials. One learner is completing a very large sculpture with a mixture of objects and plaster, while another's work is based on hanging lantern-like structures of thread and fabric. Learners are encouraged by their supportive tutors to have strong personal responses to set projects, often with very individual results. Paintings are confident and expressive, and observational drawings are strong. There is good use of image manipulation using a software package.

70. There is good personal and social gain for learners on all programmes which leads to improved self-esteem and self-confidence. Many learners are retired or are people living on their own for whom classes are an opportunity to meet new people with similar interests. Learners are able to talk about their work and the work of others with increased confidence. There is good peer group support in sessions. Many learners are developing independent learning skills and the ability to manage their own learning. Learners contribute positively to the group, ask questions and share information. They support each other's learning well. There is effective use of group discussion and debate to help learners formulate ideas and articulate their work using appropriate specialist language. Learners speak of increased visual perception in their everyday lives. Some classes specifically cater for learners to build up their confidence so that they may move on to other classes. Attendance was satisfactory during inspection.

The quality of provision

71. There is very good teaching in access programmes, with well-planned sessions and activities. Schemes of work record the sequential building of skills. Projects are challenging and learners have a real sense of achievement on completion. Tutors give positive and encouraging criticism which helps learners to progress and improve. There is good progress from the start of the course and learners comment on the life-changing quality of the access course. Classes are taught with enthusiasm, and outcomes are summarised regularly so that learners' progress in the session is clear. Well-designed handouts consolidate learning and form a useful reference document. In poorer classes there is good individual coaching, but group management of learning is not always effective. The monitoring of progress is not fully established, and individual learning records are used as a working document in some sessions but as an administrative duty in others.

72. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, with some specialist studios which have been refurbished to a high standard. However, in other centres, rooms are sometimes drab and poorly lit. There are good displays of work to inspire and stimulate learners. Computer studies are an integral part of the access course, for research and as a creative tool, and there is a specialist area in the studio with 10 online computers with image distortion software. Tutors are well qualified and many have good professional experience which they share with learners, providing them with good demonstrations of techniques and activities.

73. Assessment of accredited provision is satisfactory with appropriate internal moderation. Access moderators meet every five weeks and learners get tutorial feedback when their work is assessed. Their work is marked by two tutors, and strengths and weaknesses are

identified as well as outstanding criteria. There are two internal moderators who sample and moderate work. In some non-accredited classes, individual goal setting varies and where targets are agreed with learners they are sometimes vague and progress is not always recorded. Some lesson plans and schemes of work identify lists of tasks or activities, but some do not state what standards are expected or how they will be measured. Much monitoring focuses on when learners have completed tasks and not how well they have progressed.

74. Support for learners is satisfactory, with good individual support from tutors. They know their learners well and are sensitive to their needs. Tutors who think a learner has literacy, numeracy or language support needs on a course can request a learning support tutor to assess and diagnose the level of support. Maths and literacy for the access course is integrated in assignments, most of which are completed during induction. A member of the learning support team works on the access course for one day a week to support learners. Flexible attendance, crèche facilities, and access to materials also support learners. Learners provide each other with good mutual encouragement and support during learning sessions.

75. There is a good range of programmes which respond to community needs, with special taster days for potential access learners. The access course also has free childcare, free tuition and free materials. Summer schools include printing, sculpture and advanced life classes. A course aimed at practising artists who want to sell their work includes business skills, publicity, commissions and contracts information. An African-Caribbean initiative provides art classes for learners with mental health problems and was originally in an outreach centre but is now in the City Learning Quarter. The black ethnic minority experience group made large murals for the outside of their building, and as part of a concept of 'art in the back yard', tutors went out with resources and initiated groups, which eventually brought learners into the centre. Heath Town senior citizens club has workshops on its premises and classes are held in residential homes. A course aimed specifically at isolated people with mental health problems, carers and people lacking confidence or the opportunity for social interaction, has been running successfully for some time. Learners have been referred by health visitors or their doctors to join the class and several have progressed to other courses. Learners who have already achieved are encouraged to help with community projects, such as painting murals in youth clubs.

Leadership and management

76. The quality improvement system has yet to be fully implemented. The observation of teaching and learning is insufficiently rigorous. The feedback is not always sufficiently evaluative, and the content of schemes of work are often not commented upon. There are few actions to follow up concerns that may be areas for improvement and there is little link between observations and continuing professional development. Data is often not sufficiently understood by staff or used for curriculum planning. There are no clear performance targets for staff.

