

INSPECTION REPORT

Walsall LEA

09 December 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
- **learn**direct provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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

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*

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Walsall LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Walsall College of Continuing Education (the college) was established in 1993 by Walsall local education authority (the LEA). From that time, until 2004, it provided accredited community learning in Walsall, mainly in information and communications technology (ICT), independent living and leisure skills, numeracy, literacy, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). In August 2004, the provider was given responsibility for the LEA's adult and community learning provision, formerly managed directly by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC), and delivered by a range of community-based associations around the borough. Since 2004, the provider has focused on bringing together the former adult and community learning non-accredited provision, delivered through the numerous community organisations, with the accredited provision that the college had always provided.

2. The college's directly delivered provision is based at two main sites in Walsall, the main site at Hawbush, and the Whitehall centre, which provides mostly ESOL courses. The college also has directly delivered ICT courses at a number of schools and community venues. The provider delivers its non-accredited provision through its 22 subcontracted provider partners in a large number of community locations throughout the metropolitan borough.

3. There are 63 permanent staff and 63 part-time teaching staff employed at the college. The 22 external community associations and community organisations who deliver most of the adult and community learning provision employ their own, mostly part-time, tutors. The college maintains a community development facility staffed by three development workers, one of whom is seconded to Sure Start to support the development of family learning provision. The college also works with a variety of partners including the Primary Care Trust, the LEA, community associations, schools, libraries, Sure Start and other providers.

4. Directly delivered provision mostly comprises ICT and preparation for life and work. These areas make up around 76 per cent of the provider's total provision, while leisure, travel and tourism, languages, literature and culture, and arts, media and publishing, and the eight other areas that were not inspected, make up around 24 per cent of total provision. The highest proportion of direct provision is delivered through ICT. The largest area of adult and community learning non-accredited provision is in leisure, travel and tourism, with small numbers of learners in the other areas of learning. The college has increased its learner numbers over a period of three years to a total in excess of 9,000 learners in 2004-05.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is adequate.** Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Quality improvement is inadequate. ICT, arts, media and publishing, and preparation for life and work provision is satisfactory. Provision in leisure, travel and tourism, and languages, literature and culture is inadequate.

6. The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.

The self-assessment process for the directly delivered provision is inclusive, but less so in the small amount of recently inherited adult and community learning provision. The college's current self-assessment process has been extended since August 2004 to cover all aspects of provision in the new adult and community learning areas. The sections of the report dealing with directly delivered provision are suitably self-critical, but those dealing with areas of learning delivered in adult and community learning are too descriptive and do not identify many of the weaknesses in the provision. Most of the weaknesses found in leadership and management were identified by the self-assessment process. In adult and community learning provision, some tutors and managers are now making full use of self-assessment, though many do not yet comply fully with self-assessment arrangements.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.

Senior managers have responded very effectively to identified weaknesses in provision, and to the challenges posed by the unexpected enlargement of the college's provision in August 2004. Effective self-assessment and continuous improvement are long established in the provider's directly delivered provision, and some successful work has been carried out to introduce quality improvement and self-assessment arrangements to the adult and community learning provision during the past 14 months. Quality improvement measures have been effective in bringing about change and improvement across the college, though some small areas of adult and community learning provision remain inadequate.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR WALSALL LEA:

- implement effective curriculum management across subcontracted provision
- continue the effective management of change
- develop with the LEA an effective strategic direction for adult and community learning in the borough
- reduce the proportion of poor teaching in new adult and community learning provision
- prioritise skills for life strategies
- continue to develop quality improvement in new adult and community learning provision
- better promote equality and diversity through the curriculum

GRADES

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

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

Information and communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning	739	3 3

Leisure, travel and tourism		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	1,090	4 4

Arts, media and publishing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Dance</i> Adult and community learning	367	3
<i>Music</i> Adult and community learning	27	3
<i>Fine arts</i> Adult and community learning	241	3
<i>Crafts</i> Adult and community learning	488	3

Languages, literature and culture		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Language, literature and culture of the British Isles</i> Adult and community learning	8	4
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning	324	4

Preparation for life and work		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	389	3 3
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	281	3 2
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	300	3 3

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. ICT, leisure, travel and tourism, arts, media and publishing, languages, literature and culture, and preparation for life and work were reported on and graded. Contributory grades were given for ESOL, literacy and numeracy, and independent living and leisure skills. Provision that does exist in most of the other areas of learning was not included in the inspection because there were too few learners. Inspectors visited the college on five consecutive days to carry out the inspection.

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	60
Number of learners interviewed	373
Number of staff interviewed	131
Number of subcontractors interviewed	16
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	67
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	7
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Achievement of qualifications on accredited courses in ICT is good.** Achievement rates have improved significantly from 24 per cent in 2002-03, to 80 per cent in 2004-05. Some learners are achieving qualifications quickly, and for many learners, the courses are their first experience of adult learning and ICT. Many learners quickly become confident and competent users of ICT up to level 2.

10. **Some learners gain significant health and social benefits from attending sport, exercise and fitness courses.** Some learners indicated that their doctors had advised them to attend such classes to assist the prevention of and rehabilitation from illness and injury. In one yoga class, learners referred to improved suppleness, mobility, breathing, posture and relief from arthritis as well as benefits in terms of stress relief and relaxation. However, such improvements were not evident in the poorer classes where learners were unable to maintain or improve health and fitness as effectively.

11. **New learners achieve good skills development in arts, media and publishing.** They quickly gain a range of skills and techniques. Learners' practical demonstrations show good progress made from beginner stage to more advanced work. There is good peer support and effective use of paired work. Learners with no previous experience develop diverse skills and work on complex tasks. Learners in art classes sometimes reach a professional standard.

12. **In arts, media and publishing, there is good celebration of learners' work.** Learners' completed work is displayed at a number of centres. One centre has formalised

achievement by creating an annual graduation ceremony, in cap and gown, at the local Town Hall. At another centre, learners are rewarded with certificates of achievement to record successful completion of 10-week courses. Sugarcraft learners have been invited to work as part of a regional celebration in 2006, organised by the British Sugarcraft Guild and funded by the National Lottery. Most centres have photographic evidence of learners' work on display.

13. Dance classes offer learners progression to different ability levels. Line dancing at one centre has proved so popular that the tutor now runs classes at three different levels. In Salsa dancing at another centre, learners can choose between beginners and improvers level. This allows for year-on-year learners to achieve a higher standard and to try more difficult dance routines and practise and improve techniques. There are two belly dancing classes offering progression routes provided at two different centres.

14. Pass rates for general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English courses at grade C or above are good. Ninety-one per cent of learners who entered for the higher-level GCSE achieved grade C or above. The overall pass rate at grade C or above was 79 per cent.

15. Achievement of learning goals is good in ESOL. All 389 learners are on accredited courses. The overall retention rate was for 2004-05 was 88 per cent and in 2003-04 was 77 per cent. In 2004-05, 250 learners entered for ESOL examinations and a further 31 took examinations at pre-entry level. There was a good overall pass rate of 90 per cent. There was a pass rate of 100 per cent for the 11 learners entered for an entry 3 level examination in using ICT, the 16 learners entered for level 1 ESOL/childcare and the one candidate on the English for office skills examination. Progress is consistent with the schemes of work and in relation to the stated target accreditation aims of the course.

16. Achievement rates in literacy and numeracy are good. In 2004-05, success rates in adult literacy and numeracy national tests at level 1 and 2 were 84 per cent and 79 per cent respectively. Increasing numbers of learners are entered for externally accredited qualifications. Learners gain in confidence and progress on to higher-level literacy or numeracy, key skills or GCSE courses. Learners on other professional courses, for example, the classroom assistants' course, are better equipped to stay on their course through improved their literacy and numeracy skills gained on these courses.

17. Independent living and leisure skills learners' achievements in practical subjects are good. They participate well in a good range of interesting projects and produce work such as creative artwork and pottery, detailed tapestry and embroidery, well-prepared meals, and lively mimes and dance routines to a high standard. Learners also develop a good understanding of some specialist concepts and technical terms. Learners also develop good personal and social skills, such as teamwork and the ability to follow and remember instructions. They develop a good understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and the standards of behaviour are particularly good. This is a significant achievement for some learners.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information and communications technology	0	5	11	4	20
Leisure, travel and tourism	0	6	7	7	20
Arts, media and publishing	1	5	11	3	20
Languages, literature and culture	0	1	4	3	8
Preparation for life and work	2	10	18	4	34
Total	3	27	51	21	102

18. There are a good range of learning venues to meet the community need for ICT courses, and initiatives to widen participation have been successful. At the time of inspection, 62 per cent of learners had been recruited from deprived wards. Many learners live within walking distance of their local learning centre. Most centres provide very good learning environments.

19. Physical resources for ICT are good. In all cases equipment and software are good, meeting industry standards. In centres there are flat-screen monitors, document holders, black and white, and colour printers, and in some centres scanners are also available. There is sufficient desk space for each learner to lay out their paper learning materials, and collaborative work can be done away from computers. There is much emphasis on health and safety.

20. Good initiatives to promote health and fitness have been implemented across the community. Elderly learners are able to access classes designed to prevent or aid recovery from falls. The provider supports a cardiac rehabilitation scheme of exercise that has been extended to help assist people who doctors have identified as being at risk. One community venue operates its own well-equipped gym in a deprived part of the borough. It provides affordable exercise facilities and is supervised by qualified instructors.

21. In languages, literature and culture, the college, community centres and associations provide a very supportive learning environment. Some learner groups have worked together for several terms and provide each other with support and confidence. Daytime provision enables older learners to attend courses.

22. Initial assessment, guidance and support for ESOL learners are good. At the Whitehall centre, specialised staff provide confidential and supportive advice for potential learners. Learners who then wish to enrol are given an effective diagnostic test by a member of the teaching team and registered for a course at the appropriate level. Information from the initial interview and the diagnostic test is entered in a learner record booklet which assists the tutor, in negotiation with the learner, to establish group and individual learning goals.

23. Numeracy provision is particularly effective. Learners with poor previous experiences of mathematics make rapid progress in achieving their goals. The mathematics workshop enables adult learners to access numeracy and receive support on an individual basis from the tutor. A variety of methods are used to explain complex mathematical concepts and algebraic problems. Many learners consolidate work done in the class through extensive work at home which they enjoy. Learners learn to work independently. The tutor monitors

learners' progress through detailed records.

