INSPECTION REPORT

Norfolk County Council's Adult Education Service

25 May 2005

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

• work-based learning for all people aged over 16
• provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
• **learndirect** provision
• Adult and Community Learning
• training funded by Jobcentre Plus
• education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Norfolk County Council's Adult Education Service (NAES) directly provides adult learning opportunities throughout the county and has no subcontracting arrangements. Funding is largely drawn from the Norfolk Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with additional funding for specific projects from sources such as the LSC's Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities and the European Social Fund.

2. In February 2005, the council's education and social services departments were reorganised to create a children's services directorate. NAES transferred from the education department to the department for cultural services. A new management structure for the service has been developed and partially implemented. The head of service is responsible to the head of cultural services and corporate resources, and is supported by a director of planning, four directors of operations and a project manager. Each director of operations is in charge of a geographical area, as well as having other service-wide strategic management and operational responsibilities. The geographical areas correspond with those used by the LSC for strategic area reviews and by the children's services directorate. Staff have yet to be appointed to a revised third tier of management. Currently there are 14 area managers, seven curriculum managers, and 23 curriculum support tutors. There are 1,045 sessional tutors and 48 learning support assistants. A county council cabinet member is responsible for adult education, and the annual adult learning plan is approved by the cabinet of the county council.

3. There are six area offices serving the greater Norwich conurbation and a further nine offices in the county. Courses take place in over 350 venues. In 2003-04, there were approximately 40,000 enrolments by 28,000 learners. The population of Norfolk is widely distributed and some of the smaller communities are poorly served by public transport. In contrast with more affluent areas, there are high levels of multiple deprivation in some wards in Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Thetford and Norwich, and areas of rural deprivation in the far west of the county and the northeastern coastal fringe. According to data from the Basic Skills Agency, 24 per cent of the county's population have poor literacy skills and 23 per cent poor numeracy skills. In the 2001 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups was identified as 1.6 per cent of the county's population. Recent years have seen significant increases in migrant workers and families from Portugal and Eastern Europe as well as from South East Asia and the Far East.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS   Grade 3

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Leadership and management and the arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The arrangements for quality improvement are inadequate. Provision is good in foundation, English, languages and communications, and business administration, management and professional programmes. It is satisfactory in sciences and mathematics, information and communications technology (ICT), health and social care, visual and performing arts and media, humanities, and family learning. The provision in hospitality, sport and leisure is

inadequate.

5. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** NAES carries out self-assessment annually and has improved the thoroughness of the process over time. The latest report is, to some degree, self-critical and evaluative. Most of the grades in the self-assessment report match those given by inspectors. However, some of the strengths identified are no more than normal practice, and additional weaknesses were identified at inspection.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** NAES has a detailed development plan with clear actions to improve quality. Some quality improvement procedures have yet to become fully established.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE:

- complete the implementation of the new management structure and support staff in their new roles
- maintain and further develop productive partnerships within cultural services and with children's services to widen participation in learning
- fully develop and implement procedures for quality improvement
- ensure the accuracy of data and improve its use in curriculum planning, course monitoring and evaluation
- remedy the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified in some areas of learning, including the recording of progress and achievement in non-accredited programmes
- actively promote the sharing of good practice, both within areas of learning and more widely across the service
- strengthen the monitoring and promotion of equality of opportunity
- improve arrangements for the appraisal of teaching staff and for continuing professional development

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

Sciences & mathematics		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas Adult and community learning	317	3

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Teacher/trainer awards		*2*
Adult and community learning	406	2

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		*3*
Adult and community learning	4,127	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		
Adult and community learning	5,517	4

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
Adult and community learning	278	3

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
Adult and community learning	4,674	3

Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
Adult and community learning	402	3

English, languages & communications		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
Adult and community learning	3,166	2

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		*3*
Adult and community learning	866	3
Literacy and numeracy		*2*
Adult and community learning	2,879	2
Independent living and leisure skills		*2*
Adult and community learning	842	2

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2,034	3

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. NAES has provision in all 11 of the LSC's areas of learning but some have few enrolments. Accredited and non-accredited programmes provide first-step learning opportunities to widen participation from non-traditional learners, alongside opportunities for personal development, professional development and skills updating. The areas inspected were science and mathematics, business administration, management and professional, ICT, hospitality, sport and leisure, health and social care, visual and performing arts and media, humanities, English, languages and communications, foundation programmes including discrete provision in literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), independent living and leisure skills, and family learning.

Number of inspectors	19
Number of inspection days	135
Number of learners interviewed	893
Number of staff interviewed	286
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	55
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	12

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Learners in most curriculum areas make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. In many cases they develop the confidence to apply their newly acquired skills in family, work-related and

wider social contexts, and to pursue further opportunities for study.

9. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory in sciences and mathematics. In general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics in 2003-04, half the learners achieved a grade C or above. Many learners start out with low levels of prior achievement and make good progress to become confident in discussing possible solutions to mathematical problems. Some GCSE science coursework is of a high standard.

10. **Achievement rates are very good on teaching assistants' programmes.** In 2003-04, the achievement rate was 92 per cent at level 2 and 93 per cent at level 3. Standards of work are good both on the teaching assistant and the **teacher/trainer** programmes. Learners apply their knowledge to make a more positive and professional contribution to supporting children and teachers in their schools. In 2003-04, retention and achievement rates on teacher/trainer programmes were poor. However, retention has significantly improved in 2004-05.

11. There is **good skills development in ICT.** Many learners use their new skills to help their children and grandchildren with schoolwork, write formal letters, produce personalised greeting cards and e-mail friends and relatives. The retention and achievement rates on most courses are satisfactory, but the 2003-04 achievement rate on the level 2 course is poor at 47 per cent.

12. The achievement rates on most accredited courses **in hospitality, sport and leisure are satisfactory. Attainment levels on non-accredited courses are poor.** Some learners attend the same courses year after year, and are not being sufficiently challenged to learn new skills and make improvements.

13. Achievement rates are satisfactory in health and social care. Learners on the early years course use their knowledge of child development well to devise activities for children of different ages. Learners on the access course acquire good presentational and research skills, and learners on counselling courses develop good listening and feedback skills and a greater understanding of professional ethics. **Retention rates on the introduction to counselling course are poor.**

14. Learners' attainment and progress are satisfactory in visual and performing arts and media. In many classes, learners gain confidence, and in some they produce work of a high standard. Learners' creative skills and techniques are developed well. They experiment with new styles and extend their interest in arts, crafts, music and dance as they develop a wider knowledge of these subjects. In some poorer sessions, learners' progress is too slow and some returning learners are insufficiently challenged.

15. **In humanities, retention and achievement rates are high on access to higher education courses, and the rate of progress into higher education is good.** Learners make very well-informed and balanced contributions to discussion. They express themselves fluently both in writing and verbally. **There are poor retention rates on non-access courses.**

16. Achievement is satisfactory in modern foreign languages. Fifty per cent of learners achieved full awards in 2003-4, and a further 29 per cent achieved a partial award. Learners have particularly well-developed listening skills and develop increased confidence

in communicating in the foreign language for work and leisure purposes. Advanced learners successfully tackle demanding texts and can express their views in debates on current affairs. Attendance rates in most classes are good, and the retention rate is satisfactory.

17. In 2003-04, achievement in GCSE and A level English was satisfactory. Learners demonstrate confidence in articulating and justifying their opinions, and show good skills in critical analysis. In lip reading, learners have a good understanding of their hearing impairment. They acquire very good practical strategies that enable them to lead full and independent lives. For British Sign Language (BSL), the achievement rate at level 1 was less than satisfactory at 61 per cent, and at level 2 it was poor at 33 per cent.

18. Achievement and standards are satisfactory in ESOL programmes. Learners make progress in speaking to colleagues at work, understanding health and safety notices and improvement in social communication. Advanced learners can discuss aspects of language such as context and formality. In 2003-04, the overall retention rate on ESOL courses was satisfactory but on long courses it was low. Attendance in some classes was poor, but in most it was satisfactory.