77. The strengths for this area of learning were identified in the self-assessment report with the exception of observations of teaching and learning. Some of the strengths are no more than normal practice.

78. There is insufficient focus on cultural diversity within the art curriculum. Only a few lessons take advantage of the diverse creative material from minority ethnic communities.

Schemes of work show very little planning to celebrate cultural diversity. Most tutors have not had any equal opportunities training apart from that on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Crafts **Grade 4**

Strengths

- good personal and social gains

Weaknesses

- too much inadequate teaching
- poor curriculum planning
- weak quality improvement

Achievement and standards

79. Learners gain good personal and social benefits from attending classes in crafts. Learners who are recovering from or have a long-term illness report significant improvement in their health and well-being. Benefits to local communities are evidenced through many craft pieces being made for charitable organisations and in donations to community centres, churches and voluntary sector organisations. Benefits to learners' families are also seen through many new skills shared with children, grandchildren and other younger relatives.

80. Learners' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Most learners make satisfactory progress and many return to study their chosen crafts. New learners make good progress and achieve techniques and skills quickly. For instance, in one patchwork class, a new learner was delighted with her achievement in making a bag using complex techniques when she had no previous sewing experience. However, some returning learners do not progress and improve sufficiently and often make the same artefact many times. Attendance was satisfactory in the week of inspection.

The quality of provision

81. Too much of the teaching is inadequate. Learning is not planned adequately in schemes of work or session plans. Individual learning plans have lists of tasks or products rather than aims and learning outcomes. Many tutors use the same plan for each lesson and do not set a learning agenda for the learners at the start of each session. Activities are often limited and do not sufficiently challenge learners. In many classes, learners work independently on practical craft work and receive individual instruction from the tutor. Tutors rarely introduce visual examples of contemporary, historical or ethnic design and craft work to enrich the learners' experience. Basic design principles such as texture, line, form and tone and the use of colour are often not introduced to the learners as a basis on which to develop their own design work. Pre-printed patterns and kits are used too much and result in work that is technically proficient but lacks creative flair. Many returning learners do not develop new skills and some learners do not understand what they need to do to improve their work. Individual learning plans are generally not used sufficiently in sessions to set and agree learning goals, nor are they used to effectively monitor and record learners' progress and achievement. Where individual learning plans are used well, learners enjoy negotiating their own learning goals and benefit from evaluating their own work in

order to plan improvements and progress. In better sessions, tutors plan a good range of teaching and learning activities and develop clear and informative learning materials to inspire and inform learners. In these sessions, good individual tuition and support is often enhanced with good demonstrations of craft techniques and clear verbal information. Assessment of accredited provision is satisfactory.

82. Resources and accommodation are generally satisfactory. The newly refurbished accommodation at Old Hall Street provides light and airy classrooms and studios that are suitable for purpose. There is also storage for materials and learners' work. Many learning areas have computer facilities, although technology is rarely used by tutors or learners to enhance the learning experience. A few of the classrooms are too small for the number of learners and the practical nature of the sessions. The qualifications and experience of the teaching staff are satisfactory.

83. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Pre-course information is satisfactory and is presented through course information sheets and a prospectus. Participation is promoted well through a no-fees policy for specific courses such as those given in partnership with other organisations. Learners on some courses receive basic materials to support their learning, and on one course for visually impaired learners, transport is provided from their homes to the learning centre. The information learners are given by tutors on further courses and progression is usually good. However, one class of learners with multiple learning difficulties did not have sufficient additional learning support to enable learning to take place. Learners are generally advised to re-enrol early on the same class to ensure a place, although this restricts access for new learners. Information about summer courses is extensively distributed in all classes.

Leadership and management

84. Arrangements to plan the curriculum are poor. Specific enrolment targets are not set to enable managers to plan effectively. For instance, curriculum plans do not specify actions to increase participation from under-represented groups such as men, Asian learners and younger learners. Response to the problem of poor success rates on the 'learning mosaic' programme has been too slow. Plans for 2005-06 show little change in the offer of accredited courses. Market needs analysis and community surveys are not used sufficiently to plan the process. The ideas of existing tutors and learners are used to plan a traditional curriculum and the content of courses. There is little evidence of joint planning or sharing of good practice with the art and design department to ensure a coherent programme with good learning opportunities across the area of learning.