24. The range of courses for literacy and numeracy learners is particularly wide, and responsive to community needs. In addition to the literacy and numeracy courses from entry level to level 2, the college provides other vocational courses like English and information technology (IT) to help learners take up employment in vocational areas. Learners can progress to key skills and application of number courses at levels 1, 2 and 3, to develop their writing and number skills at higher levels.

25. Provision for people with learning difficulties and disabilities is well resourced. Managers strictly adhere to the agreed maximum class size of eight learners on each programme and learners receive good individual support. An additional support tutor is allocated to most classes and they work well with learners and tutors to provide appropriate individual personal and learning support. Learners are also provided with some particularly good visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning resources.

26. Planning of the curriculum for independent living and leisure skills is particularly inclusive. Since September 2005, the provider has offered many of the courses in practical subjects at three different levels and has successfully created an appropriate range of progression routes within the department. Most courses are supplemented effectively by a good range of external visits to places such as museums, libraries and galleries. Good links with partners provides a good range of courses for specific groups of learners in day or residential centres and community venues, as well as provision for learners with specific disabilities. The provider has been successful in enabling learners to join its programmes throughout the year.

27. There is slow progress in some ICT lessons. In the poorer sessions, teaching and learning methods are not sufficiently varied to meet learners' needs. Assessment information is not used effectively and reviews do not focus sufficiently on learners' rates of progress. Tutors rely too much on learners' self-assessment of prior knowledge and experience. There are not enough enrichment activities for learners. Learners work at their own pace on applications such as word processing, spreadsheets and databases, and opportunities to deliver group, and paired teaching are missed. In many learning sessions, learners are not challenged or inspired.

28. There are many poor-quality teaching and learning resources used in ICT. Some schemes of work are poor and some session plans are not sufficiently detailed. There are many examples of poorly photocopied handouts given to learners, and in a number of cases, out-of-date handouts refer to old versions of software. Many tutors relied on pages photocopied from books as the learners' central resource. Some handouts contain hand-written sections and are difficult to read.

29. Teaching and learning is of a poor standard in leisure, travel and tourism. Thirty-five per cent of observed classes were judged to be inadequate. Some lessons are poorly planned and lesson plans and schemes of work are poorly developed or not completed by tutors. The weaker classes are characterised by poor differentiation and attention to the needs of all learners, poor choice of level of exercise for the class, insufficient or incorrect demonstration of technique by the teacher and failure to correct learners practising poor posture and technique.

30. Assessment and monitoring of learner progress in leisure travel and tourism is inadequate. Correct induction procedures are not always fully adhered to. Initial assessment of learners' starting point on the programme and target-setting is unsatisfactory. Health screening forms have been introduced but are not currently being completed by all tutors for all learners. Some good examples of monitoring and recording learners' progress have been adopted.

31. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in arts, media and publishing. In the better classes there are examples of challenging tasks being set for learners to achieve. This target-setting can appear as learning a new dance style, such as Rumba, or a new craft technique, such as Iris folding for card making. However, in the poorer classes, learners are not taught rudimentary techniques to support ongoing projects.

32. The quality of teaching and learning in languages, literature and culture is inadequate. In many sessions, tutors and learners use the foreign language for too little of the session. Learners often do not have sufficient opportunities to use the language, even though spoken fluency is a frequent personal learning goal. In some learning sessions, learners spend too much time translating words and short phrases, rather than using language purposefully. In many sessions, tutors use a limited range of teaching methods and resources.

33. Setting and monitoring of learning outcomes is inadequate in languages classes. Learning outcomes are often a list of topics with no indication of what learners should be able to do. Individual learning goals are recorded for some courses, but they do not always inform planning of the course. Learners do not always understand these goals. Assessment is often through short answer written tests, although learners' goals are generally to acquire speaking skills. Learners are not always given information on what they need to do to improve.

34. There is insufficient development of learners' oral skills in ESOL. Tutors spend too much time talking and do not allow the learners opportunities to fully practise the target language. There is not enough paired or group work and tutors often go through exercises with the whole class, frequently providing the correct answers for the learners, and allowing no opportunity for the learners to practise their skills. In the better classes, tutors plan work for different levels and include learner-centred activities.

35. There is a narrow range of provision for ESOL in other community venues than the Whitehall centre. Nine courses run in these centres. Classes are at lower levels and there are groups with mixed abilities. In one class, there are learners at entry 1 and entry 3 being taught separately in the same room by a tutor and a support tutor. Management is taking steps to resolve this situation by creating two separate classes in the next term.

36. On some vocational literacy and numeracy courses, there is insufficient development of skills. Not enough work is done to develop subject-related vocabulary and progress learners' reading, writing and numeracy skills through the vocational curriculum. Learners are not encouraged to read and follow instructions in recipes or calculate amounts needed for cooking. Specific terminology covered in theory lessons is not reinforced in practical sessions. Learners in IT sessions do not make use of the internet to build on their reading skills through researching topics of interest to them.

37. There is insufficient correction of grammar in spoken and written English in literacy and numeracy classes. Many learners write as they speak in the local dialect. Tutors do not always correct grammar errors of ESOL learners in spoken English.

38. There are too few checks on learning to ascertain whether literacy and numeracy learners have understood concepts and developed the skills required to apply in other contexts. For example, in some sessions, there is insufficient review of the steps needed to do tasks such as inserting pictures in a text. Some learners rely too much on the tutor and are unable to do some tasks independently.

39. The targets in the individual learning plans for independent living and leisure skills are too narrow. Some targets are not sufficiently challenging, especially for some learners on advanced courses who are working towards a national award. The learning plans and progress charts do not include learners' development needs and progress in social and personal skills. Although many learners make good progress in developing independent living skills, this progress is not recorded. The provider has identified that potential progression routes are not recorded early enough or used sufficiently in planning of learning activities to prepare learners for next step.

40. Independent living and leisure skills provision is not sufficiently co-ordinated. Tutors do not systematically share enough information about learners' progress or development. Similarly tutors do not routinely share their interpretation or analysis of learners' needs sufficiently. Learners attend up to three courses, but these are primarily planned as separate programmes.

Leadership and management

41. Management of the literacy and numeracy curriculum is good. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced to teach literacy and numeracy. Four new staff have completed the subject-specific level 4 qualification. A good mentoring system exists to support new staff. Experienced staff are allocated new tutors for support, advice and guidance on teaching and learning, and resources. A well-established system to observe teaching and learning exists, and staff receive feedback and an action plan to identify needs. The internal observations did not identify any weak teaching, although the inspection did. Courses are regularly reviewed and improvements made.

42. Staff in independent living and leisure skills make good use of course reviews to improve the programmes for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Their evaluation is thorough and reflective, and records of this process are constructive and objective. Managers collate these systematically and use them well when producing development plans. They consult well with relevant staff to negotiate proposals for improvement and development. Staff also provide good support for one another and use meetings well to share ideas and learning materials. Self-assessment is a similarly consultative process.

43. Attention to health and safety in community venues for sport and leisure classes is poor. In some venues learners have to rearrange furniture before the class can take place. In some multi-purpose rooms, space for activities is insufficient and, on occasions, furniture is stacked too high. Electrical equipment brought in by part-time tutors is not routinely safety tested. Access for the emergency services is not always maintained. At one venue, inappropriately parked vehicles blocked ambulance access to the swimming pool. Unsafe

practices were demonstrated in a number of classes.

44. **In leisure, travel and tourism, there is inadequate planning and co-ordination of the curriculum.** No manager is responsible for the curriculum area, though a post was recently advertised. Strategic planning of the curriculum does not take place and community organisations largely decide their own curriculum offer. Many courses merely represent what has been offered historically. Co-ordination between the LEA and community venues and between the venues themselves is poor. Effective lines of communication with part-time tutors have yet to be established. There are no regular staff meetings for sport and fitness staff.

45. **Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate in leisure travel and tourism.** A significant number of observations of teaching and learning have been completed, but curriculum specialists have not carried these out. The self-assessment report is not self-critical and fails to recognise key weaknesses. Several strengths stated in the self-assessment report were identified as weaknesses by inspectors. Tutors were not involved in the self-assessment process and there is no system of course evaluation in place to contribute to the self-assessment process.

46. **Curriculum planning is poor in arts, media and publishing.** Of all the classes on offer, only 1 per cent represented the ethnicity and cultural diversity of the borough. There are insufficient opportunities to progress to more advanced work in art classes and some learners take the same courses repeatedly and others move to a different level in the same class. Traditional subjects are offered annually although some taster classes are on offer at some centres.

47. **New quality improvement initiatives which tackle lesson planning, schemes of work and individual learning have not yet made sufficient impact on most classes in arts, media and publishing.** Despite being offered instruction at a variety of times and days, some tutors have still not accepted the invitation to train. There is, in some cases, a resistance in complying with the provider's directives, and a poor understanding of written lesson planning and the use of individual learning plans. In some cases, initial assessment is used but not always made use of appropriately. Recording of learners' progress is not in place in all courses.

48. **The leadership and management for languages, literature and culture are inadequate.** For modern foreign languages, curriculum centres do not adequately plan the curriculum offer and do not offer progression routes across the provision.

49. **Some tutors have insufficient expertise in teaching ESOL.** A number of well-qualified tutors have left the service recently, and the provider has had difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced tutors. New tutors do not all have basic ESOL core curriculum training. The management is aware of this and had planned a two-day training session with an external provider but the training body cancelled at short notice, so another training session is planned. Some tutors do not have an ESOL-specific qualification, but are either working towards one or planning to take one.

50. Most independent living and leisure skills staff have appropriate qualifications in teaching and in their specialist subject. However **some staff**, particularly those new to this area of work, **do not have sufficient understanding of some disabilities and learning**

needs of people with learning difficulties. Some current staff have attended awareness training in autism, behaviour management, deaf awareness and introducing IT to adults. However, training in some of these subjects has not been offered since 2003. Many tutors do not have sufficient expertise in teaching literacy and numeracy to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

51. Managers have dealt effectively with organisational change following WMBC's decision to give the college responsibility for adult and community learning provision in August 2004. A thorough monitoring and evaluation exercise was carried out to assess the quality of the new provision and needs among partner organisations. Successful measures already in place to assure and improve the quality of direct delivery provision were quickly adapted for use in the non-accredited provision.

52. Internal communications are good. Staff and middle managers are kept very well informed of the organisation's strategic direction, and have a good understanding of the connections between their own work and that strategy. All staff have very good access to members of the senior management team, and there is very good morale in the organisation despite the considerable changes it has recently undergone.