19. **There is good achievement of individual learning goals and qualifications in literacy and numeracy.** In 2003-04, 82 per cent of the learners who took national qualifications passed them, and 91 per cent of these gained qualifications at levels 1 or 2. Many learners develop increased confidence in reading aloud to their children, helping them with their school work, making everyday numerical calculations, and applying for jobs. The retention rate is satisfactory.

20. There is **good achievement of learners' personal and social goals in courses in independent living and leisure skills.** Many learners with profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in communicating effectively with their peers and working constructively in groups. In craft classes the standard of learners' work is good and their achievements are celebrated.

21. There is **good achievement in family learning.** In 2003-04, all the learners on wider family learning programmes gained an Open College Network (OCN) qualification. On family literacy, language and numeracy programmes (FLLN), 87 per cent of learners entered for the national tests in literacy or numeracy passed. Parents and carers gain confidence in talking to teachers and in supporting their children's development. Retention and attendance rates are satisfactory.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Business administration, management & professional	1	7	1	0	9
English, languages & communications	2	17	11	1	31
Family learning	1	2	5	2	10
Foundation programmes	3	18	16	3	40
Health, social care & public services	0	5	4	0	9
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	8	11	8	27
Humanities	0	8	4	0	12
Information & communications technology	2	9	13	0	24
Sciences & mathematics	1	5	3	1	10
Visual & performing arts & media	4	16	7	3	30
Total	14	95	75	18	202

22. Over half of the observed sessions were graded good or better, with 37 per cent satisfactory and 9 per cent inadequate. **Teaching and learning are good in sciences and mathematics, teacher/trainer awards, ICT, health and social care access and early years courses, humanities, English, modern foreign languages, literacy and numeracy, and independent living and leisure skills.**

23. In the better sessions, tutors use a variety of appropriate teaching methods to make the sessions lively and interesting. Learners are fully involved in the learning process and highly effective use is made of their contributions. Tutors set challenging tasks and successfully encourage learners to reflect on their experiences. Learners are highly motivated and keen to learn. Many enjoy learning independently and continue their studies at home.

24. **On counselling courses some teaching is good, but some sessions are too slow for more able learners.** The teaching in visual and performing arts and media is mostly satisfactory but lesson plans for many classes are poor. In some sessions there is insufficient instruction and support for learners, and in others, the tutors dominates and learners do not participate sufficiently in their own learning. In the better ESOL lessons there are well-planned activities to foster communication skills but in others there is too much reliance on textbook activities and worksheets that are not adapted to the needs of the group or individual learners. **There is insufficient focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills in some contextualised and themed literacy and numeracy courses.**

25. There is **some poor teaching on FLLN and wider family learning programmes.** In the weaker sessions, a narrow range of teaching and learning approaches is used and there is insufficient modelling of approaches that parents and carers could use with their children at home. There is **too much unsatisfactory teaching in hospitality, sport and leisure.** Tutors in weak sessions pay too little attention to individual needs and they give limited individual verbal feedback.

26. **Individual support for learners is particularly good in sciences and mathematics, teacher/trainer programmes, ICT, access courses in health and social care and in humanities, modern foreign languages, ESOL, and independent living and leisure skills.** Many tutors offer help for individuals outside the timetabled class, by using time before and after sessions. They offer very effective individual help in overcoming deficiencies in written skills, and make suggestions for improving performance. In many curriculum areas,

tutors provide clear and helpful guidance about progression and employment opportunities, and help learners with curriculum vitae and job applications.

27. There are learning support assistants available in all independent living and leisure skills sessions and a bilingual support worker provides good support for ESOL learners. Although staff in foundation programmes have a good awareness of how to identify learners who may have dyslexia, **there are too few specialist dyslexia tutors to meet demand.**

28. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory in most curriculum areas. Accommodation varies, some being spacious and attractive, and some cramped, particularly in the case of some of the venues used for ICT and art classes. In some venues there are inappropriate chairs for ICT, at others the pianos are out of tune, and there are insufficient mirrors for dance classes. In **humanities, accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory at many centres** and the **resources for programmes in independent living and leisure skills are inadequate.** Overall there is very little use of ICT, although tutors encourage learners to use websites.

29. **Assessment is highly effective on literacy and numeracy courses** and there is **very effective use of individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress in ICT, independent living and leisure skills, and on ESOL courses.** In negotiation with learners, tutors record clear, measurable and easily understood learning goals, and learning plans are reviewed regularly to identify whether targets have been achieved and progress made.

30. **Target-setting and the monitoring of learners' progress is inadequate in hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts and media, and in family learning.** There is little formal recording of learners' starting points. Many individual learning plans are not used consistently, and they are rarely completed fully by learners or tutors. Some learners on family learning programmes find it difficult to articulate their goals and have difficulty recognising their achievements without input from their tutors.

Leadership and management

31. There is a **well-focused strategy for the development of the service.** The county council is committed to NAES and has given considerable financial support to ensure the long-term sustainability of the provision. NAES has a clear service plan for 2004 to 2007 and has made good progress in developing its service management arrangements. A new management structure has been partially implemented, a new management information system has improved the collection of data, and the introduction of new financial systems has led to better budgetary control.

32. There is **very effective working with external partners.** Partnerships with employers have led to good curriculum initiatives to recruit new learners. NAES is the largest contributor to the LSC's **skills for life brokerage** scheme. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The service also runs an **award-winning foreign languages programme for business.**

33. NAES has a **good range of initiatives to widen participation.** The service works well to develop learning opportunities for under-represented groups and new learners. This was identified as a strength in a number of areas of learning, including sciences and mathematics, ICT, hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts and media,

modern foreign languages, literacy and numeracy, ESOL and family learning programmes. There is insufficient flexibility in some longer ESOL provision and insufficient progression opportunities for learners on independent living and leisure skills programmes.

34. The provision of **initial information, advice and guidance is good.** Appropriately qualified staff at the service's 15 area offices are very effective in helping learners to choose the programme most likely to meet their needs.

35. NAES manages resources satisfactorily and supports literacy, numeracy and language needs adequately. **Curriculum management** is satisfactory in most areas of learning, and **is particularly good in modern foreign languages.**   There is **insufficient management capacity to support recent growth in the ESOL programme** and insufficient strategic development of provision to meet the specialist training requirements for staff working in adult support in literacy, numeracy and language. There is **insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum in sciences and mathematics. Curriculum management is poor in BSL and weak in hospitality, sport and leisure.**

36. NAES has a comprehensive and detailed range of equality of opportunity documents which relate specifically to its service. It has identified a range of actions to support equality and diversity and the service has a detailed action plan for their achievement. NAES promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Learners' and staff awareness of diversity issues is satisfactory but inspectors found very **limited promotion of equality and diversity in course materials and course content.** The service has not carried out disability audits of all venues and there has been little training on the implications of recent legislation.

37. The **monitoring of equality of opportunity is inadequate.** The service collects data relating to gender, age, ethnicity and disability but it is not complete and it is not used to plan at local level. Managers do not monitor the performance of particular learner groups.

38. **Arrangements for the appraisal of teaching staff are inadequate.** A significant number of staff have not been appraised for the past two years. A range of development opportunities is offered to teaching and non-teaching staff, but some training events are very poorly attended.

39. NAES collects data but does not analyse it in a systematic way to support curriculum planning. **Data is not used effectively** to monitor retention and achievement rates or conduct analysis at qualification and area of learning level.