85. The quality improvement system is weak. Records of observations of teaching and learning do not contain sufficient evaluative comment. Grades are usually higher than the commentary would suggest and are significantly higher than those given by inspectors. Poor performance is not adequately identified and corrected. Action plans are not sufficiently rigorous to drive quality improvement and are not always followed through to conclusion. Monitoring of documents is insufficient and the assessment of the quality and content of planning and monitoring is inadequate. There is no system for tutors to review courses. The tutors' session evaluations are not collated or analysed to improve planning. Tutors are not directly involved in the self-assessment process, although a few do know about the report and have recently had information at an area of learning meeting. Records of internal verification are satisfactory.

86. Many of the strengths in the self-assessment report are no more than normal practice. The weaknesses identified by inspectors are only partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. All learners have adequate access to classes and there is good support for learners with additional needs. However, there is insufficient promotion and celebration of cultural diversity in the curriculum.

English, languages & communications   **Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages		*3*
Adult and community learning	887	3

87. WAES provides a range of courses in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Welsh and British Sign Language (BSL) at five learning centres. Family learning courses in Spanish and French take place on Saturdays. At the time of inspection there were 769 learners on 77 courses in modern foreign languages and 118 on eight courses in BSL. All foreign languages are available at level 1. French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese are available at levels 2 and 3. BSL is available at levels 1 and 2. Most courses lead to a qualification. Sixty-five per cent of courses take place during the day and the duration ranges from 10 weeks to 30 weeks. Most learning sessions are for one and a half or two hours. Almost all learners are adults. Forty-one per cent are men and 31 per cent are over 60 years of age. There is one full-time member of staff and 25 part-time staff. Most tutors have a teaching qualification.

Languages   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good speaking and listening skills for foreign languages
- good development of provision in response to local need
- successful action to improve retention and achievement rates
- good support for tutors

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment
- insufficiently developed quality improvement processes

Achievement and standards

88. Learners in modern foreign languages have good speaking and listening skills. This was not identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Over 60 per cent of classes were graded good or better. Learners use the foreign language extensively in the classroom, particularly at higher levels, in oral exchanges with the tutor and other learners. They are able to apply newly learnt language effectively in a variety of situations. In many classes there is sustained and confident use of language structures demonstrating a good understanding of background knowledge. For example, in one advanced French conversation class, learners had developed good discussion skills and were discussing a topic of current affairs, using sophisticated language and vocabulary to express their opinions. In another class for beginners, learners were using language of a higher standard than would normally be expected at this level. Learners' listening skills are well developed and they respond with ease to questions from the tutor in the foreign language. They are able to extract information accurately from audio and video tapes. One learner of Italian described how his improved listening skills allowed him to identify subtle distinctions of the

language of which he had previously been unaware. In a small number of lessons, however, learners lack confidence and are hesitant in their use of the language, often demonstrating poor pronunciation and intonation. In many cases, they are unable to interact with other learners or respond to tutors' questions in the foreign language. Learners are achieving their personal learning goals and speak of their ability to use the foreign language more confidently in visits to the countries where the language is spoken. There has been an improvement in retention rates from 47 per cent to 81 per cent and in achievement rates from 78 per cent to 87 per cent between 2002 and 2004, and they are now satisfactory. Attendance during the inspection was low at 72 per cent.

The quality of provision

89. The development of provision in response to local need is good. Classes in seven languages are offered in five venues and there are clear progression routes within the service and externally. The service plays a prominent part in a regional forum to identify gaps in provision and avoid duplication across local providers. Where possible, the service sets up new courses in response to local demand. For example, courses in Spanish for families take place on a Saturday morning after requests from residents, and a course in BSL was put on for local schools as part of the enrichment programme for pupils. WAES is responsive to employer demand and has provided classes in BSL for employees at a hospital and opportunities to learn German at a local company. There are good opportunities for learners to enrich their language learning. Tutors of French, German and Italian organise trips to these countries, and learners of Spanish attend displays of flamenco dancing locally. However, there are few courses for those learners who do not wish to take a qualification.

90. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. In the better lessons, tutors make good use of the foreign language as the main medium of instruction. They plan well to meet the needs of individual learners and use a variety of appropriate activities and resources to develop and extend learning. Learners are well motivated and industrious and participate well. However, in the poorer lessons, teaching is often dull and uninspiring with few opportunities for the learners to consolidate their learning or use the language independently. There is an over-reliance on English by learners and tutors and learners have poor pronunciation and intonation. Although some tutors have had training in skills for life and dyslexia awareness, learners with literacy needs are not always identified or appropriately supported. For example, they sometimes struggle to read a passage or take notes in the time given.

91. The provision of teaching resources is satisfactory. Some classrooms are well equipped, but others do not have adequate IT facilities. Most classes take place in large comfortable rooms, but some accommodation is overcrowded or noisy. There is an adequate supply of teaching materials at the main centre for tutors to borrow, including visual aids or materials for teaching BSL. All tutors are adequately qualified.

92. Overall support for learners is satisfactory. Learners who have a disability have good access to additional support. For example, visually impaired learners and those with restricted mobility are well integrated with classes. Tutors have had training in serving disabled customers and display good awareness of their needs. However, access to pre-course information is inconsistent and there is no procedure for learner induction. In some cases, learners are not given essential information about health and safety or service policies on equality and diversity or harassment.

93. Initial assessment is inadequate. When learners join a course, there is no formal mechanism to assess and record their language skills. This was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. No information is gathered on their previous experience or reasons for learning a language, to ensure that they are placed on an appropriate course. Tutors are unable to plan lessons and schemes of work effectively to meet learners' individual needs. However, in many cases, tutors gather information informally. Individual learning plans are in place but the results of the initial assessment are not used to plan the training. The components of language learning are identified in the learning plan, but individual targets are not set. Learners are unable to assess their own learning or their progress in a meaningful way.

Leadership and management

94. There has been successful action to improve the retention and achievement rates. The retention rates have increased from 47 per cent to 81 per cent and the achievement rates have increased from 78 per cent to 87 per cent over the past two years. Ten-week foreign language taster courses have been introduced to deal with the low retention rates on longer beginners' courses. The head of department now attends the BSL induction to offer learners another familiar contact apart from their tutor. Tutors have been trained in factors affecting retention and motivation. Improving retention and achievement is a regular focus of team meetings. Week-by-week checking of attendance has been introduced to give an early warning of falling numbers.

95. Tutors are well supported at operational level. Mentors support new tutors in their first year's employment by showing them all the venues and helping them to complete documents. There is a well-attended staff development programme, which includes IT skills development and training which is specific to language tutors. Selected tutors attend national and regional training events and pass on what they have learnt to their colleagues. In addition, there are development sessions where ideas and learning materials are shared. There has been a special level 3 tutor training course which is aimed at the needs of BSL tutors, as well as sessions on electronic presentations for deaf tutors. Deaf tutors are fully integrated in the department. Interpreters are available for all team meetings and training events.

96. There has been insufficient development of quality improvement processes and inconsistent practices in the assessment of learning. This was partially identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Tutors are not required to record the assessment methods they use in class. There are very few documents on quality improvement processes, and the self-assessment report has not adequately identified the improvements required. Reports on the observation of teaching are rarely evaluative and tutors' individual development needs are not often accurately identified. None of the three deaf tutors have been observed, nor have they been given action plans. None of the staff are working towards clear performance targets.

Foundation programmes   Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		*4*
Adult and community learning	513	4
Literacy and numeracy		*4*
Adult and community learning	343	4

97. Foundation programmes range from first step learning opportunities in literacy, numeracy and ESOL to courses at level 2. There are currently 856 learners on foundation courses. Of these, 26 per cent are under 25 years of age, 47 per cent are between 26 and 45, 19 per cent are between 46 and 59, and 8 per cent are over 60. Sixty-one per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. In 2003-04, 806 learners enrolled on foundation programmes.

98. The shortest course lasts for three hours and the longest for 30 weeks. Most courses lead to a qualification. There are 33 tutors teaching on foundation programmes, of whom seven are full time. Learners usually progress to a higher-level course after completing their present course.

99. Courses are held in 35 learning venues throughout the city. These include nursery and primary schools, community centres, a day centre, the local university and two probation service venues. Classes are held in the daytime and during the evening. Most of the classes are for between two and three hours a week. All learners are initially assessed and the results are used to allocate them to appropriate classes. The service works in partnership with community and voluntary organisations to encourage learners who are not usually involved in education and training to enrol on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses.