53. The provider has a range of productive links with educational, social and community partners around the borough. There are constructive links with the skills for life managers at a local college of further education and effective joint staff development activities to promote skills for life awareness. Work has been carried out to improve educational progression for residents in some of the borough's most deprived wards as part of a New Deal for communities project. There are good links with some of the WMBC's other service areas, including libraries and catering.

54. There is a clear staff development strategy and staff development policy, which set out objectives and responsibilities for the implementation of development activities. Following the takeover of community provision in 2004, the college provided an extensive range of staff training and development sessions. Training was offered for tutors, for centre managers and for team leaders in many aspects of quality improvement and management. Tutor training included sessions on lesson planning, schemes of work, differentiation, identification of literacy and numeracy needs, advice and guidance and equal opportunities.

55. Good use is made of learner support funding in direct provision. The learner support fund is widely publicised as is the college discretionary fund. The free creche at the Whitehall centre is supported by the fund. Learners are equipped with a range of equipment and books to support their skills development, for example dictionaries in skills for life provision.

56. The recruitment of learners from under-represented groups into direct provision to widen participation has increased. Targets are set for participation, retention and achievement of specific groups of learners at strategic level, and in areas of learning but not at course level. The provider has increased the participation of learners from minority ethnic groups from 27 per cent in 2004-05 to 35 per cent this term. Similarly, recruitment of men has increased from 27 per cent to 34 per cent. The number of learners in adult and community learning provision has risen by 20 per cent this term.

57. **WMBC has not provided effective strategic direction for the provider.** Since its decision to merge accredited and non-accredited provision within the college in 2004, the authority has not communicated a clear direction or strategy for the development of adult and community learning in the borough. There are poor understandings of the authority's role in providing courses among learners and tutors. Many tutors in community providers did not know that they were teaching on WMBC courses.

58. **Curriculum management is ineffective in community provision.** There are no effective measures in place to plan and develop courses. Only limited needs analysis work has been undertaken, and many community providers are resistant to borough-wide planning from the college. Tutors often work in isolation, and there are insufficient arrangements in place to support the sharing of good practice within and across areas of learning. In some areas of learning there is no curriculum management, and in some, fractional appointments have recently been made. The provider recognised this weakness in the self-assessment report and has set out some measures to deal with the problem in the development plan.

59. **The curriculum is not used sufficiently to promote equality of opportunity in adult and community learning provision.** The community associations determine the curriculum offer which is historical. There is insufficient needs analysis. Marketing materials for modern foreign languages classes use stereotypical images. The curriculum offer and the individual learning programmes do not sufficiently reflect the rich cultural diversity of the area.

60. Quality improvement in directly delivered provision is broadly satisfactory. **However, in adult and community learning quality improvement is inadequate.** The provider has worked effectively over the past 12 months to make improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning on the courses offered by the community associations. The quality policy is updated annually, and contains clear descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of staff including the governing body and part-time tutors. In addition, it documents the sources of data used to monitor quality improvement. The governing body is active in supporting quality improvements.

61. **Community association centre heads are not always supportive of the quality improvement arrangements implemented by the provider.** Some tutors are not implementing the process of recognising and recording progress and achievement. Course reviews are not used by all tutors on adult and community learning courses. The contract with community associations focuses on compliance with no clear statement on the provider's minimum quality standards with regard to teaching and learning. The provider's audits of paperwork have successfully improved compliance by 45 per cent. However, this has not yet had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

62. **There is insufficient sharing of good practice between the provider and the community associations.** Curriculum teams within the accredited provision hold regular team meetings and staff development events to share good practice. However, in the non-accredited provision, there are no systematic mechanisms for this to happen.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective measures to deal with organisational change
- good internal communications
- good partnership working
- good staff development
- good use of learner support funding
- increasing recruitment of learners from under-represented groups on accredited courses

Weaknesses

- ineffective strategic direction from LEA
- inadequate management of adult and community learning provision
- insufficient use of curriculum to promote equality of opportunity in adult and community learning provision
- inadequate compliance with quality improvement measures in adult and community learning provision
- insufficient sharing of good practice in adult and community learning provision

Information and communications technology

ICT for users

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievement of qualifications on accredited courses
- good range of learning venues to meet community needs
- good physical resources

Weaknesses

- slow progress in some learning sessions
- many poor-quality teaching and learning resources

Leisure, travel and tourism

Sport, leisure and recreation

Grade 4

Strengths

- good health and social benefits for some learners
- some good implementation of initiatives to promote health and fitness across the community

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching
- insufficient assessment and monitoring of learners' progress
- poor attention to health and safety in community venues
- inadequate planning and co-ordination of the curriculum
- poor quality assurance arrangements

Arts, media and publishing

Strengths

- good progress by new learners
- good celebration of learners' work
- good progression routes in dance

Weaknesses

- poor curriculum planning
- insufficient use of quality improvement systems

Languages, literature and culture

Strengths

- good pass rates in GCSE English
- very supportive learning environment
- innovative and effective use of information learning technology (ILT) in pilot project

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching and learning
- inadequate setting and monitoring of learning goals in adult and community learning
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination in adult and community learning

Preparation for life and work

ESOL

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievement of learning goals
- good initial assessment, guidance and support
- good accommodation and resources at main centre

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' oral skills

- narrow range of provision in some venues
- insufficient expertise of some tutors in teaching ESOL

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievements
- particularly wide range of courses
- particularly effective numeracy provision
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- insufficient literacy and numeracy development on vocational courses
- insufficient monitoring of learning

Independent living and leisure skills

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good resources
- inclusive planning of the provision
- good use of course reviews to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- narrow range of targets on learning plans
- insufficient co-ordination of learning programmes
- insufficient specialist training for staff

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WALSALL LEA:

- the friendly and supportive staff
- the number of classes available locally
- the opportunity to develop self-confidence and to make new friends
- the crèche and childcare provision
- the ways the college celebrates success
- daytime classes
- informal approach to learning without pressure of accreditation

WHAT LEARNERS THINK WALSALL LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the standard of accommodation and rooms used for some classes
- the co-operation between some local centres and course tutors
- the provision of appropriate eating facilities at the Whitehall centre
- the coverage of employment-related English in ESOL classes

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.
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DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- effective measures to deal with organisational change
- good internal communications
- good partnership working
- good staff development
- good use of learner support funding
- increasing recruitment of learners from under-represented groups on accredited courses

Weaknesses

- ineffective strategic direction from LEA
- inadequate management of adult and community learning provision
- insufficient use of curriculum to promote equality of opportunity in adult and community learning provision
- inadequate compliance with quality improvement measures in adult and community learning provision
- insufficient sharing of good practice in adult and community learning provision

63. Managers at the provider have dealt effectively with organisational change following WMBC's decision to give the college responsibility for adult and community learning provision in August 2004. A very thorough monitoring and evaluation exercise was completed to assess the quality of the new provision and needs among the provider's 24 new partner organisations. Successful measures already in place to assure and improve the quality of direct delivery provision were quickly and successfully adapted for use in the non-accredited provision. A major audit of compliance with quality arrangements across all partner providers was carried out. The results were used well to carry out effective management activity on those providers needing most support and guidance. A comprehensive programme of teaching and learning observation was carried out and good support given to tutors as appropriate. A very clear and useful tutor toolkit was developed and copies distributed among all adult and community learning tutors employed by partner organisations. A broad range of well-planned staff development sessions was organised for adult and community learning tutors. The provider's management information team worked with adult and community learning provider partners to improve and develop learner data and record-keeping systems. A second comprehensive audit of quality compliance was conducted about eight months after the initial audit, and significant improvements were recorded. Good levels of training were given to provider partners where necessary. The provider has now stopped contracting with around one-fifth of the previous number of community providers whose performance was not improving despite support, and has taken on some of those aspects of provision directly. For all the remaining providers, new contracts and service level agreements have been issued which include clear quality improvement, performance and compliance targets.

64. There are good internal communications at the provider. Staff and middle managers are kept very well informed of the organisation's strategic direction and have a good understanding of the connections between their own work and that strategy. All staff have very good access to members of the senior management team, and there is very good morale in the organisation despite the considerable changes it has recently undergone. Course team leaders have a weekly individual meeting with the vice-principal in addition to weekly senior management team meetings and monthly meetings with the business manager to discuss budgets. There are frequent staff and team meetings, and decisions and action points are clearly recorded and communicated around the organisation. The college produces a useful and well-used monthly newsletter and there is a good intranet for staff. Members of the governing body are well known to staff and attend college social events and learner celebrations.

65. The provider has a range of good links with educational, social and community partners around the borough. The college is well regarded by partners in the community and is seen as a very useful broker in the region. There are constructive links with the skills for life managers at a local college of further education with effective joint-staff development activities to promote skills for life awareness. Work has also been carried out to improve educational progression for residents in some of the borough's most deprived wards as part of a New Deal for communities project. There are good links with some of the WMBC's other service areas, including libraries and catering. Work with the libraries has included the college taking on the running of a mobile ICT centre formerly run by the libraries service. The college developed a series of training programmes for borough catering employees who were finding it difficult to attend existing courses at the local college because of their shift patterns. The college also provides courses for school meals staff as part of the borough's healthier meals campaign. The provider has played an active part in the borough's lifelong learning alliance, including successful work with the local primary care health trust to develop skills for life provision for employees. As part of its work with the alliance, the college recently played an effective part in the planning of adult and community provision across the borough. There are good links with an education association in Walsall, and the college has played a major role in the development of workforce skills for teaching support staff. As part of its collaborative work with the education association in Walsall, the college has trained around 100 teaching assistants to level 2 or 3, and has provided training in literacy and numeracy for around 40 teaching assistants during the past two years.

66. The college has provided good development for its staff. There is a clear staff development strategy and policy, which set out objectives and responsibilities for the implementation of development activities. Following the takeover of community provision in 2004, the college provided an extensive range of staff training and development sessions. Training was offered for tutors, centre managers and team leaders in many aspects of quality improvement and management. Tutor training included sessions on lesson planning, schemes of work, differentiation, identification of literacy and numeracy needs, advice and guidance, and equal opportunities. Around 103 different development courses have been offered in the past 14 months. Sessions for tutors were run on a repeat basis on several weekdays, a number of evenings and during weekends, so that all staff would be able to attend. Tutors belonging to partner providers have been paid to attend key training sessions in support of the college's quality improvement priorities. Sessions are evaluated and the outcomes analysed by the college's senior managers. Teaching and

learning observation is closely linked to development, and tutors who have identified needs are well supported.