40. NAES's **quality improvement arrangements are incomplete** and do not lead to a cycle of continuous improvement. A quality improvement manual is being written but many procedures are not yet in place across the provision. Formal feedback from learners and partners is analysed and some action has been taken to improve the quality of provision. In some curriculum areas there are regular and thorough observations of teaching, but in others, tutors are not observed regularly. Records of observations and course reviews are not consistent and some are inadequate. Some tutors do not have a good understanding of the purpose and benefits of quality assurance.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- well-focused strategy to develop the service
- very effective working with external partners
- good provision of initial advice and guidance
- wide range of initiatives to widen participation in learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for the appraisal of teaching staff
- insufficient use of data to support curriculum management
- inadequate monitoring or equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

Sciences & mathematics

Strengths

- much good teaching
- good individual support for learners
- good initiatives to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient pre-course information and assessment for GCSE mathematics
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

Business administration, management & professional

Teacher/trainer awards   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- very good achievement rates on teaching assistants' programmes
- very good teaching and learning
- good progression opportunities for learners on teaching assistants' and generic teaching programmes
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates on teacher/trainer programmes in 2003-04
- insufficient strategic development of provision

Information & communications technology

Using IT   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good skills development
- highly individualised learning
- responsive local community provision
- good use of curriculum support tutors to monitor provision

Weaknesses

- poor achievement on level 2 course in 2003-04
- inadequate arrangements to support learners with additional learning needs
- poor use of learner data to monitor provision

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good partnership work to widen participation

Weaknesses

- poor attainment levels on non-accredited courses
- too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- inadequate setting of targets and monitoring of progress for individual learners
- weak curriculum management
- very weak quality improvement

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good skills development
- good teaching and learning on access and early years courses
- very good support for learners on the access course

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on counselling courses
- inadequate quality improvement arrangements

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good development of creative skills and techniques

- innovative curriculum to extend learning opportunities

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate quality improvement arrangements

Humanities

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on access to higher education courses
- good teaching
- very effective support in many lessons

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on non-access courses
- unsatisfactory accommodation and resources at many centres

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- good range of provision
- very good curriculum development initiatives
- good staff development in modern foreign languages

Weaknesses

- poor management of the BSL curriculum
- poor use of data in management

Foundation programmes

ESOL *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good use of individual learning plans to support learning
- good targeted provision to meet identified needs
- very good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently flexible course structure
- insufficient management capacity to support the ESOL programme
- insufficient use of data to monitor achievements

Literacy and numeracy *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals and qualifications
- challenging and interesting teaching in most lessons
- highly effective assessment
- wide range of responsive programmes to widen participation in learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on literacy and numeracy skills development in some contextualised and themed courses
- insufficient use of ICT

Independent living and leisure skills *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement
- good teaching and learning
- very effective use of individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress
- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for progression
- inadequate resources

Family learning

Strengths

- good achievement
- good range of targeted provision
- effective collaboration to promote family learning

Weaknesses

- some poor teaching
- inadequate individual learning plans
- inadequate monitoring of the quality of teaching

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE:

- the opportunities to learn in local centres and at convenient times
- the welcoming, knowledgeable and supportive tutors - 'the extra efforts they go to'; 'their inexhaustible patience'
- the purposeful classes
- the chance to gain a qualification
- learning in a group and getting support from other learners
- 'the chance to improve confidence in ourselves and to communicate our needs and opinions'
- 'being able to use what we have learnt outside class, both for our work and leisure activities'
- the opportunity to meet other people

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE COULD IMPROVE:

- the crèche and childcare provision
- the accommodation and facilities in some venues - cleaner classrooms, rooms of an appropriate size
- the access to computers
- the opportunities for more intensive study and being able to attend classes throughout the calendar year
- the administrative procedures which request information that has already been supplied on previous occasions

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Provider	Provider	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges.
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher/ Trainer	Tutor Mentor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them
Learning goals	Main learning goals Secondary	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge. These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
Personal and learning skills	Personal and learning skills	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult Community Learning
Unanticipated or unintended learning outcome	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
Subject-based programme	A programme organised around body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
Issue-based programme	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
Outreach provision	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
Neighbourhood-based work	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
Community regeneration	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.
Community capacity building	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become self managing, sustainable communities.

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 3

Strengths

- well-focused strategy to develop the service
- very effective working with external partners
- good provision of initial advice and guidance
- wide range of initiatives to widen participation in learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for the appraisal of teaching staff
- insufficient use of data to support curriculum management
- inadequate monitoring or equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

41. There is a well-focused strategy for the development of the service. The responsibility for developing corporate strategy and monitoring the implementation of policy for adult and community learning now rests with the council's cultural services department. The council is committed to supporting NAES and recognises the contribution the service makes to the social inclusion agenda. It has invested considerable financial support to ensure the long-term sustainability of the provision. There are many council departments which operate in the field of lifelong learning, and these are brought together at a strategic level to benefit learners. 'Norfolk Ambition', the council's community strategy, makes specific reference to the contribution expected from NAES in meeting overall objectives. NAES has a clear service plan for 2004 to 2007, which focuses on promoting literacy and numeracy skills, developing lifelong learning and supporting social inclusion. NAES produces an annual adult learning plan which is approved by the cabinet of the county council.

42. NAES has recently made good progress in developing its service management arrangements. A new management structure has been partially implemented and is intended to secure more consistent practice across the county. Clear line-management responsibilities have been established and a system of team meetings is planned to support effective teamwork. A new management information system has improved the collection of data, and it has recently become possible to use some analysis of data to support management decisions. Data is collected centrally but is not used sufficiently in local programme planning. The introduction of new financial systems has led to better budgetary control.

43. NAES has good relationships with a range of partners that help make efficient use of shared resources and reduce competition between providers. Effective partnerships have helped to attract new learners and encourage others to progress from non-accredited to accredited courses. The service has been very successful in gaining additional external funding for a range of developments including the Attleborough learning centre. NAES provides training through links with the local business community, the NHS, Connexions

and learndirect. Bespoke provision for employers has included programmes to develop the communication skills of employees of a local NHS trust and a regional railway company. NAES's training for council employees ranges from ICT training for the education department and library service, to literacy, numeracy and language courses for parks, cleaning and catering staff. NAES is also the largest contributor to the local LSC's skills for life brokerage scheme, and since 2001 it has worked successfully with 127 employers. It is currently working with 40 employers across the county, offering tailor-made literacy, numeracy and language provision at venues and times to fit around employees' shift patterns. Provision is offered as short intensive programmes or longer courses, and has included report writing in the workplace for care workers, literacy and numeracy for services personnel, and ESOL programmes at food production companies and hotels for Portuguese, Chinese, Albanian, Hungarian and Greek workers. NAES also runs an award-winning foreign languages programme for business, which currently has 121 learners.

44. There is good provision of initial advice and guidance. NAES has achieved a nationally recognised quality standard for guidance and support. There is a comprehensive information, advice and guidance policy, and an action plan. A guidance group meets regularly to monitor performance against the plan. The head of NAES attends the local strategic board for information, advice and guidance, and staff are active in local network meetings. Information, advice and guidance are provided at NAES's 15 area offices, and most administrative staff who have direct contact with learners have a level 2 qualification in guidance and support. Some staff are qualified to level 3 and a few to level 4, and learners and potential learners requiring full guidance interviews are referred to them. Many tutors who teach on accredited programmes have had guidance training. NAES contributes to the funding and staffing of a Norwich city centre learning shop in partnership with a local college and university. Approximately 30 per cent of people who enquire there are subsequently referred to NAES. Information is available about a wide range of courses and types of learning, and staff are very effective in helping learners to choose the programme most likely to meet their needs. NAES was successful in bidding for additional funding to provide the 'Trailblazer' project which gave advice and guidance to 700 learners.

45. Curriculum management is satisfactory in most areas of learning, and is particularly good in modern foreign languages. However, there is insufficient management capacity to support recent growth in the ESOL programme and insufficient strategic development of provision to meet the specialist training requirements of staff working in adult support and skills for life. There is insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum in sciences and mathematics. Curriculum management is poor in BSL and weak in hospitality, sport and leisure.

46. The management of resources is satisfactory. Most staff are appropriately qualified and experienced, but staff without a recognised teaching qualification are not all working to achieve one. Resources vary across curriculum areas, but are generally adequate. Accommodation is inappropriate at some centres, and requests for courses sometimes have to be turned down. There is insufficient clarity about the provision of some teaching aids. Risk assessments have been completed for most learning activities at the various venues, but insufficient attention is paid to health and safety issues such as trip hazards and the provision of adequate seating for ICT courses.