ESOL   *Grade 4*

Strengths

- good development of speaking and reading skills for many learners
- good range of provision to attract ESOL learners from deprived areas

Weaknesses

- low attendance and poor punctuality
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

100. Learners develop good speaking and reading skills. They are now able to listen more effectively and have enough confidence to answer the telephone and make appointments with their doctors or solicitors. They can now fill in simple application forms and read job advertisements correctly. Some learners are better able to talk to their grandchildren.

Some older Asian women with little school experience are able to write their name and address for the first time. More advanced learners are able to understand polite ways of making requests and use intonation correctly to emphasise the points they wish to make. Most of the learners have increased their confidence and self-esteem.

101. Achievement of external qualifications is satisfactory. For example, in the previous academic year 157 learners achieved a range of nationally recognised qualifications. WAES learners also achieve Open College Network (OCN) and other qualifications. Approximately 60 per cent of the learners are making satisfactory or better progress in developing their language skills in speaking, reading and to a lesser degree writing. However, 40 per cent of learners are making slow progress.

102. Learners do not attend classes regularly and their punctuality is poor. Staff do not have a clear idea of how many learners are active in classes or how many to expect on a particular day. In many classes, attendance is less than 40 per cent. Many learners have not attended for several weeks and they have not been withdrawn from the classes. Many learners do not arrive on time and lateness is not challenged or recorded. Learners and tutors do not recognise the impact of this disruption on other learners.

The quality of provision

103. The provider has a good range of provision to meet the needs of learners from deprived areas. Classes are run from 31 local venues. In community venues, learners can attend classes in their local community centre without having to wait. Discrete classes are established to meet the needs of local communities, such as classes for Asian women and those with restricted mobility. In addition, 38 learners who are unable to attend classes, as there are difficulties with transport and other personal problems, benefit from home tuition by qualified and well-supported volunteers. Some higher-level classes are offered on the Wolverhampton university campus. However, the service does not offer short tasters or intensive courses. The provision is limited in the evenings, particularly in the community venues. The range of qualifications meets the learners' needs.

104. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors, particularly in community venues, deal with learners' personal problems sensitively. Crèche facilities in community venues are satisfactory, but rooms are often inadequate. The take-up of information, advice and guidance for learners with higher-level qualifications is low. Learners are not told about the value of qualifications which were gained in their own country. The take-up and promotion of guidance is inadequate. Tutors use their best efforts and knowledge to guide learners but this practise is limited.

105. Twenty-five per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. Tutors pay inadequate attention to planning lessons. For example, in almost half of the classes, lesson plans do not have any learning objectives. Plans are often not followed. Tutors place too much emphasis on cross-referencing the lesson plans to the national core curriculum. Some tutors do not allow enough time for allocated tasks. Lessons are not innovative and challenging. Tutors are reluctant to give learners challenging work to develop their full potential. Tutors dominate the class and much of the teaching is uninspiring. Most sessions have a slow pace and not all learners are fully involved in sessions. Tutors make insufficient use of tape recorders, computers, videos and internet-based learning. Many community venues have poor resources and tutors rely heavily on worksheets and handouts. They make little use of real-life objects, listening, and reading materials.

106. In the minority of good sessions, tutors plan their lessons thoroughly by meeting individual needs and delivering the lessons at a brisk pace. Learners in such sessions are fully engaged and make good progress.

107. The tutors put insufficient focus on individual learning. Individual learning needs are not identified sufficiently and some learners do not have an individual learning plan. When needs are identified they are not followed through, either in the classes or on an individual basis. Further additional assessment is not carried out to identify learners' previous learning, learning styles or the constraints that they may face. Teaching is in whole groups with limited attempts to offer individual support. Tutors give insufficient encouragement and guidance to learners on how to develop their language skills outside of the classes. A significant number of learners have no experience of education, either in this country or in their country of origin. Some learners write from right to left and have difficulty in writing effectively. They are not encouraged to develop independent learning skills and take responsibility for their own learning and success in life and society. The lesson content is driven by national core curricula rather than the needs of the individuals. Learners' levels of motivation and time for learning are not fully considered when programmes are designed. Targets in some individual learning plans are too general. Forty per cent of the learners are making slow progress.