67. The LEA has not provided effective strategic direction for the college. Since its decision to merge accredited and non-accredited provision within the college in 2004, it has not communicated a clear direction or strategy for the development of adult and community learning in the borough. The principal of the college reports to the authority as one of the senior managers in the leisure and culture directorate, but links across the authority's departments are not used well. Targets are largely generated from and by the college, and managers of community associations and organisations do not recognise any clear direction set by the authority. The LEA has not fully supported managers in their efforts to bring about improvements in the community provision. There is poor understanding of the authority's role in providing courses among learners and tutors. Many tutors in community providers did not know that they were teaching on LEA courses. Learners do not know whether they have any means of comment or complaint to the LEA, and many college staff do not see any effective involvement in provision from the authority.

68. Direct delivery programmes, which account for around 75 per cent of provision, are generally satisfactorily managed. However, management of adult and community learning is inadequate. Despite some considerable progress in training managers and staff of partner organisations, there are no effective measures in place across all organisations to plan and develop courses. Some needs analysis work has been completed by some providers, but many community providers are still resistant to borough-wide planning from the college. Tutors in several providers work in isolation, and there are insufficient arrangements in place to support the sharing of good practice within and across areas of learning. In some areas of learning there is no curriculum management, though in some, fractional appointments have recently been made to rectify the weakness. The provider identified the overall ineffectiveness of curriculum management in partner organisations in the self-assessment report and has set out some effective measures to deal with the problem in the development plan.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

69. Good use is made of learner support funding in direct provision. The learner support fund is widely publicised as is the college discretionary fund. The free crèche at the Whitehall centre is supported by the fund. Learners are given a range of equipment and books to support their skills development, such as dictionaries in skills for life provision. Retention rates of those learners receiving support funding are significantly higher on skills for life and ICT courses, at between 7 and 10 per cent.

70. The provider has successfully increased recruitment of learners from under-represented groups into direct provision to widen participation. Targets are set for participation, retention and achievement of specific groups of learners at strategic level and in areas of learning, but not at course level. The provider has increased the participation of learners from minority ethnic groups from 27 per cent in 2004-05 to 35 per cent in 2005-06. Similarly, recruitment of men has increased from 27 per cent to 34 per cent, and for people with disabilities and learning difficulties from 14 per cent to 18 per cent. The provider has also been successful in increasing the number of learners in adult and community learning provision by 20 per cent this year. It contracted with six new community organisations to target learners in areas of high social and economic deprivation.

71. Equality of opportunity and diversity policies are satisfactory. There is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that cover equal opportunities, race equality, the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. These have also been adjusted accordingly for adult and community learning. Overall responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the principal and is overseen by the governing body. The race equality action plan for 2005-06 is used to identify priorities and implement improvements. Specific responsibility for actions set in the plan is clear. The provider has responded appropriately to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and has carried out an audit of its premises. Currently, one of the main learning centres is fully compliant and has good access for people with restricted mobility. The other learning centre has been reviewed and plans are advanced to install a lift. The community associations' premises generally have acceptable access.

72. Staff are provided with sufficient training on equality and diversity. Learners and staff have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. Managers and staff provide good personal and pastoral support to learners. The student handbook includes the learners' charter that lists their entitlements. Information and guidance is available in other languages other than English, large print and in an internationally recognised communication programme for people with communication and learning difficulties on request.

73. Literacy, numeracy and language support is insufficient in some areas. Arrangements for the initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy and language skills are not complete. For example, in ICT direct provision, there is no systematic identification of learners' specific literacy and numeracy support needs.

74. The curriculum is not used sufficiently to promote equality of opportunity in adult and community learning provision. Community associations determine the curriculum provided. However, there is insufficient analysis of learning needs in the communities by the provider. Learning materials do not meet the needs of all groups in the local area. The marketing materials for modern foreign languages classes use stereotypical images. The overall curriculum, and the individual learning programmes, does not sufficiently reflect the rich cultural diversity of the area. For example, there is only one course in art, media and publishing that successfully attracts more learners from minority ethnic groups. There is not enough family learning. At the time of inspection, only 8 per cent of the learners in adult and community learning provision are from minority ethnic groups.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 4

75. Quality improvement in the college's directly delivered provision, which accounts for around 75 per cent of activity, is broadly satisfactory. However, in the newer 25 per cent of provider-delivered community provision it is inadequate. Although the provider has worked hard over the past 12 months to make improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning on the courses offered by the community associations, some of the community-based providers have yet to comply with all aspects of its operation. The vice principal is responsible for quality improvement. The quality policy is updated annually. It contains clear descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of staff including the governing body and part-time tutors. In addition, it records the sources of data used to monitor quality improvement. The governing body is active in supporting quality improvements. The quality and student affairs committee meets three times annually to monitor these.

76. The observation of teaching and learning on accredited provision is satisfactory. It is monitored effectively by the vice principal. Tutors use the observation process to help them improve their service to learners. They are observed annually by team leaders and associate lecturers with new tutors having a higher level of monitoring. Tutors receive constructive feedback after each observation, although in ICT the inconsistent quality of learning resources was not identified. Staff development and, in the write to learn curriculum area mentoring, tackle areas for development. The scheme has helped tutors adopt a consistent approach to course files, schemes of work and lesson plans. Tutors use the course file to aid improvement and as a source of data for the course review process. The quality of course reviews is particularly good in independent living and leisure skills provision.

77. The monitoring of teaching and learning in community associations has identified those that do not have the capacity to develop. The provider has stopped contracting with seven out of 27 of the organisations it was working with in August 2004. Observation of teaching and learning on non-accredited provision was introduced in January 2005 to develop a consistency in paperwork and a minimum quality in the planning and delivery of learning. Although tutors are positive about the observation scheme, there is significant inconsistency in compliance. Adherence to satisfactory health and safety practices is a weakness in sport as is the inadequate use of learning objectives in modern foreign languages. Insufficient attention is given to alternative methods of assessing achievement. In addition, initial assessment is not systematically used to identify learners' skills. Although the four members of the observation team are not subject specialists, they have successfully supported improvements in some community associations. For example, comparing 31 tutors who were observed in 2004-05, and again this term, 16 per cent have improved their performance by one grade. However, the grade profile was higher in comparison to the grades given by inspectors in all areas of learning. The observation team has produced a well-designed tutors' toolkit to support quality improvement. It provides clear guidelines on course and lesson planning, recording progress and achievement and what makes a good lesson. The team also provides staff development and training in areas identified as needing development, for example, lesson planning, schemes of work, and meeting individual needs. However, attendance of part-time tutors from the community associations, at 25 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, is low, despite them being paid to attend.

78. Community association centre heads do not always support the quality improvement arrangements the provider is implementing. This has a negative impact on tutor compliance. There is still resistance to the introduction of procedures to support the process of recognising and recording progress and achievement. Course reviews are not yet used by all tutors on adult and community learning courses. The contract with community associations focuses on compliance with no clear statement on the provider's minimum quality standards with regard to teaching and learning. The provider's audits of paperwork have successfully improved compliance by 45 per cent. However, this has not yet had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

79. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between the provider and the community associations. Curriculum teams within the accredited provision of the provider hold regular team meetings and staff development events to share good practice. However, in the non-accredited provision there are no systematic mechanisms for this to take place.

80. Data is used effectively by the provider's staff to evaluate their performance. Retention and achievement data is used in course reviews. Attendance is now reviewed. On ESOL courses, the attendance rates have improved significantly from around 50 per cent to 87 per cent. Appraisal of staff is satisfactory in the direct provision, although targets are not set directly to manage tutor performance. Data is not used effectively in the community associations. Progression data is not reliable, and this was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

81. Self-assessment has been carried out annually since 2001. The process is inclusive at the provider. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process and understand the importance of course reviews in determining areas for improvement. The provider has a clear understanding of the priority areas for improvement. Learner and staff surveys are well established and are used as part of the self-assessment process. Improvements suggested by learners are acted upon, for example, the colour coding of doors at the Hawbush centre to improve access. Provision in the community associations was assessed through the provider's quality audit process, and observations of teaching and learning were introduced to build understanding of the process. However, adult and community learning tutors were not adequately involved in the process. The report section dealing with adult and community learning provision is insufficiently evaluative, and data is not used adequately to substantiate judgements. The development plan for adult and community learning does not include sufficient targets to measure performance.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information and communications technology

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning	739	3 3

82. In 2004-05, 1,287 learners enrolled on 111 ICT courses. Nineteen per cent of learners were aged under 34, 41 per cent of learners were aged between 34 and 65, and 39 per cent were aged over 55. Sixty-nine per cent of learners were women, and 22 per cent were from minority ethnic communities. Courses ranged from six hours to two years in length. At the time of inspection, 739 learners were enrolled on 86 further education courses and 203 learners on 22 adult and community learning courses. Programmes range from beginner through to level 1 and 2 nationally accredited courses. Non-accredited provision includes computer building, and card and calendar making. Eighty-five per cent of courses are held in the daytime, 15 per cent in the evening and one course at the weekend. Overall, 942 learners are enrolled on nationally accredited courses. The curriculum is managed by a full-time team leader. A team of 15 part-time tutors are directly employed by the college to teach on the ICT courses, which are held at 35 locations across the borough.

ICT for users

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievement of qualifications on accredited courses
- good range of learning venues to meet community needs
- good physical resources

Weaknesses

- slow progress in some learning sessions
- many poor-quality teaching and learning resources

Achievement and standards

83. Achievement of qualifications on accredited courses is good. The achievement rate has improved significantly from 24 per cent in 2002-03, to 80 per cent in 2004-05. Some learners are achieving their qualifications particularly quickly. For many learners, the courses are their first experience of adult learning and ICT. Many learners quickly become confident and competent users of ICT up to level 2. They use their new skills and qualifications in the community organisations to which they belong, to support their children's or grandchildren's education or to access e-mail and the internet. Learners make good use of the social and employment-related benefits derived from their learning. Learners gain good confidence through achieving qualifications.

84. Retention rates are good on both accredited and non-accredited courses. Attendance

at observed lessons was satisfactory at 77 per cent, with most learners arriving punctually. Tutors effectively monitor attendance and keep in frequent contact with learners through telephone calls, e-mail and letters. Learners often inform tutors of their intended absence.