47. Internal communications are satisfactory. There is a range of routine scheduled meetings for non-teaching staff. The outcomes of meetings are recorded and action points identified, but there are no deadlines for completion and sometimes progress on actions is not reported. All staff have access to the council's intranet and e-mail system. Tutors are invited to a start-of-year briefing to receive information about changes to the provision and new programme requirements. However, there is low attendance at some meetings and some staff who work remotely feel isolated.

48. The service adequately manages support for literacy, numeracy and language. In discrete literacy, numeracy and language courses, the support is good, and learners make good progress and succeed in national tests. There is good provision of support in access courses, but no systematic approach to the identification of support needs on other mainstream programmes, and too much reliance on learners' self-declaration, particularly in ICT courses at entry level and level 1.

49. The council has a long-established staff appraisal process which is used to identify training needs and agree an annual staff development plan. However, a significant number of staff have not been appraised for the past two years. There is a staff learning plan showing the training needs of each member of staff and how these relate to NAES's objectives. Most of the training, including teaching qualifications, takes place in-house. All staff are offered training in dyslexia and deaf awareness, information technology (IT), and health and safety, and updates on service procedures, but some training events are very poorly attended. A range of development opportunities is offered to teaching and non-teaching staff, but although attendance at training events is recorded, there has been no analysis of this data to determine patterns of attendance by tutors from curriculum and geographical areas, or to support future training plans.

50. NAES collects data but does not analyse it in a systematic way to support curriculum planning. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Targets, based on contract levels, are agreed for the total number of learner enrolments, but planning at the curriculum level is often driven by the availability of tutors and the needs of existing learners, rather than by service priorities or market analysis. Data is not used effectively to monitor retention and achievement rates or analyse success at qualification and area of learning level. Problems with data collection in previous years have made it impossible to establish reliable trends, but few targets are set for retention and achievement rates except for separately funded projects like the 'fast forward' and 'step into learning' programmes.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 3

51. NAES has a good range of initiatives to widen participation. It works very effectively with a number of partners to identify need and to offer learning opportunities to under-represented groups and to new learners. This was recognised as a strength in a number of areas of learning including sciences and mathematics, ICT, hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts and media, modern foreign languages, literacy and numeracy, ESOL, and family learning programmes.

52. NAES works with partners to access funding for a wide range of tasters and short courses for new learners from under-represented groups and from wards with high levels of deprivation. For example, the 'Have a Go' project, which taught literacy and numeracy alongside a range of other activities, enrolled 550 learners, 475 of whom progressed to further courses. NAES's ESOL programmes for migrant workers are particularly effective in

widening participation in learning. NAES works in partnership with SureStart, offering learning programmes to attract new learners in wards with high levels of deprivation. It has also developed a range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of many of the isolated rural communities in the county. Classes take place in over 350 venues, including village halls, schools, health centres and workplaces. NAES has improved access to learning by offering courses of different lengths and at a variety of times, including weekends. It is piloting an e-learning project leading to a level 2 qualification in creative embroidery, which is providing very effective support for learners who are unable to attend classes because they live in isolated rural communities or have caring responsibilities. There is not enough flexibility in some longer ESOL programmes and there are too few progression opportunities for learners on independent living and leisure skills programmes.

53. NAES has adapted the council's equality of opportunity statement, policy and strategy, and now has comprehensive and detailed documents which are specific to its service. These were developed in the month before the inspection and have recently been approved by the senior management team. NAES has identified a range of actions to support equality and diversity, and has a detailed plan for their achievement. NAES has made all this information available to staff on the intranet.

54. Norfolk County Council operates within the policies laid down by the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Educational Needs Discrimination Act 2001 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. NAES has effective plans to meet the requirements of these policies. It has produced a disability statement which clearly outlines what learners can expect from the service.

55. NAES offers some staff development for tutors. For example, all staff who come into direct contact with learners have been offered deaf awareness training and literacy and numeracy awareness training, and NAES has provided some training on specific learning difficulties. However, there has been little training on the implications of recent legislation. Staff attendance at training programmes has been low. The service has also offered a range of training for community organisations.

56. NAES promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. All staff and learners receive a copy of the equal opportunities policy, and the grievance and complaints procedures are discussed during their induction. Learning centres display some materials relating to equality of opportunity but local publicity materials do not include an equality statement. Learners' and staff's awareness of diversity issues is satisfactory but there is very little promotion of equality and diversity in course materials and course content.

57. NAES recognises the importance of providing venues with good physical access for users with a range of needs, but it has not carried out disability audits of all its venues. It has four sets of a wide range of adaptive equipment for ICT learners, but the support resources are not shared equally across the county and some tutors who have learners with disabilities do not use these resources. Crèche provision is good in some venues and NAES provides some transport for learners who have restricted mobility. A few leaflets have been translated into community languages. Some venues are not accessible for learners with restricted mobility, and inspectors observed some classes where inappropriate furniture and accommodation limited participation.

58. The monitoring of equality of opportunity is inadequate. NAES does not have a

comprehensive learning support policy. It collects data on learners' gender, age, ethnicity and disabilities but this is not complete and it is not used to plan at local level. Managers do not analyse data and use it to set targets to widen participation, to recruit tutors from minority ethnic groups or to monitor the performance of particular groups of learners.

Quality improvement   **Contributory grade 4**

59. NAES has an established quality group and a new strategic quality improvement team. The team has discussed the approach to quality improvement in detail and has developed an action plan. However, it is too new to have had any effect on the learners' experience.

60. NAES's quality improvement arrangements are incomplete and do not lead to a cycle of continuous improvement. This weakness was partly identified in the self-assessment report. NAES is developing a quality assurance manual. Many of the procedures it contains are complete and detailed, but it does not include a quality improvement cycle and many of the procedures have not yet been introduced across the provision. The manual does not include a policy or procedure for internal verification, or monitoring systems for induction or course materials. There is no policy or procedure for the sharing of good practice among teaching staff, and no schedule for the auditing or reviewing of procedures.

61. NAES has a clear set of guidelines for planning and conducting observations and has been conducting them since 2003. The curriculum support staff have been trained to carry out observations and all new tutors are observed within six months of starting. In some curriculum areas, thorough observations take place regularly and managers follow up identified issues. However, some curriculum support staff do not have enough time, and in some areas of learning, tutors are not observed regularly. Records of observations are not consistent and some are inadequate. During 2003-04, no teaching was graded unsatisfactory. NAES has not analysed the results of observations to identify strengths and weaknesses across the service.

62. NAES collects formal feedback from its learners and partners. This is analysed and has let to some action to improve the quality of provision. For example, some accommodation has been improved and classes have been moved. In one instance, a manager carried out an additional observation of a tutor in response to learners' feedback. NAES has effective systems for informal feedback which include notice boards and suggestion boxes. Area managers analyse the information collected, together with learners' written complaints and comments, and they record the action they take. Internal verification is satisfactory, but there are too few qualified assessors in some areas.

63. NAES does not have quality assurance statements for teaching and learning, and sets few targets or performance indicators by which to monitor courses. Tutors do not all complete course reviews in the same way. NAES does not provide guidance on carrying out course reviews or define the standards for their completion. Some tutors do not fully understand the purpose and benefits of quality assurance, and some do not follow the established procedures.

64. NAES carries out an annual self-assessment which has improved in thoroughness over time. It now has a calendar for the development of the report, and self-assessment guidelines for staff. NAES uses feedback from learners and partners to contribute to the report, and involves many of the staff. The latest report is to some degree self-critical and

evaluative. However, NAES does not have enough reliable historical data to make judgements about trends in retention and achievement rates. Parts of three areas of learning were not included in the report. Most of the grades in the self-assessment report match those given by inspectors. The report identifies some of the same strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, but the inspectors considered some of the strengths to be no more than normal practice and they identified additional weaknesses.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Sciences & mathematics   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas Adult and community learning	317	3

65. In 2003-04, there were 285 learners on sciences and mathematics courses. In 2004-05, the number has risen to 317, of whom 70 per cent are women and 11 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Courses are offered at 31 locations across Norfolk, including 25 high schools, four community centres and two Royal Air Force stations. Learners are taught by 15 part-time tutors, 11 in mathematics and four in sciences. There are 23 courses that lead to GCSEs, six in sciences, mainly biology related, and 17 in mathematics. One centre offers AS and A2 levels in mathematics but only to about 14 learners. Most GCSE courses are planned to take one year, although some mathematics courses include an extra term of pre-GCSE work. There are a few courses that do not lead to a qualification, for example in geology and astronomy.