Leadership and management

108. Curriculum management is weak. For a significant period the curriculum manager has been ill and interim management arrangements are not adequate. The tutors are fulfilling too many roles and responsibilities. They do not have adequate time to manage, teach and co-ordinate the programmes. The service has not analysed the needs of the individuals and groups attending classes. The classes have been planned on a historical basis with little change from previous years. Data which is collected and used to plan and monitor the provision is poor. The management strategy for managing absenteeism and withdrawing long-term absentees is inadequate. The demand and supply of ESOL provision is poorly managed. In some classes there is a waiting list, and in some centres, classes are run with very low numbers.

109. Many of the learners attend more than one class and they have two or three individual learning plans without sufficient co-ordination. The management of ongoing programmes is ineffective. Learners' induction arrangements are inadequate.

110. Tutors are suitably experienced and qualified, but there are insufficient numbers to meet the demand. Staff development is inadequate for part-time tutors, but it is satisfactory for full-time staff. Staff do not have any formal coaching and mentoring. The support for many part-time tutors in community venues is inadequate. The management of learning resources in community venues is poor.

111. The staff do not sufficiently identify and share good practice within the area of learning and across the service. The provider does not put sufficient effort into monitoring the quality of learning and teaching. So far this year, only one tutor has been observed. The focus of observations is on the tutor's input and observers do not comment on learning and attainment. Tutors do not evaluate their own performance.

112. Internal and external verification is unsatisfactory. The provider does not have any

formal procedures or sampling plan. The internal verifiers do not get any written feedback on the quality of assessment.

Literacy and numeracy   *Grade 4*

Strengths

- good development of personal effectiveness
- good actions to extend the provision

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient planning of individual learning
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

113. Learners develop good literacy and numeracy skills to enhance their personal effectiveness. For example, learners' writing and spelling have improved. They are now able to write letters, notes and postcards and send birthday cards. Numeracy learners are now able to complete bank paying-in slips and cheques, handle money more skilfully and check the accuracy of household bills. Some learners can read to their children and help them with their school work. Many learners improve their oral skills and become much better at expressing themselves. Learners' self-confidence has improved and their self-esteem has increased significantly. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory.

114. Many learners prepare for nationally-recognised qualifications in literacy and numeracy and are successful at achieving full or partial awards. The provider was unable to provide reliable data to make a clear judgement on the achievement of qualifications. Retention rates overall are satisfactory. Attendance levels are low in some classes. During inspection, the attendance was 61 per cent.

The quality of provision

115. The provider is taking good action to raise the profile of and extend the skills for life provision. For example, it is now delivering more literacy and numeracy sessions within the local probation service, giving a larger number of offenders good opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The service has ambitious plans for integrating literacy and numeracy training into other areas of learning. Learners on the preparation for work course now have good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in a work context. Similarly, the service is offering literacy and numeracy classes to employees with local employers. Learners now have a choice of online and paper-based testing for literacy and numeracy at levels 1 and 2. Teaching assistants and other support workers in schools, such as caretakers and secretaries, are also able to use the service's testing facilities. Good attempts are also being made to integrate ICT into skills for life so that learners can develop all three skills simultaneously.

116. Information, advice and guidance and learner support are satisfactory. Pastoral and additional support and resources are satisfactory. Accommodation at the main site is excellent, easily accessible and has relevant learning resources. Accommodation and

learning resources are satisfactory at the other sites. The service's staff are appropriately qualified and supported.

117. Much of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The key feature of the 25 per cent of unsatisfactory teaching is poor planning, including poor schemes of work and lesson plans. Some lesson plans do not have clear learning objectives and tutors do not specify what will be taught. The times that are allocated to some parts of the lessons are unrealistic. Tutors do not have sufficient information on learners to help them with the lesson planning, such as on learning difficulties and disabilities and how these affect the learners. Some tutors have assessed the learning styles of learners, but the information has not been used to plan lessons. Some learners are not sufficiently challenged and are making slow progress. Tutors do not make sufficient use of ICT, websites, videos and computer-based simulations. Many lessons lack variety and tutors rely too heavily on worksheets and handouts. Tutors do not evaluate their own lessons to improve their practice for future lessons. In the better lessons, learners are challenged and stimulated. Tutors use a range of different resources at a brisk pace and reinforce earlier learning effectively.