85. The development of learners' confidence and skills is effective. However, a small number of tutors have low expectations of learners and do not encourage them to work to their full potential. Some tutors do not record learners' progress in sufficient detail. They frequently record the tasks completed but not the knowledge and skills acquired.

The quality of provision

86. There is a good range of learning venues to meet community needs. Initiatives to widen participation have been successful. At the time of inspection, 62 per cent of learners had been recruited from deprived wards. Many learners live within walking distance of their local learning centre. Most centres provide very good learning environments, such as Moxley People's Resource Centre, St Johns Church of England Primary School and Croft Street Community Association. There are a wide range of local outreach centres including a youth and community centre, schools, libraries and a mobile learning bus. Most centres are warm and inviting and encourage learners from older age groups who have been out of education for many years to consider enrolling on a course. Many learning centres are also used for other community activities. One centre provides free crèche facilities. Courses are delivered over a range of days and times to fit around learners' personal commitments.

87. Physical resources are good. In all cases, ICT equipment and software are good and meet industry standards. In most centres there are flat-screen monitors, document copy holders, black and white, and colour printers and, in some centres, scanners are also available. Furniture is also good, with sufficient desk space for each learner to lay out their paper learning materials, and collaborative work can be done away from computers. In three centres there are non-adjustable plastic chairs. There is much emphasis on health and safety and lesson plans and posters on walls show how to adjust computer screens and chairs. However, this guidance is not always followed in the lessons where some poor posture was observed. At some centres there is insufficient technical support available in the evenings to ensure that problems are solved quickly.

88. Twenty-five per cent of teaching was judged to be good, and teaching and learning is broadly satisfactory. In the more successful sessions, tutors used a variety of teaching styles, and used ILT effectively as a teaching tool. In the better sessions, the resources developed by tutors are very effective and reflect learners' interests. Good use is made of question and answer sessions to check learners' knowledge and understanding. For example, in one entry-level session, the tutor used a quiz to consolidate learning and identify areas for reinforcement. Some courses are inappropriately designed for learners over 55 years of age who want to acquire computing skills for non-vocational purposes.

89. Progress is slow in some lessons. In the poorer sessions, teaching and learning methods were insufficiently varied to suit the needs of learners. Assessment information is not used effectively and reviews do not focus sufficiently on learners' rates of progress and on recording their personal effectiveness. Tutors rely too much on learners' self-assessment of their own prior knowledge and experience. There are not enough enrichment activities for learners. Learners work at their own pace on applications such as word-processing, spreadsheets and databases. There is not enough use of group, subgroup and paired teaching. In many learning session, learners are not sufficiently challenged by their work

tasks. Learning plans are not used effectively to set individual learning goals and targets or to plan learning and additional support. Learning materials and objectives are not adapted to extend the skills of more able learners. In the less effective sessions, the pace of learning is too slow and the more able learners are provided with insufficient extension activities to develop their skills and knowledge.

90. There are many poor-quality teaching and learning resources used by tutors. Some schemes of work are poor and some session plans are not sufficiently detailed. Some tutors' planning documents comprise of only a list of awarding body objectives. There are many examples of poorly photocopied handouts given to learners, and, in a number of cases, out-of-date handouts referred to old versions of software. Too many tutors rely on pages photocopied from books. Some handouts contain hand-written sections which can be difficult to read.

Leadership and management

91. The curriculum is satisfactorily managed, but some aspects are not co-ordinated sufficiently to ensure that all staff have effective approaches to teaching and learning. The quality of session plans varies, even between staff providing the same courses, though most are satisfactory. Tutors in many of the centres produce their own learning resources, some of which are good, but many are poor.

92. Communications are good between managers and tutors. The sharing of good practice is being extended with the development of an electronic support system for learners. Three tutors are involved in the development of the ICT resources within this system.

93. Quality assurance is satisfactory overall. However, some course reviews pay insufficient attention to the rate at which learners complete their intended learning. Information is effectively collected by the information and guidance team, but is not always best used to plan the curriculum. Some aspects of quality assurance and improvement do not focus sufficiently on the learners' experience.

94. Observation of teaching and learning has been effective in raising the standards of learning, teaching and attainment, but inspectors gave lower grades for teaching and learning than those in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is thorough, but in places the report is not sufficiently analytical. Inspectors agreed with most of the report's strengths and weaknesses.

Leisure, travel and tourism**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	1,090	4 4

95. Walsall LEA currently provides 71 non-accredited sport, health and fitness-related courses including yoga, keep fit, Pilates, badminton and swimming. All courses are currently non-accredited, with the exception of a national pool lifeguard qualification. Five fitness courses are for those aged 40 and over, and discrete sessions are offered for men and women. Courses are offered at 20 venues by arrangement with a number of partner organisations, such as schools, and youth and community centres, across the area. Courses generally last between one and two hours with learners enrolling for an academic year, though paying fees to centres on a weekly or termly basis. Courses are offered during the day, evening and weekends. To date this term, there have been 1,355 enrolments by 1,090 learners. Seven per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, and 14 per cent are men. Fifty-three per cent of learners are currently 55 or over. Most classes are of mixed ability.

96. Fifty-one part-time tutors teach in this area and are employed by the college's partner community organisations. Of these, 52 per cent hold a recognised teaching qualification and 91 per cent hold a relevant sport and fitness-related qualification. There is no specialist curriculum manager responsible for the area.

Sport, leisure and recreation**Grade 4***Strengths*

- good health and social benefits for some learners
- some good implementation of initiatives to promote health and fitness across the community

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching
- insufficient assessment and monitoring of learners' progress
- poor attention to health and safety in community venues
- inadequate planning and co-ordination of the curriculum
- poor quality assurance arrangements

Achievement and standards

97. Some learners gain significant health and social benefits from attending sport, exercise and fitness courses. A number of learners indicated that their doctors had advised them to attend such classes to assist the prevention of, and rehabilitation from, illness and injury. Learners, particularly those who are older, in yoga and gentle exercise classes achieve a wide range of physical and mental benefits. In one yoga class, learners referred to improved suppleness, mobility, breathing, posture and relief from arthritis as well as benefits

in terms of stress relief and relaxation. In another gentle fitness class, elderly learners said how important the regular routine of attending classes with friends was in terms of motivating them to exercise and that there are no realistic alternatives for them. There are a large number of adult beginners' swimming classes available to help learners develop new skills and improve general fitness at the same time. However, such improvements were not evident in the poorer classes where learners were unable to maintain or improve health and fitness as effectively.

98. Retention is satisfactory at 73 per cent for 2004-05 and 89 per cent for the first term of 2005-06. Punctuality at classes is satisfactory. Attendance in observed classes was poor, at 64 per cent.

The quality of provision

99. Some good initiatives to promote health and fitness have been implemented across the community. Elderly learners are able to access classes designed to prevent or aid recovery from falls. The LEA supports a cardiac rehabilitation scheme of exercise that has been extended to help assist people that doctors have identified as at risk and would benefit from exercise. One community venue operates its own well-equipped gym in a deprived part of the borough. It provides affordable exercise facilities and is supervised by qualified instructors. Provision of classes across the borough is broadly satisfactory, although there is a lack of progression opportunities. Many learners repeat classes, sometimes for many years.

100. Teaching is inadequate. Thirty-five per cent of observed classes were graded inadequate. Some lessons are poorly planned, and lesson plans and schemes of work are poorly developed or not completed by tutors. The weaker courses are characterised by poor differentiation and attention to the needs of all learners, poor choice of level of exercise for the class, no or incorrect demonstration of technique by the tutor, and failure to correct learners practising poor posture and technique.

101. Assessment and monitoring of learner progress is insufficient. Correct induction procedures are not always fully adhered to with learners not being given sufficient information about the venue, including health and safety guidance. Initial assessment of learners' starting point on the programme and target-setting is unsatisfactory and is largely based on a self-assessment process. Health screening forms have been introduced but are not currently being completed by all tutors for all learners. Some good examples of monitoring and recording learners' progress have been adopted. For example, in some swimming classes, a national scheme to encourage adult beginners is used. This allows for the setting of detailed and flexible targets, which are recorded on a pocket-sized card, and lead to five levels of certification. However, monitoring learners' progress is mostly informal and ongoing during classes and this is generally poorly recorded. The generic paperwork provided by the LEA does not best suit tutors' and learners' needs in many cases.

Leadership and management

102. Attention to health and safety in community venues is poor. In some venues, learners have to rearrange furniture before the class can take place. In some multi-purpose rooms space for activities is insufficient and, on occasions, furniture is poorly stored. Electrical equipment brought in by part-time tutors is not routinely safety tested. Access for the

emergency services is not always maintained. At one venue, inappropriately parked vehicles blocked ambulance access to the swimming pool. Unsafe practices were demonstrated in a number of classes. These included no differentiation between learners, sometimes including children, and insufficient attention to correct posture and joint movement.

103. Planning and co-ordination of the curriculum are inadequate. Although a post has been recently advertised, no manager responsible for the curriculum area has been appointed. Strategic planning of the curriculum does not take place and community venues largely decide their own curriculum offer linked to the needs and resources in their local area. Many courses merely represent what has been offered historically. There is no evidence of any research having been carried out across the borough to find out what provision is currently available and what learners would like to do. Co-ordination between the LEA and community venues, and between the venues themselves is poor. A number of timetabled classes during the week of inspection either did not take place or were cancelled at short notice. No central system for providing cover for absences is in operation. Effective lines of communication with part-time tutors have yet to be established. Regular staff meetings to bring together sport and fitness staff do not take place and some tutors feel unsupported. For example, some classes are too large for venues and exceed recommended class sizes and some tutors have concerns about resources, facilities, and health and safety. Equality of opportunity is poorly promoted in the community venues and poorly understood by some tutors. The participation level by minority ethnic learners was 5 per cent during inspection and 7.4 per cent overall in 2004-05, whereas minority ethnic groups make up over 13 per cent of the local population. Men comprised 10 per cent of learners during inspection and 14 per cent of learners in 2004-05. No specific strategies are in place to tackle this imbalance.

104. Although facilities and resources are broadly satisfactory, there is currently no system in place to risk assess activities as well as buildings or to formally involve subject-specialist tutors in this process. Most staff are appropriately qualified in terms of occupational competence. However, few tutors are currently first aid trained.

105. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. Although a significant number of observations of teaching and learning have been completed, curriculum specialists have not carried these out. Some grading is too high and the overall profile varies significantly from inspectors' observations. The self-assessment report is not self-critical and fails to recognise key weaknesses identified during inspection. Several strengths stated in the self-assessment report were identified as weaknesses by inspectors. Tutors were not involved in the self-assessment process and there is no system of course evaluation in place to contribute to the self-assessment process. Formal feedback from learners to improve provision is not currently collected. There is no forum for sharing good practice.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Dance Adult and community learning	367	3
Music Adult and community learning	27	3
Fine arts Adult and community learning	241	3
Crafts Adult and community learning	488	3

106. Currently 1,123 learners are on a total of 86 visual and performing art courses including art, dance, music and craft. All courses are non-accredited. In 2004-05, 1,954 learners enrolled on arts courses, including painting and drawing, stained glass, dressmaking, digital camera work and tap, line, salsa and belly dancing.

107. Twenty subcontractors deliver the courses over a large geographical area. Courses are offered in the day, evening and at weekends and range from four to 30 weeks in duration. There are 42 part-time tutors, of whom 36 hold subject-specific qualifications and 25 hold a teaching qualification. The area is managed by the centre managers of the community associations and organisations who deliver the courses.

Strengths

- good progress by new learners
- good celebration of learners' work
- good progression routes in dance

Weaknesses

- poor curriculum planning
- insufficient use of quality improvement systems

Achievement and standards

108. New learners make good progress, achieving effective skills' development in their practical work, and quickly gaining a range of skills and techniques. Learners' practical demonstrations show good progress made from beginner stage to more advanced work. On digital camera courses learners' work is of a good standard and the tutor makes good use of differentiation techniques. For example, given the task of transferring seasonal images to a Christmas card, some learners use their own photographs and others successfully download appropriate images from the internet. In sugarcraft, new learners have quickly adapted techniques to class projects. There is good peer support and effective use of paired work with learners advising each other on aspects of sewing and digital camera use. Learners develop confidence in their abilities in salsa dancing classes and effectively use end-of-class demonstrations to review their learning. Similarly, line dancers make fast progress through relatively simple steps to learn and move onto more

complex routines. Learners with no previous experience develop diverse skills and work on complex tasks. They also use their skills in their everyday lives. For example, some learners prepare cards for sale in aid of charities. Some learners in art classes reach a professional standard. In some art classes, learners experiment with a wide range of media such as acrylics, watercolour, charcoal and crayon. In a sewing class learners with no experience of a sewing machine or hand sewing made complex patchwork quilts and used fabrics for dressmaking.

109. There is good celebration of learners' work. Learners' completed work is displayed at a number of centres. For example, to celebrate a centre's 30th anniversary year, the work of over 200 learners was placed in a public art and craft exhibition. One centre has formalised achievement by creating an annual graduation ceremony at the local town hall. At another centre, learners are rewarded with certificates of achievement to record successful completion of their 10-week courses. Sugarcraft learners have been invited to work as a part of a regional celebration in 2006, organised by the British Sugarcraft Guild and funded by the National Lottery, on a local history theme. In most centres there is photographic evidence of learners' skills' development. Learners also visit craft exhibitions to stimulate their own ideas, such as learners on art courses attending an annual visit to London's galleries. They are voluntarily accompanied by their tutor and the travel costs are paid for themselves. Many learners report that the courses and celebration events have been good for socialising and meeting new people, especially for retired learners. Working relationships between tutors and learners are good.

110. Learners are able to progress to different ability levels in dance. Line dancing at one centre has proved so popular that the tutor now runs classes at three different levels. In Salsa dancing at another centre, learners can choose either beginner or improver levels. This allows for learners who attend over a number of years to achieve a higher standard and to try more difficult dance routines and practice and improve their techniques. Two belly dancing classes offer progression routes at two centres.

111. Retention and achievement in 2004-05 was 73 per cent. On the week of inspection attendance at classes observed was 66 per cent, but the provider figures record a higher average of 81 per cent for the term to date.

The quality of provision

112. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better classes there are examples of challenging tasks being set for learners to achieve such as learning a new dance style, for example Rumba, or a new craft technique, for example, Iris folding for card making and trapunting techniques in patchwork. However, in the poorer classes, learners are not taught basic techniques to support ongoing projects.

113. In most centres resources are satisfactory. However, a patchwork class with 15 learners takes place in a room that is too small given the nature of the activity. Most dance tutors provide their own music on CD to accompany dance routines. A line dance tutor had a very effective and practical head microphone, which she has provided herself, for calling out dance steps over the music.

114. Support and guidance is satisfactory. Tutors give effective discreet support in lessons to individual learners. Those with impaired sight are given a larger screen on which to work.

115. There is adequate attention to learners' numeracy and literacy needs across the provision. For example, in dance classes there is good use of counting mechanisms to produce dance routines. In sewing classes and in patchwork quilting, learners measured fabric and differing shapes.

116. Curriculum planning is poor. Of all the classes on offer, only 1 per cent represented the ethnicity and cultural diversity of the borough. There are insufficient opportunities for learners to progress to more advanced work in art classes and some learners take the same courses repeatedly while others move to a different level in the same class. These more experienced learners are not provided with sufficiently challenging activities. Traditional subjects are offered annually, although some taster classes are on offer at some of the providers' centres. There is no subject-specific curriculum specialist in post and insufficient cross-centre planning or allocation of courses. The provision in the arts, crafts, media, publishing and the performing arts does not extend to include, for example, song, drama and culturally specific courses.

Leadership and management

117. New quality improvement initiatives to improve lesson planning, schemes of work and individual learning, have not been implemented by all tutors. Despite the range of staff development offered to tutors at a variety of times and days, some have still not accepted the invitation to attend training. There is in some cases a resistance to comply with the provider's directives and a poor understanding of written lesson planning and the use of individual learning plans. In some cases, initial assessment is used but is not always done so appropriately. Recording of learner progress is not in place in all courses. Some tutors have devised their own appropriate mechanisms for recording progress. For example, in Victorian crafts, the tutor photographs learners' work, and in a card-making session, work was photographed in preparation for assessment. The lesson plans incorporated previous examples of work in progress. This example of good practice has been shared between centres but the sharing of good practice does not regularly take place.

118. The self-assessment report was largely accurate in its identification of weaknesses in the provision. Inspectors found most teaching and learning to be satisfactory with some good or better sessions. The college identified generally the same profile of good or better teaching. However, inspectors identified a higher number of unsatisfactory lessons than those that had been assessed by the provider's quality team.

Languages, literature and culture**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Language, literature and culture of the British Isles</i> Adult and community learning	8	4
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning	324	4

119. At time of inspection, there were 326 enrolments and 324 learners on 26 modern foreign language courses and eight learners on two GCSE English courses. Overall 84 per cent of provision is in the evening. Modern foreign languages are offered at nine community centres and GCSE English is run at the main sites of the college. French and Spanish are the most popular languages and together account for 77 per cent of the provision. German, Italian, and Welsh are also offered. Thirty-eight per cent of the courses are for beginners and 23 per cent are conversation classes. Spanish is offered from beginners to intermediate level, and French is offered from beginners to advanced level, though this range is not available in all centres.

120. Courses run for two hours a week, between 10 and 30 weeks a year for non-accredited provision, and 35 weeks a year for accredited provision. Sixty-five per cent are female learners, 53 per cent are aged 45 to 64, 3 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 4 per cent of learners have a disability. There are 19 part-time language tutors who are managed by community centres and two tutors who teach GCSE English, managed by the basic skills manager. The provider has recently appointed a part-time curriculum leader for two days a week.

Strengths

- good pass rates in GCSE English
- very supportive learning environment
- innovative and effective use of information learning technology (ILT) in pilot project

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching and learning
- inadequate setting and monitoring of learning goals in adult and community learning
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination in adult and community learning

Achievement and standards

121. Pass rates for GCSE English courses at grade C or above are good. Ninety-one per cent of learners who entered for the higher level in 2004-05 achieved grade C or above and the overall pass rate at these grades is 79 per cent.

122. Attainment in most of the learning sessions observed is satisfactory overall. Some modern foreign language learners speak with fluency and demonstrate appropriate levels of comprehension. Learners make progress and gain confidence. In modern foreign languages classes where tutors and learners used English extensively, learners were more

hesitant about speaking the foreign languages and for some progress is inadequate.

123. Community centres did not record achievement of learning for 2004-05. Retention is satisfactory across the area. The retention rate for GCSE English in 2004-05 was 76 per cent. The retention rate for non-accredited courses in 2004-05 was 71 per cent.

The quality of provision

124. The college, community centres and associations provide a very supportive learning environment. Learners make effective use of the friendly, informal atmosphere of the learning sessions. Some learner groups have worked together for several terms and learners provide each other with considerable support and confidence. The daytime provision enables many older learners to attend the provision.

125. An innovative and effective pilot project is exploring the use of ILT to deliver languages. Learners have been issued with MP3 players on which they download speaking and listening exercises from computers and practise these at home. They will be able to e-mail their speaking exercises back to their tutor for assessment. This project enables learners to develop independent learning skills and gives them greater flexibility. For example, a learner who is unable to attend learning sessions will be able to keep in touch with the course by e-mail.

126. Resources are satisfactory. Rooms are generally adequate and some are good. Resources such as video players can be booked in centres and some courses have access to good ILT equipment. Eighty-one per cent of tutors have an appropriate teaching qualification.

127. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The provision attracts new learners with 63 per cent of learners new to the provision. However, the area does not recruit sufficiently from under-represented groups. Only 3 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The range of provision is adequate. French is offered from beginners' to advanced level, and Spanish is offered from beginners' to intermediate level. German, Italian and Welsh are also offered. In four of the eight centres, where modern foreign languages are offered, French, Spanish or both are provided at a range of levels. However, progression routes are not clearly planned across the provision in the borough. The provider does not offer heritage and community languages although these are offered by other providers in the borough.

128. Guidance and support are satisfactory. In one centre, learners are offered taster sessions and guidance staff are available to advise learners. In another centre, learners attended an open evening and a useful induction session. GCSE English learners are given a guidance interview before the start of the course. However, learners are not always aware of the suitability of the level of language classes. Course leaflets give insufficient information about course content, levels or expectations of language courses.

129. Teaching and learning is inadequate. In some sessions, tutors use the foreign language effectively to conduct the business of the class. Learners are engaged with activities and contribute with confidence. However, in many sessions, tutors and learners do not sufficiently use the foreign language. Learners often do not have enough opportunities to use the language although spoken fluency is a frequent personal learning goal. In some classes, learners spend too much time translating words and short phrases

rather than using language purposefully. In many sessions, tutors use a poor range of teaching methods and resources. Insufficient use is made of visual aids and tutors often rely on photocopied handouts.