Strengths

- much good teaching
- good individual support for learners
- good initiatives to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient pre-course information and assessment for GCSE mathematics
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

Achievement and standards

66. Achievement is satisfactory. In 2003-04, learners on sciences and mathematics GCSE courses had similar pass rates of approximately 81 per cent. The overall retention rate was 76 per cent. In mathematics, about half the learners achieved a grade C or above. Many of the learners start out with low levels of prior achievement and confidence, and they make good progress. Some move onto GCSE courses from basic skills programmes. The GCSE mathematics programme is aimed at learners who want to explore personal goals in mathematics and improve their skills, as well as those hoping to gain a high GCSE grade. Most succeed in their learning aims. In classes, many learners become confident in discussing possible solutions to mathematical problems. Some GCSE science coursework is of a high standard. In 2004, six of the 10 learners taking mathematics at A2 level achieved a pass.

The quality of provision

67. Much of the teaching and learning is good, and a small amount is outstanding. Most tutors have useful schemes of work and plan lessons carefully. In the better sessions both in sciences and in mathematics, learners are expected to read ahead and are drawn into

discussion. The tutors are adept at reinforcing key points and checking learners' understanding of fundamentals. In a science session, small groups of learners used an overhead projector to give interesting presentations to the class about micro-organisms such as bacteria, fungi and viruses. They also prepared good back-up notes for the audience. Some lessons are satisfactory rather than good, with a limited range of learning activity and less effective explanations. There is a small amount of inadequate teaching.

68. Individual support for learners is good. Most tutors make strong efforts to respond to the needs of individual learners. Nearly all lessons take place in a friendly atmosphere with learners gaining much help from their peers. In one lesson, pairs of learners tried to construct mathematical problems for each other. Many tutors help individuals outside the timetabled class, by using time before and after sessions or offering extra classes. Classes often include learners working at various levels, from foundation to higher tier. Most tutors set or suggest homework for individuals at an appropriate level, but few learners take full advantage of this opportunity.

69. There are good initiatives to widen participation. Effective use is made of partnerships. GCSE mathematics is available at centres across Norfolk and attracts learners across a wide age profile and with a variety of learning aims. Some community centres promote progression from basic education and family learning into GCSE study, and there has been a range of short taster courses to promote interest both in sciences and in mathematics. Some learners are parents who want to help their children with mathematics. Mathematics courses have been specifically tailored to meet the needs of Royal Air Force personnel who may be away on duty for long periods. In some areas of deprivation a one-term pre-GCSE course is used to build learners' confidence.

70. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are ample supplies of mathematics worksheets and science handouts. Many learners purchase GCSE textbooks to supplement these. Appropriate equipment is usually available as many classes take place in local high schools. Accommodation varies, some being spacious and attractive, and some drab. Records of staff qualifications are incomplete, although many tutors are qualified teachers. There is little use of ICT to provide extra variety and stimulation.

71. There is not enough initial advice and guidance to ensure that learners are aware of the demands of the GCSE mathematics courses. This is a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Although the course leaflets, and some of the staff at the adult education centres, stress the demanding nature of GCSE mathematics, and some learners are advised to begin with a numeracy course, in practice enrolment is open to all. A CD-ROM is being piloted to enable learners to self-assess their mathematical skills, but the outcome of this trial is unclear. On enrolment, an initial learning agreement is set up for each learner. Some tutors use this to a limited extent as a learning plan, but many learners have no really systematic way of identifying weaknesses and monitoring their own progress.

Leadership and management

72. There is insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum. The self-assessment report identifies that there has not been a curriculum manager with mathematical or scientific expertise. Staff have not collected, analysed or disseminated information that would identify and spread good practice. The provision is spread over a wide geographical area, and tutors find it hard to attend meetings. There is a tutors' forum on the intranet but this is not yet being used as an alternative to meetings to promote discussion. There has been

little systematic analysis of data to show how learners' grades have improved against targets, to compare results between centres or to measure the extent of progression from literacy, numeracy and language, and family learning programmes. There is only limited sharing of teaching materials. Management structures are under review, and one tutor now has a curriculum support role. Communication is improving as a result.

Business administration, management & professional **Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Teacher/trainer awards		*2*
Adult and community learning	406	2

73. NAES provides a range of professional training programmes for teachers, tutors and teaching assistants. The largest of these, with 309 learners, is a work-based programme for teaching assistants, leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3. It is offered at 21 local centres, and learners attend for one session a week. They are assessed in their workplaces. In 2003-04, there were 13 courses at level 2 and eight at level 3, with a total of 266 learners. In 2004-05, there are five level 2 courses, four level 3 courses, and six level 4 courses. There is also a 10-week, non-accredited introductory course for learners planning to work in schools.

74. NAES also provides externally accredited teacher/trainer programmes comprising three stages at level 4. The service also offers a short preparatory course for learners who do not have teaching qualifications but wish to attend a level 4 programme. In 2003-04, there were 161 learners on the programmes, and in 2004-05 to date there have been 97. Programmes are run at nine different venues, and learners normally attend one session a week. NAES also offers some training for teachers of modern foreign languages and for staff working in skills for life.

Teacher/trainer awards   Grade 2

Strengths

- very good achievement rates on teaching assistants' programmes
- very good teaching and learning
- good progression opportunities for learners on teaching assistants' and generic teaching programmes
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates on teacher/trainer programmes in 2003-04
- insufficient strategic development of provision

Achievement and standards

75. Achievement rates are very good on teaching assistants' programmes. In 2003-04, the achievement rate was 92 per cent on the level 2 NVQ for teaching assistants and 93 per cent on the level 3. Standards of work are good on both programmes. Learners produce well-researched and thorough written work, such as detailed descriptions and evaluations of school policies and practice on issues such as inclusion. Learners enjoy their work, and feel able to apply their new knowledge to make a more positive and professional contribution to support children and teachers in their schools.

76. In 2003-04, retention rates on teacher/trainer programmes were poor at 69 per cent for stage 2 programmes and 67 per cent for stage 3. Achievement rates were also poor at 54 per cent for stage 2 and 62 per cent for stage 3. NAES has recognised this weakness and has taken clear action to deal with it. A more thorough initial assessment process has been introduced, together with more effective course information and advice. A preparatory programme in teaching and study skills has been provided for learners who have limited experience of academic research and essay writing. Tutors also provide extra support for individual learners outside normal class hours. There are clear signs of a significant improvement in the retention rate in 2004-05. All the learners who enrolled on stage 2 programmes this year are still in learning, as are eight of the nine on stage 3 programmes.

The quality of provision

77. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching assistants' programmes are particularly well structured, with very effective use of standardised outline session plans. Tutors are well qualified and professionally very competent, and they make good use of their extensive experience to provide clear examples and to model good practice. They focus closely on the workplace situation of teachers and teaching assistants to make sessions very relevant to the learners. Learners are fully involved in the learning process and highly effective use is made of their contributions of experience and good practice. Tutors monitor individual progress closely, and record it clearly. Assessment is regular and thorough, and feedback to learners is constructive, with clear actions for future development.

78. There are good progression opportunities for learners on teaching assistants' and generic teaching programmes. They can progress from initial level 1 awards to level 3 awards for teaching assistants and level 4 awards for teacher/trainers. Teaching assistants' programmes are especially responsive to learners' aspirations and local employers' requirements. Many learners interviewed had progressed successfully from being unqualified classroom volunteers to becoming employed teaching assistants with level 3 qualifications. Course tutors on the teaching assistants' programme work closely with local schools and with NAES's professional development centre to provide relevant training which effectively supports inclusion in schools. In 2003-04, 14 learners progressed from initial teacher/trainer programmes to stage 1, eight from stage 1 to stage 2, and 21 from stage 2 to stage 3.