118. Planning for individual learning is insufficient. The initial assessment is limited to a short test in literacy or numeracy and is ineffective. Tutors do not assess listening and speaking skills or the learners' ability to carry out calculations without using pen and paper. Diagnostic assessment is relatively new and inadequate. Tutors have not evaluated the suitability of the assessment and its effectiveness. The individual learning needs of learners are not sufficiently identified and recorded on their individual learning plans. Resources to promote independent learning are insufficient. Different learning styles are identified, but are not used sufficiently to guide learning. Learners are not encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching is predominantly led by the tutor. The number of tutors to manage and implement effective individual learning is low. Learners are not given guidance and support to reinforce their learning in daily life. For example, they are not taught to identify how their learning in the classroom could be reinforced through posters, newspapers and magazines. Some learners are not making satisfactory progress and the reasons are not adequately investigated. In one class, more than half the learners were having difficulty with forming, spacing and positioning letters on ruled A4 paper. Some had been attending literacy classes for two or three years but their difficulties had not been identified.

Leadership and management

119. Curriculum management is weak. The permanent curriculum manager has been sick for a long while and interim managers are fulfilling too many roles and responsibilities. They do not have adequate time to manage, co-ordinate and improve the quality of the programmes. Under-qualified tutors are not monitored effectively. Arrangements to mentor and support new part-time tutors are poor. Inadequate resources are allocated to this area of learning. The provider does not have a sufficient number of qualified and experienced tutors to provide good individual teaching. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report.

120. Curriculum development is ineffective. Too little action has been taken to develop the skills for life curriculum and to ensure that it meets the learners' needs. Some learners are not accurately matched to the level of the classes they join and too little action is taken to move them to higher- or lower-level classes when the need arises. There are no pre-entry classes for learners with very low literacy and numeracy skills, and few numeracy

classes. Many learners enrol on more than one class and they have many individual learning plans without any co-ordination. The service strategy for managing absenteeism or withdrawing long-term absentees is inadequate. Numbers are low in many classes and some potential learners are on waiting lists. The service follows up the learners' absenteeism, but it has had little success in improving the situation. The reasons for absence are not analysed. The service does not have a clear policy on withdrawing learners from classes.

121. The provider is unable to collect and present data to make a meaningful analysis for measuring retention and achievement rates of full and partial qualifications. The observation of learning and teaching is not thorough. Much emphasis is placed on tutor input and little on the learning. The service has not been able to carry out the planned number of class observations in the current year. Good practice is not routinely identified and shared.

122. Internal verification is unsystematic with no sampling plan. Feedback to verifiers on the accuracy and quality of their assessments is not detailed. Some members of staff were insufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses to those presented in the self-assessment report. Many of the strengths were considered to be no more than normal practice.

123. The induction process for learners is ineffective. The induction pack is too long and complex, particularly for learners with low levels of literacy. Although equality of opportunity is included, learners' knowledge and understanding are not progressively extended during their courses. The service has not thought about innovative ways of delivering the induction.

124. Staff communications have improved and are now satisfactory. The meetings are now arranged at convenient times to allow part-time staff to attend.

Family learning   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		*2*
Adult and community learning	489	2

125. Four hundred and eighty-nine adult learners are enrolled on family learning programmes. One hundred and three learners attend FLLN programmes, while a further 386 attend wider family learning provision. FLLN courses include short and intensive literacy and numeracy programmes, together with 'keeping up with the children' courses. The programmes are mainly targeted at parents of children at, or before, the foundation stage or at key stages I and 2. Wider family learning provision includes programmes designed to encourage parent/child interaction, for example 'story sacks', creative arts courses and general programmes offering parents and carers the opportunity to re-engage in learning. The 31 venues include early years settings, primary and secondary schools and community centres. Family learning is managed by the family learning curriculum manager, assisted by two members of staff with co-ordinating roles. There are 10 teachers, one of whom is full time.