130. Setting and monitoring of learning outcomes is inadequate. Tutors do not set clear learning outcomes. When set, learning outcomes are often a list of topics with no indication of what learners should be able to do. Individual learning goals are recorded for some courses but do not always aid planning. Learners do not always understand these goals. Many tutors do not evaluate learning effectively. Assessment is often through short answer written tests, although learners' goals are generally to acquire speaking skills. Learners are not always given information on what they need to do to improve. Expectations of the outcomes for different levels are undefined. Many tutors do not fully understand the purpose of recording learning outcomes and some do not complete what they regard as unnecessary paperwork.

Leadership and management

131. There is insufficient curriculum co-ordination of the area among provider partners. For modern foreign languages, curriculum centres do not adequately plan the curriculum offer and do not offer progression routes across the provision. Community centres do not fully understand the starting points and outcomes for each level or of the meaning of descriptors such as conversation and intermediate in course titles.

132. Tutors often work in isolation and do not have sufficient opportunities to share good practice. Attendance at training sessions is low. Twenty-six per cent of language tutors attended training on session planning and 16 per cent attended training on individual learning plans. The provider has identified many of the issues of curriculum co-ordination in the area and has introduced a comprehensive scheme of lesson observations. A curriculum co-ordinator has recently been appointed to provide tutor support and develop resources and e-learning. However, the job description of the curriculum co-ordinator does not fully clarify the relative responsibilities of the curriculum co-ordinator and heads of community centres. A system has been set up to allow tutors to communicate with each other and share resources, though this is not yet in operation. There has not yet been sufficient time for these initiatives to have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

133. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Adequate arrangements are made to provide access for learners with restricted mobility. There is no clear strategy to attract under-represented groups into languages courses. Information leaflets for languages courses do not make adequate use of appropriate illustrations.

134. Quality improvement is satisfactory. A comprehensive system of annual observations of teaching and learning has been set up. Observations are followed by action-planning for improvement by the observer and the tutor. New tutors have an ungraded observation in their first term. These observations are not carried out by subject specialists. Observation grades are on average a grade higher than grades given during inspection. Tutors in the community centres are not involved in self-assessment of the area of learning. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify most of the weaknesses found during inspection.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	389	3 3
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	281	3 2
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	300	3 3

135. Three hundred and eighty-nine learners are enrolled on 40 ESOL courses. Of these, 297 learners are at the main Whitehall site on 31 courses and 92 are in community venues on nine courses. At the Whitehall centre, the provider offers courses at levels ranging from pre-entry to level 2. At other centres, courses are at lower levels and often have mixed-ability learners. Many learners on entry-level courses are actively looking for employment or are already in employment and aiming to improve their employability. In 2004-05 there were 627 learners and 1,546 enrolments. Learners enrol on a termly basis and follow courses of between two and eight hours per week. As well as general courses, learners can do courses in ESOL with ICT, sewing and healthy eating. Courses in the main site and community venues are in the mornings and afternoons and in the main site in the evenings. There are eight community venues where courses are being held. There is a full-time ESOL manager, a part-time ESOL team leader, two part-time associate lecturers and 21 part-time tutors.

136. Most of the learners enrolled on the 61 independent living and leisure skills programmes attend between one and three courses that last between two and four hours a week. Twelve of the courses are held for specific target groups of learners, such as people attending day centres or people who require support and training after a specific illness such as a stroke. More general courses for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide development in subjects such as art, drama and music, sewing, cooking, computer skills, horticulture and sports studies. Approximately 250 learners are currently working towards modules of a national award in independent living. Learners also receive an internal certificate. Thirty-three learners are working towards a certificate at level 1 or 2 in computing literacy and seven learners are currently working towards a certificate in basic food hygiene. A team leader and an assistant team leader manage these programmes and work with four assistant lecturers and 17 part-time tutors.

137. Currently 281 learners are enrolled on 55 literacy and numeracy courses. All courses are funded through the further education funding stream. Most courses run for just under two hours a week for 35 weeks. Courses are provided at the main site in Hawbush and seven outreach centres in community locations. Classes are held during the daytime, twilight and in the evenings. Sixty-four per cent of the provision is literacy and 36 per cent is numeracy. Courses are from entry level to GCSE and key skills in literacy and numeracy. Twenty-three per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, 31 per cent are men and 18 per cent have a declared disability. Twenty-one learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are receiving additional learning support. Learners take entry-level qualifications, national tests at levels 1 and 2, GCSE in maths or English and key skills, communication or

application of number at levels 1 and 2. One full-time and 20 part-time staff teach on the programmes. The area is managed by a full-time manager.

ESOL

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievement of learning goals
- good initial assessment, guidance and support
- good accommodation and resources at main centre

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' oral skills
- narrow range of provision in some venues
- insufficient expertise of some tutors in teaching ESOL

Achievement and standards

138. Achievement of learning goals is good. All current learners are on accredited courses. The overall retention rate for 2004-05 was 88 per cent and in 2003-04 was 77 per cent. In 2004-05, 250 learners entered for ESOL examinations and a further 31 took examinations at pre-entry level. There was a good overall pass rate of 90 per cent. Candidates were entered at levels entry 1, entry 2, level 1 and level 2. The pass rates for the 11 learners entered for an entry level 3 examination in using ICT, the 16 learners entered for level 1 ESOL/childcare and the one candidate on the English for office skills examination was 100 per cent.

139. Most learners gain skills relevant to their needs. At pre-entry level, learners acquire language skills relevant to their everyday lives and, at other levels, learners develop their existing skills to help them to better integrate into the local community. Attendance is satisfactory at 78 per cent and has improved since last year.

The quality of provision

140. Initial assessment, guidance and support for learners are good. At the Whitehall centre, specialised staff provide confidential and supportive advice for potential learners. Learners who wish to enrol are given an effective diagnostic test by a designated member of the teaching team and registered for a course at the appropriate level according to their needs and availabilities. Information from the initial interview and the diagnostic test is entered in a learner record booklet which assists the tutor, in negotiation with the learner, to establish group and individual learning goals. Tutors and learners record progress made in this booklet and there are separate learner diaries for learners to keep their own record of learning.

141. Accommodation in the main centre is good. The rooms are comfortable, warm and well lit. The centre has good ICT facilities and paper-based resources for use in classes. Learners can use an open access library where they sign out simplified reading material and read daily newspapers. In the main hall and classrooms are eye-catching celebrations of learners' work on the noticeboard. The ESOL and sewing course has a particularly effective display board with examples of learners' sewing skills and written work. A photo display of

learners receiving their certificates from the mayor at a ceremony held at a community centre, further celebrates learners' achievements.

142. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons follow appropriate schemes of work. Most tutors establish good working relationships with their learners and create a friendly, supportive classroom atmosphere where learners have the security and confidence to practise their English.

143. There is insufficient development of learners' oral skills. In many learning sessions, tutors spend too much time talking and do not allow learners to fully practise the target language. There are not enough pair or group work activities and tutors often go through exercises with the whole class, frequently providing the correct answers for the learners, and allowing no opportunity for the learners to practise the target language. In the better classes, tutors plan work for different levels and include appropriate learning activities.

144. There is a narrow range of provision in other community venues. Nine courses run in these centres. Classes are at lower levels and there are groups with mixed abilities. On one course there are learners at entry 1 and entry 3 being taught separately in the same room by a tutor and a support tutor. Management is taking steps to resolve this situation by creating two separate classes in the next term. Community courses are run in partnership with a number of organisations and agencies. These links have facilitated the use of venues that attract hard-to-reach learners. Programmes are run in primary schools, a mosque, two Sure Start centres and a women's centre. All courses outside the main centre are for women only with the exception of one men-only course held in a mosque. Teaching rooms at some of these centres are basic, but are equipped with whiteboards or flipcharts and have storage facilities for tutors resources.

Leadership and management

145. There is a comprehensive programme of tutor observations. All new tutors are observed within a few weeks of starting to offer them support and guidance. Full appraisals are carried out each year and are well recorded. There are effective communications between the ESOL management and team with regular meetings and development sessions. The paper-based systems for recording individual learning plans, progress and achievement, schemes of work, lesson plans and tutor records are well constructed and support teaching and learning. All staff in the ESOL team contributed to the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with some of the weaknesses and the strength relating to achievement, but found other strengths to be overstated. Inspectors agreed with the overall grade for provision.

146. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Several tutors speak the community languages. Information on diversity is included in the learner records. Materials promoting cultural diversity are displayed in the main centre. Equal opportunities training is included in the induction programme for new tutors.

147. Some tutors have insufficient expertise in teaching ESOL. A number of well-qualified tutors have recently left the service. The provider has had difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced tutors. New tutors do not have basic ESOL core curriculum training. Management is aware of this and had planned a two-day training session with an external provider. This was cancelled at short notice and is being rescheduled. Some tutors do not have an ESOL-specific qualification, but are either working towards one or

planning to take one.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievements
- particularly wide range of courses
- particularly effective numeracy provision
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- insufficient literacy and numeracy development on vocational courses
- insufficient monitoring of learning

Achievement and standards

148. Achievement rates in literacy and numeracy are good. In 2004-05, success rates in adult literacy and numeracy national tests at level 1 and 2 were 84 per cent and 79 per cent respectively. Increasing numbers of learners are entered for externally accredited qualifications. Learners gain in confidence and progress on to higher-level literacy or numeracy, key skills or GCSE courses. Learners on other professional courses, such as the classroom assistants' course, are better equipped to stay on their course through improved literacy and numeracy skills gained on these courses.

149. Retention and attendance are satisfactory. The standard of learners' work is good. However, some learners on entry level and vocational courses have insufficient opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in relevant adult contexts.

The quality of provision

150. The range of courses is particularly wide. In addition to the literacy and numeracy courses from entry level to level 2, other vocational courses, like English and IT, and an office skills course, help learners take up employment in vocational areas. One learner who took the office course is now working for the provider as a receptionist. Learners can now progress to key skills and application of number courses at levels 1, 2 and 3, to develop their writing and number skills at higher levels.