79. Tutors support learners well. They meet them regularly to review their progress and to provide pastoral and academic support. Tutorials are part of the course programmes, and additional informal meetings are frequently arranged in response to learners' immediate needs. Most tutors also provide learners with their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. Learners are given detailed information and advice before the programme starts. Tutors provide careers advice, and help learners with curriculum vitae and job applications both as part of the teaching assistants' programmes and through additional tutorial support.

80. Learning resources are satisfactory. Teaching assistants' programmes are held in a range of accessible local venues around the county. Classrooms, which vary in size and comfort, are generally adequate. The best venues contain a range of reference materials for teaching assistants' programmes, but some locations have too few resources.

81. NAES has an adequate system for supporting learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. All learners are interviewed individually before their programme starts, and on teacher/trainer courses, their language and literacy needs are identified through a piece of written work. However, there is no formal screening for numeracy. Additional support is arranged with specialist tutors.

Leadership and management

82. Communications between staff are satisfactory and informal communications between tutors are very good. Tutors meet regularly to exchange information, review programmes and develop aspects of the curriculum, and to standardise learners' assessments. Clear notes are made of these meetings, and actions are followed up.

83. Internal verification arrangements for NVQ programmes are satisfactory. Internal verifiers provide particularly comprehensive and helpful advice to assessors. At present there are too few qualified internal verifiers to meet further growth in the programme. However, a number of additional staff are working towards their assessor and verifier awards.

84. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is good, and teaching and learning reinforce this very effectively. Although most premises used for classes are suitable, one is inaccessible to those with limited mobility.

85. Teaching is generally monitored effectively, and staff regularly review and develop aspects of the existing curriculum. On the programmes for teaching assistants, clear targets are set for improvement in retention and achievement rates, and the self-assessment process is thorough. Staff regularly collect feedback from learners and evaluate it thoroughly. Clear improvements in programmes are made as a result of this feedback. There is a system for the formal observation of teaching and learning as part of the appraisal process, but none of the staff for the teacher/trainer course and only two staff from the teaching assistants' course have been formally observed this year. Some staff on established contracts are unaware of the appraisal process, and many have not been appraised for at least a year. Although improvements have been made to the teacher/trainer programmes, there is no formal self-assessment report for the current year, and no formal targets for improvement have been set.

86. There has been insufficient strategic development of training provision to meet the specialist training requirements for staff working in adult support and skills for life. Although there are clear progression routes for learners on generic teaching programmes and for teaching assistants, at present there are no clear progression routes for adult support staff and tutors of literacy, numeracy and language, or for staff working with adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. NAES recognises this weakness and is taking steps to improve the position. In 2003-04, NAES received additional funding to pilot a specialist award at level 4 in teaching ESOL. It is also piloting programmes in literacy, numeracy and language.

Information & communications technology   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		*3*
Adult and community learning	4,127	3

87. NAES offers a wide range of courses in using ICT. They include introduction to computers, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing, internet usage and computer graphics. Courses range from entry level to level 2. For 2004-05, NAES has introduced a package option where learners can take a selection of accredited modules in 15-hour blocks, ultimately leading to an accredited qualification. This is replacing a lot of the non-accredited introductory provision. Other learners are on 60-hour accredited courses. Learners can select optional modules according to their need. Study sessions include weekend workshops but are primarily weekly sessions of two, two and a half or three hours.

88. In 2004-05, 4,127 learners have enrolled on courses, the vast majority of which are entry level and level 1. Twenty-nine per cent of the learners are men, 2 per cent have disabilities and 15 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. NAES uses seven learning centres, 24 schools, eight community centres or village halls, and one library. There are 186 registered sessional tutors of whom 48 are currently tutoring. There are also nine part-time tutors, of whom five have curriculum support responsibilities.

Using IT   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good skills development
- highly individualised learning
- responsive local community provision
- good use of curriculum support tutors to monitor provision

Weaknesses

- poor achievement on level 2 course in 2003-04
- inadequate arrangements to support learners with additional learning needs
- poor use of learner data to monitor provision

Achievement and standards

89. Learners of all ages develop very good ICT skills, even though many of them have not used computers before. In observed lessons, attainment was good and average attendance was 80 per cent. Many of the learners are using their new skills in their daily lives at home and at work. They can help their children and grandchildren with schoolwork, write formal letters, produce personalised greeting cards, and e-mail friends and relatives. Learners value these opportunities and speak of their improved levels of self-confidence.

90. The retention rate is satisfactory, increasing from 88 per cent in 2002-03 to 92 per cent

in 2003-04. Achievement on most courses is satisfactory. In 2003-04, the achievement rate on level 1 accredited courses was 70 per cent, and on non-accredited courses, it was between 75 and 97 per cent.

91. The 2003-04 achievement rate on the level 2 course is poor at 47 per cent. Fewer than 4 per cent of learners are on this course, but it is the only level 2 accredited course available.

The quality of provision

92. Learning is very effectively matched to individual learners' needs. Tutors provide learning opportunities focused on the expressed needs of the learners. In many observed lessons the learners were all working on different activities, with tutors providing individual support swiftly and sensitively. Learners are effectively encouraged to take learning materials home so that they can study between classes. Most tutors use a variety of teaching methods to reinforce learning, including computerised presentations, and interactive white boards where these are available. Schemes of work and lesson plans clearly outline the course content and include differentiated activities to support learning. On many courses, tutors use individual learning plans at each session to record learners' progress towards their individual learning goals. They provide regular, encouraging feedback, and mark learners' classwork and homework thoroughly. Learners are effectively involved in the management of their progress.

93. Provision is very responsive to local community needs. Lessons are held in a wide range of venues across the county, in dedicated learning centres, schools, libraries and village halls. Taster sessions are held in dispersed locations, and if enough learners express interest then classes are arranged. Learners value the local classes as they make access to learning affordable and help to prevent social isolation. NAES works effectively with a range of local partners to focus learning activities into areas where there are hard-to-reach learners, and to gain funding for these activities. Three sets of laptop computers are used in some of the outreach venues. The courses offered are full-length and accredited, but elements of these courses are also packaged into 'bite size' modules. In one area, a successful pilot programme has offered the modules at a range of flexible times to meet the needs of learners on shift work and with changing opportunities for attendance.

94. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced, and several have high-level professional and teaching qualifications. Fewer than 4 per cent of the staff have no teaching qualifications, but they are working towards them. All the computers used are at least satisfactory and in some venues there is new equipment. A range of other teaching equipment is available, such as interactive whiteboards and display projectors.

95. Some of the venues used, particularly in schools, have cramped accommodation with insufficient space for learners to work in. Several of the venues have chairs which are inappropriate for adult learners working at computers. Learning materials are satisfactory. NAES has produced a CD of learning resources, but not all staff are aware of this. A few of the accredited courses do not have the support materials necessary to ensure that learners gain the skills they need to achieve the qualifications.

96. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Classes offer learners opportunities to progress from course for beginners to one in computer literacy and business technology. A few centres offer examination-based courses in IT, and learners are encouraged to travel to take

part in these. NAES sends out a range of surveys and questionnaires to prospective learners to identify their needs. The results are analysed and used in curriculum development.

97. Arrangements for the support of learners with additional learning needs are inadequate. Learners' needs are rarely assessed formally or recorded. There is too much reliance on self-declaration. One group of learners who had not completed compulsory education had not been tested to identify their literacy, numeracy and language needs. Some staff do not know how to access support for their learners. A few learners with language needs are not receiving additional support.

Leadership and management

98. NAES uses curriculum support tutors well to monitor provision. The number of curriculum support tutors has been increased in 2004-05. They receive good training for their role, including training in carrying out observations and interviews. Most have met the targets set for the number of lesson observations and visits to tutors. They provide detailed feedback that clearly identifies areas for development. The grade profile of their observations closely matches that of the inspectors' observations. Curriculum support tutors are in turn well supported by the curriculum management staff. All staff use e-mail effectively to maintain communication.