Adult and community learning   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- very good teaching
- good support for progression
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment on short FLLN programmes
- insufficient use of literacy, numeracy and language accreditation for FLLN learners

Achievement and standards

126. Learners develop good skills in family learning programmes. Many learners significantly improve their skills in supporting or interacting with their children. Learners also develop their own skills in arts and crafts or in literacy. Learners demonstrate increased levels of confidence. Many parents and carers progress to other family learning, adult or further education courses. In one instance a learner progressed to an access course, while another moved on to a level 3 national vocational qualification in childcare. Some have become more involved with the school as volunteer readers or support assistants. Learners on accredited wider family learning programmes make very good progress in achieving OCN qualifications. Learners on wider family learning programmes and FLLN produce very good standards of written and practical work. Retention on family learning programmes is satisfactory. Punctuality and attendance are satisfactory, although some classes are small.

The quality of provision

127. There is very good teaching in family learning. Teachers produce good course and session plans, with clear learning objectives and evaluations. Teachers across all age ranges co-operate well to effectively plan sessions together. Sessions are well paced, interactive and provide learners with a good range of practical activities and opportunities for discussion. For example, in one session, parents designed mosaics which they subsequently made with their children. They discussed the implications for their children's learning at relevant times during the session and planned for home activities. Resources, including ICT, are effectively used. Parents and carers make games, books and toys to share with their children. Some make good use of digital cameras to record their achievements. Teachers encourage learners to reflect on the implications of their activities for their own and their children's learning. Most individual learning plans are completed to at least a satisfactory standard.

128. Advice and guidance on progression are good. All learners receive comprehensive initial information, advice and guidance. Learners can request that an information, advice and guidance worker visits the whole group. Teachers integrate such visits seamlessly and effectively into the learning programme. Alternatively, learners have the option of attending individual advice sessions.

129. Initial and continuous assessment is satisfactory overall. Learners on FLLN programmes and many wider family learning programmes complete the 'family fast track' screening tool to assess their literacy, numeracy and/or language needs. Many also complete a learning styles assessment. Learners on intensive skills for life programmes complete diagnostic assessments in literacy, numeracy or language. However, the initial assessment on short FLLN programmes is poor. Arrangements for initial assessment do not follow LSC guidelines for short FLLN programmes. There is some confusion between the purpose and nature of screening and initial assessment. There is a good form for recording the results of initial assessment, but this is not always completed correctly.

130. There is a satisfactory range of provision to meet school and community needs. The family learning team provides a wide variety of programmes in schools and community venues across Wolverhampton. The service caters for parents/carers of children up to three years old, at the foundation stage and key stages 1 and 2. It has recently attempted to establish courses for parents/carers of key stage 3 children but has failed to recruit. The service sustains some relationships with schools over time, providing a range of family learning programmes in response to requests. Other partners include Sure Start, libraries and an early years group. The service has recently contacted a teenage pregnancy unit and an ethnic community centre, with a view to increasing participation of under-represented groups. However, these initiatives have not yet had an impact on recruitment.

131. There is insufficient use of literacy, numeracy and language accreditation for FLLN learners. FLLN learners are offered in-house certificates but no external accreditation. It is possible to work towards OCN qualifications that accredit aspects of family learning, but these do not cover literacy, numeracy and language skills. There are plans to introduce the national tests in literacy and numeracy later in the year.

Leadership and management

132. Curriculum management is good within family learning. There is meticulous use of systems to support learning. Standards are consistently high across the family learning curriculum area. Session plans and forms used to record progress and achievement are well designed. There are formal observations for all teachers, including those who are part-time, at least once a year. Teachers also receive a visit if a programme is starting at a new venue. The manager and teachers agree specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed targets in an action plan and the manager ensures that these are put into practice. Session observations are thorough, demonstrate sound understanding of the teaching and learning process, and relate to the Common Inspection Framework. General concerns identified from observations are used to plan continuous professional development and for discussions in team meetings. The manager also ensures that all teachers complete thorough course evaluations and makes suggestions for further action points.

133. The communications are good between the manager and staff and among staff. There are regular team meetings and the manager communicates with staff regularly through mobile telephone text messages or e-mail. Teachers are well supported and all staff, including those who are part time, receive annual appraisals. Staff take up a good range of professional development opportunities, for example in becoming an 'e-guide', or in developing knowledge and skills which are relevant to the early years curriculum.

134. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The service is trying to target under-represented groups, such as men and teenage parents. Teachers and learners demonstrate respect for those from a range of ethnic groups, cultures and religions. However, there is no sustained effort to promote equality and diversity through teaching and learning materials.