151. Numeracy provision is particularly effective. Learners with poor previous experiences of mathematics are successfully engaged and make rapid progress in achieving their goals. One learner achieved his level 2 numeracy after attending three weeks of the course. The three-hour mathematics workshop allows adult learners to access numeracy at any time during this period and receive support on an individual basis from the tutor. The workshop is staffed by an experienced tutor. All learners work through their individual learning plans and seek help as and when needed. A variety of methods are used to explain complex mathematical concepts and algebraic problems. Many learners consolidate work done in the class through extensive work at home which they enjoy. Learners learn to work independently. The tutor monitors learners' progress through detailed records. Different shaped packaging is used to make direct links between wooden shapes and consumer packaging. Tutors are very aware of individual needs and provide appropriate support to

achieve numeracy qualifications.

152. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some outstanding learning sessions. In better sessions, learners are fully engaged and are set interesting tasks relevant to their needs. For example in one session, learners worked on homonyms and discussed the various different meanings of individual words. All learners understand the different meaning and pronunciation of similarly spelt words. In a few outstanding sessions, work related to the same topic is differentiated for learners with varied abilities. Tutors are fully aware of individual needs and plan for differentiation. Individual learning plans are used well to monitor progress. However, in satisfactory sessions, there is too much use of worksheets and much of the work is not given an adult context relevant to learners' lives. Learners do not have an opportunity to apply their learning in meaningful contexts or situations. In weaker learning sessions learners are involved in separate activities rather than working towards clear learning objectives.

153. Resources are satisfactory. A range of dictionaries, books and games are available for use by learners and tutors. Computers are available and used in some classes. Interactive whiteboards are installed in two classrooms and staff have recently been trained to use it. Rooms on the main site are conducive to learning with good displays on the walls.

154. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. A dedicated guidance worker is attached to the literacy and numeracy provision. Most learners have a guidance interview before enrolling on a course. Initial and diagnostic assessment is conducted by the subject tutors. This information is used to place the learner on the appropriate course. Guidance workers also interview learners after the start of the course to ensure that the learner is on the right course. However, exit interviews are not always done at the end of the course.

155. On some vocational courses, there is insufficient development of literacy and numeracy skills. Not enough work is done to develop subject-related vocabulary and improve learners' reading, writing and numeracy skills through the vocational curriculum. Learners are not encouraged to read and follow instructions in recipes or calculate amounts needed for cooking. Specific terminology covered in theory lessons is not reinforced in practical sessions. Learners in IT sessions do not make use of the internet to build on their reading skills through researching topics of interest to them. There is insufficient correction of grammar in spoken and written English in some sessions, and many learners write as they speak in their local dialect. Tutors do not always correct grammar errors of ESOL learners in spoken English.

156. There is insufficient monitoring of learning. Too few checks on learning are carried out to identify if learners have understood concepts and developed the skills required to apply in other contexts. For example, in some ICT sessions, there is insufficient review of the steps needed to do tasks such as inserting pictures in a text. Some learners depend too much on help from the tutor and are unable to do some tasks independently.

Leadership and management

157. Management of literacy and numeracy is good. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced to teach literacy and numeracy. Four new staff have completed the subject-specific level 4 qualification. A good mentoring system exists to support new staff. Experienced staff are allocated new tutors for support, advice and guidance on teaching and learning and resources. A well-established system to observe teaching and learning

exists. Staff receive feedback after observations and an action plan is drawn up to meet tutor needs. The internal observations did not identify any weak teaching, although the inspection did. Courses are regularly reviewed and improvements are made taking into consideration staff and learners' views. There is ongoing curriculum development. For example, key skills in communication and application of number have been introduced to enable learners to focus on developing writing skills and applying numbers in real-life or work contexts. New centres are sought to develop and deliver literacy and numeracy in schools and libraries. Internal and external verification procedures are effective and well managed. There is satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity. The provision is inclusive and staff are sensitive to learners' needs. The self-assessment report is largely accurate for this contributory area of learning.

Independent living and leisure skills

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good resources
- inclusive planning of the provision
- good use of course reviews to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- narrow range of targets on learning plans
- insufficient co-ordination of learning programmes
- insufficient specialist training for staff

Achievement and standards

158. Development of learners' skills is good. Learners participate well and to a high standard in a good range of interesting projects and produce work such as creative artwork and pottery, detailed tapestry and embroidery, well-prepared meals and lively mimes and dance routines. Staff and learners use cameras well to provide learners with permanent records of their achievements. Learners also develop a good understanding of some specialist concepts and technical terms. For example in art, some learners can identify primary colours and a very good range of shapes, and are aware of different drawing and painting styles such as landscapes, still life and pop art. Learners also develop good personal and social skills, such as teamwork and the ability to follow and remember instructions. They develop a good understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and the standards of behaviour are particularly good. This is a significant achievement for some learners.

159. The provider celebrates learners' achievements well at award ceremonies and through displays of their work at the college in Hawbush. Recent successes for learners on courses specifically for people who have had a stroke include a national award presented by staff from the Victoria and Albert museum and a local award in lifelong learning.

160. Retention rates were good in 2004-05, at 89 per cent. Nearly all learners who completed their programme achieved their main learning goal. Most of these learners achieve an external award at a basic level. However, this award does not adequately

recognise all the achievement of some learners working above entry level.

The quality of provision

161. Resources are good. Managers strictly adhere to the agreed maximum class size of eight learners on each programme and learners receive good individual support. An additional support tutor is allocated to most classes and they work well with learners and tutors to provide appropriate individual personal and learning support. Learners are provided with some particularly good visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning resources. For example, tutors teaching learners with complex needs use electronic sensory equipment very well to develop their ability to communicate in response to specific sounds, movement or lights. Some tutors are particularly thoughtful in the way they prepare the learning environment for each class. They carefully consider learners' preferences, as well as their background reading or research, when selecting background music or lighting, or designing wall displays. Some tutors use the computing facilities that are available in every room well to provide stimulating learning activities and help learners produce interesting records of their achievements. Practical learning materials are good. Tutors provide learners with a good choice of materials when they start a project and learners take pride in showing their work to other people.

162. Planning of the provision is inclusive. From the middle of the spring term, managers collect information from initial assessments, progress reviews and guidance interviews to identify learners' interests and preferences in courses they would like to attend. They use this information very well when identifying the curriculum to offer each year. Since September 2005, the provider has offered many of the courses in practical subjects at three different levels and has successfully created an appropriate range of progression routes within the department. Most courses are supplemented effectively by a good range of external visits to places such as museums, libraries and galleries. The provider has good links with partners and provides a good range of courses for specific groups of learners in day or residential centres and community venues, as well as provision for learners with specific disabilities. The provider has been successful in enabling learners to join its programmes throughout the year. The new half-termly introductory courses are well designed. They provide good induction training and a wide range of taster courses to help learners select a course to join when they are ready.

163. Some teaching is very good. Some tutors are particularly skilled at setting high expectations for learners and using imaginative and stimulating activities to help learners achieve high standards of work. They also develop and reinforce learners' background understanding in their subjects particularly well. Most learning sessions are well planned and managed, and learners participate well in a good range of relevant learning activities, including interesting discussions. However, some plans for courses are influenced too much by the curriculum specified by the external awarding body, with insufficient attention to the development needs of some learners. Some learners do not receive sufficiently constructive feedback on their performance during learning sessions. Generic risk assessments for each learning session are satisfactory, but they do not relate to individual learners sufficiently.

164. Individual learning plans have a narrow range of targets. Tutors negotiate primary learning goals well with learners. These relate well to practical activities and are broken down appropriately into milestones. However, some targets are not sufficiently challenging, especially for learners on advanced courses working towards a national award.

Learning plans and progress charts do not include learners' development needs or their progress in their social and personal skills. Although many learners make good progress in developing independent living skills, such as following safe working practices, working effectively in teams, and showing respect for other people, this progress is not recorded. Few profiles of learners and schemes of work include sufficient details of some learners' needs. For example, some learners on programmes for people who have had a stroke have identified that they are using the programme to help them improve their dexterity or practise talking again, but this information is not on their individual records. Similarly, although many learning sessions include the development of literacy and numeracy, their progress is not recorded adequately. Learners receive little feedback on their progress or permanent records of their achievements in these aspects of their learning programmes. The provider has identified that potential progression routes are not sufficiently recorded early enough or used sufficiently in planning of learning activities to prepare learners for next step. It also identifies that learners do not receive sufficient support, training and guidance to help them progress to employment.

165. Learning programmes are not sufficiently coordinated. Tutors working in independent living and leisure skills have recently begun to develop one learning record for each learner that contain the primary learning for all the courses they currently attend. However, tutors do not systematically share enough information about learners' progress or development. They do not routinely share their interpretation or analysis of learners' needs. Learners attend up to three courses, but these are primarily planned as separate programmes. For example, tutors teaching art do not know which literacy, numeracy or personal development skills their learners are working on in another course. A learner may be working on a skill, such as identifying shape, in more than one class at the same time. Tutors do not check that they are reinforcing learning appropriately in difference contexts.

Leadership and management

166. Curriculum co-ordination is satisfactory. Staff make good use of course reviews to improve the programmes for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Their evaluation of each programme is thorough and reflective, and their records of this process are constructive and objective. Managers collate these thoughts systematically and use them well when producing development plans. They consult well with relevant staff to negotiate proposals for improvement and development. Recent improvements have included the introduction of the learning record, courses at different levels and the half-termly introductory programme. Staff also provide good support for one another and use meetings well to share ideas and learning materials. Self-assessment is a similarly consultative process, and one that staff contribute to well throughout the year. Inspectors' judgements matched most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report for 2004-05.

167. Good support is provided to meet effectively learners' individual needs. Staff are particularly supportive and many learners receive good guidance in using appropriate and useful adaptive aids. The learning environment is very appropriate. Staff work very well with learners to create an environment of trust and mutual respect, and most learners develop very good skills in working with other people, including their fellow learners. However, although staff review their programmes very well, they are not sufficiently thorough when evaluating the effectiveness of the promotion of equality of opportunity.

168. There is insufficient specialist training for staff. Most staff have appropriate

qualifications in teaching and in their specialist subject. However, some staff, particularly those new to this area of work, do not have sufficient understanding of some disabilities and learning needs of people with learning difficulties. Some current staff have attended awareness training in autism, behaviour management, deaf awareness and introducing IT to adults. However, training in some of these subjects has not been offered since 2003. Some staff do not use their specialist understanding adequately when defining learners' learning needs and progress. Similarly, many tutors do not have sufficient expertise in teaching literacy and numeracy to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