99. Equality of opportunity is monitored satisfactorily. All the venues visited are accessible by learners with limited mobility. NAES has four sets of adaptive technology equipment, and at a few venues there are adapted desks for wheelchair users. The provider collects data on learners' ethnic origin to analyse levels of participation, but does not use it to monitor performance.

100. Quality improvement activities are satisfactory. Learners' feedback is used by managers and has led to changes such as the introduction of flexible attendance options. The self-assessment process is inclusive with contributions both from tutors and from area administration staff. Most of the strengths and some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report matched those found by inspectors. However, the report was not sufficiently critical, and some of the weaknesses were overlooked.

101. NAES's use of learner performance data to monitor provision is very poor. Summary statistics of learners' performance are rarely used in management. Managers do not analyse learners' performance by area, tutor or course. ICT staff are not aware of the overall performance of learners in their area. Curriculum staff do not receive summary statistics about the performance of their learners. The achievement data provided in the self-assessment report was both inaccurate and contradictory.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel   Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation Adult and community learning	5,517	4

102. NAES offers programmes in hospitality, sport and fitness, most of them sports related. These include yoga, swimming, tai chi, keep fit, aqua aerobics, badminton, and archery. The hospitality courses include food hygiene, blood group diet, and cookery. Ninety-six per cent of the courses are non-accredited. The accredited courses include life-saving, swimming awards and basic food hygiene. Over 200 courses are offered at 122 learning venues, including schools, colleges and health centres. Most courses are run in 10-week blocks over the academic year, on weekdays and at weekends. In 2003-04, there were 5,583 learners and 12,437 enrolments. Between September 2004 and May 2005, there were 5,517 learners and 12,504 enrolments. Over 90 per cent of the learners are women, just over 7 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, and 3 per cent have declared a disability. There are more than 100 part-time teaching staff, working between one and 11 hours a week. An acting curriculum manager, a part-time curriculum adviser and two part-time support tutors have responsibility for curriculum development and quality improvement.

Strengths

- good partnership work to widen participation

Weaknesses

- poor attainment levels on non-accredited courses
- too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- inadequate setting of targets and monitoring of progress for individual learners
- weak curriculum management
- very weak quality improvement

Achievement and standards

103. Attendance in most classes is satisfactory. The overall attendance rate during the inspection was 74.6 per cent. There are too few checks on punctuality.

104. Attainment levels on non-accredited courses are poor. Some learners attend the same courses year after year, and are not sufficiently challenged to learn new skills and make improvements. Too few learners recognise the benefits gained from these types of classes. In a significant number of classes, learners follow the tutor's instruction and demonstrations but do not sufficiently retain or develop these movements or sequences. However, some learners report health-related benefits and increased confidence. The achievement levels on most accredited courses are satisfactory.

The quality of provision

105. The range of courses is satisfactory. A wide range of sports courses is available, but there are limited progression routes. The timing of courses is varied and allows learners good access. The geographical spread of courses is wide. In most venues there is satisfactory physical access for learners with mobility difficulties. Equipment is satisfactory and there are pool hoists at some locations. The venues used have good parking facilities and are close to public transport. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, but the rooms used for a few classes are untidy and too small for the groups.

106. Guidance and support arrangements for learners are mostly satisfactory. Learners are involved in identifying their own additional support needs at the start of the course. Some learners have been able to bring friends along to support them at subsidised fees. There are informal arrangements for assessing individual needs during enrolment and in the first few lessons. None of the current learners is receiving support for literacy, numeracy or language.

107. Too much of the teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Nearly 30 per cent of the sessions observed were inadequate and many of the remainder were only satisfactory. Tutors in weak sessions pay too little attention to individual needs. They use insufficiently varied teaching methods and little differentiation. The amount of individual verbal feedback is limited. A significant number of classes are running as clubs. Learners often arrive at sessions late and leave early. They enjoy the social aspect of the activity but little learning takes place. In the better classes, lessons are well planned with appropriate challenges to meet the needs of learners.

108. Target-setting and monitoring of individual learners' progress are inadequate. There is little formal recording of learners' starting points and progress. In most classes, learners do not receive sufficient verbal feedback. There are no systematic arrangements to review, monitor and plan learners' achievements. All learners have individual learning agreements but these are not used consistently, and in some cases only the learners' names are recorded. Where the agreements are being used, they do not include specific outcomes or targets for individuals. Many staff have a poor attitude towards the recording of learners' progress and this is reflected in learners' perception of its benefits.

Leadership and management

109. There is good partnership work to widen participation. This includes successful partnerships with voluntary agencies, local communities, schools and other educational establishments. Courses are provided specifically to attract learners from groups that are traditionally under-represented. There has been consultation and partnership work with SureStart and with health promotion projects. For example, one course was provided locally in response to learners' family commitments. There is a wide range of sports programmes across the county, and provision is offered in many outreach venues.

110. Staff awareness and promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. However, a few tutors use inappropriate and stereotypical language. Some groups are split up inappropriately by gender rather than ability level.

111. Curriculum management and the co-ordination of programmes are weak. There is

too little communication with, and support for, part-time tutors. Some tutors do not know who their curriculum manager is. Meetings for part-time staff are poorly attended, and although there are examples of good practice, these are not shared. Internal staff development for part-time tutors is poorly attended.

112. Quality improvement processes are very weak. Managers have not routinely observed teaching and learning, and some tutors who have worked for a considerable period of time have never been observed. A schedule of observations has been planned, but there is not enough staff capacity to carry it out. The self-assessment process is weak. Very few key stakeholders have been involved in the process and they do not know its outcome. The self-assessment report is incomplete and insufficiently critical. It does not adequately identify key strengths and weaknesses in areas that affect the quality of the learners' experience.

Health, social care & public services   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas Adult and community learning	278	3

113. NAES has 278 learners on accredited health and social care courses. There are 147 learners on counselling courses, 102 on access courses and 29 on early years courses.

114. The level 1 introduction to counselling is in three parts, each one consisting of two and a half hours of study a week over 30 weeks. Learners can progress to a level 2 certificate in counselling skills, but this is not being offered in 2004-05. Access to the caring professions comprises six modules, each requiring 60 hours of study, and is accredited at level 3. It is designed for learners who want to progress to higher education to study nursing and other care-related courses. The counselling and access courses are accredited by the OCN. Learners on the early years care and education course study for two and a half hours a week over 48 weeks. The course leads to an NVQ at level 2 or 3. Most of the learners are already working in the childcare sector either as childminders or in nurseries, playgroups or crèches.

115. The counselling team comprises 21 part-time tutors who are all experienced counsellors themselves. The access team has 11 part-time tutors and one full-time co-ordinator who is also a tutor. Six part-time tutors provide the early years training. Health and social care courses are offered to learners at more than 22 venues in the community including adult education centres, community centres and schools. Most sessions are in the evenings, but a few are also offered in the morning.

Strengths

- good skills development
- good teaching and learning on access and early years courses
- very good support for learners on the access course

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on counselling courses
- inadequate quality improvement arrangements

Achievement and standards

116. Most learners increase their knowledge and develop good skills. Learners on an early years course use their knowledge of child development to devise activities for children of different ages, gaining a clearer understanding of the stages of child development and the importance of learning through play. Learners enhance their practical skills. For example, learners on the access course acquire presentational and research skills which they can later use on higher education courses. Learners on counselling courses develop good listening and feedback skills that they can transfer to work and domestic settings. They work with increased sensitivity and a greater understanding of professional ethics. Many learners report increasing self-esteem and confidence. Learners on all courses clearly

understand the topics discussed, and produce a good standard of written work including detailed portfolios of evidence.

117. Achievement rates are satisfactory on all courses. Learners are focused on completing assignments and units. Learners on the early years course make good progress towards completing their NVQ. Most learners on the access course successfully complete at least one module of the course during the year.

118. Retention rates on the introduction to counselling course are poor. In 2003-04, just over a third of the learners who started the course completed it. In 2004-05, fewer than half the learners who started the course are still in learning.

The quality of provision

119. There is good teaching and learning on access and early years courses. Lessons are characterised by careful planning, effective classroom management techniques and the development of supportive relationships which promote learning. Tutors are enthusiastic and very well motivated. They use a good variety of appropriate teaching methods to make the sessions lively and interesting. In some lessons, they bring their own materials into class to enrich the learning experience. For example, in an early years class the tutor brought in a variety of objects from home which the learners used to devise activities for children. The group was asked to look for any safety implications in using these objects for play. Learners are highly motivated and keen to learn, and they participate well in interesting discussions. They work well in small groups and they use case studies effectively. Tutors set challenging tasks and successfully encourage learners to reflect on their experiences. Many enjoy learning independently and continue their studies at home.

120. On counselling courses some teaching is good, but some is uninspiring and some sessions are too slow for the more able learners. In a few classes, learners are not all given opportunities to answer questions or take a full role in class discussions. These learners are unable to demonstrate whether they have acquired new skills or knowledge.

121. Learners on the access course receive very good support. They have a pre-course interview and a formal induction session, and they are given a handbook which clearly explains the course aims and objectives and the assessment requirements. Learners also receive very detailed information and help with completing the research project and key skills units. Individual learners have an effective initial assessment to identify their support needs. Individual learning plans are used to monitor progress and ensure learners are given additional support when needed. Staff provide clear and helpful guidance about progression and employment opportunities. Tutors have good links with local higher education institutions, and learners are well supported and encouraged with their applications for further study. Many learners from the access course progress onto nursing, occupational therapy and other care-related courses. Learners value the way staff give freely of their time.

122. Assessment practices are effective on all courses. Tutors understand the requirements of the awarding bodies well. They carefully apply the relevant assessment criteria when assessing learners' performance. In most classes, tutors carefully check and monitor learners' progress. Learners on access courses receive good written feedback from tutors and assessors, increasing their confidence when completing course units. Learners on the early years course receive appropriate support from the tutor and assessor

to keep their portfolios up to date. Learners have a good understanding of the assessment procedures. Internal verification is thorough. Assessors and tutors meet to standardise the assessment process. For a few early years learners the assessment process is unsatisfactory as there is no assessor for their course at present. They have a backlog of completed units waiting to be assessed.

123. Resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is generally fit for purpose, although some rooms have inappropriate furniture. Course co-ordinators have no main base or office and no identifiable administrative support. Tutorial staff have recent occupational experience but not all have a teaching qualification or are working towards one.

Leadership and management

124. Equality of opportunity is effectively integrated with much of the curriculum. Learners on the early years course use case studies to look at cultural differences in child behaviour and the particular requirements of children with special needs.

125. Some aspects of curriculum management are weak. Much of the data available to managers is collected by area, and that for individual courses or programmes is not easily identifiable. Data on enrolments and achievements is unreliable making it difficult to plan and evaluate provision. No targets are set for recruitment, achievement and retention. There is a limited range of classes to meet the needs of learners. Very little daytime provision is currently running. Of the 28 courses running, six are in the mornings and 22 in the evenings. No courses are offered in the afternoons. A few learners on the access course travel across the county to attend their lessons and are often late, causing some disruption to the class. None of the courses or units is offered through flexible, distance or electronic learning.

126. Quality improvement arrangements are inadequate. Until recently there has been little routine classroom observation of teaching or learning. A new scheme has now been introduced but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. The few staff who have been observed do not fully understand how the results of classroom observations will be used to improve their teaching practice. Good practice is not identified and shared. NAES does not collect course evaluation data or use it to improve courses. Attendance at staff development events is poor. Support, development and performance appraisal for sessional tutors are often not structured or clearly defined.

127. The self-assessment report identified many of the same strengths found by the inspectors, but overlooked many of the weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses mentioned in the self-assessment report were not considered significant by the inspectors. The self-assessment report omitted the early years provision.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas Adult and community learning	4,674	3

128. There are 4,674 learners enrolled on 9,209 courses in visual and performing arts and media. Twenty-three per cent are men, 16 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 2.3 per cent have declared a disability.

129. Courses are offered during the day, in the evening and on Saturdays, in over 350 community venues throughout the county, including adult education centres, schools, libraries, village and church halls, and partner venues such as SureStart centres. Courses run for between half a day and a full academic year. A full programme is run on Saturdays throughout the year, and includes courses such as access to higher education in art and new media and a series of one-day creative workshops in disciplines such as stained glass and Egyptian dance.

130. Ten per cent of the courses are accredited. These include courses in art, creative writing, interior design, textiles, creative skills, ceramics, fashion, lace making, puppet making, soft furnishings, photography and woodwork. The professional diploma in creative arts, a level 4 course, runs on two days a week. The non-accredited courses include a wide variety of classes in painting and drawing, three-dimensional studies, upholstery, jewellery making, digital photography, textiles, singing, instrument playing, music appreciation, and tap, salsa, ballroom and Egyptian dance. One distance-learning course leads to a level 2 qualification in creative embroidery through online learning.

131. Courses are planned and managed by two part-time contract curriculum managers, one of whom is responsible for art and performing arts and the other for craft and textile courses. They are supported by a part-time contract curriculum adviser and four part-time contract curriculum support tutors. There are also three part-time contract specialist tutors, one part-time permanent tutor and 265 hourly paid specialist sessional tutors.

Strengths

- good development of creative skills and techniques
- innovative curriculum to extend learning opportunities

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate quality improvement arrangements

Achievement and standards

132. Learners' creative skills and techniques are developed well and their attainment and progress are generally satisfactory. They experiment with new styles and extend their interest in arts, crafts, music and dance as they develop a wider knowledge of the subjects. They gain confidence, and in some classes they produce a high standard of work. In many

art classes, learners gain knowledge of the basic elements and principles of drawing and painting and use these creatively to experiment with a variety of media. Learners in patchwork and quilting classes use their knowledge of colour theory and their technical proficiency at hand and machine stitching to create good-quality group and individual projects. Learners in performance classes show good rehearsal discipline, dancing and singing competently to their peers, and responding positively to constructive criticism. Learners in dance classes demonstrate a good variety of dance styles, choreography and technical steps, as individuals and in couples. In one string ensemble session observed, the learners developed from playing as individuals into a group of players who listened and responded to each other as their rhythm, timing and overall musicality improved. For some learners in performing arts, this is the first experience they have had of performing before an audience.

133. In some poorer sessions, learners' progress is too slow and some returning learners are insufficiently challenged. The data on achievement in accredited programmes is unreliable and cannot be used as a basis for judgements.

The quality of provision

134. Learning opportunities are being extended well through innovative curriculum development. There is an advanced puppetry course that is unique in its field and allows learners to extend their interest into a more experimental area of puppetry and performance. An e-learning course in creative embroidery provides a level 2 qualification for those unable to attend at centres. The OCN pathfinder programme, run in partnership with community organisations, successfully offers a return-to-learning opportunity for adults such as young parents. Non-traditional learners are also targeted effectively through the pilot access to higher education programme in art and new media. Learners are referred from specialist agencies and receive particularly good levels of support. An extensive programme of Saturday taster courses has resulted in the recruitment of new learners, and NAES is planning a summer programme to extend learning opportunities throughout the year. Courses in a range of arts disciplines are offered at many rural and urban locations throughout the county.

135. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the good and better sessions, the teaching is planned well and includes a range of challenging learning activities and learning materials. However, lesson plans for many classes are poor, with lists of tasks or products rather than stated aims and learning outcomes. In a few classes, poor teaching is characterised by insufficient instruction and support for learners and too little constructive feedback to enable them to progress and improve. In others, the tutor dominates the session and learners do not participate sufficiently in their own learning.

136. The learning materials used in most classes are good, and in a few they are very good. For instance, in one drawing and painting class, a large still-life setting included vibrant orange and cerise patterned fabrics, large arrangements of colourful flowers, and patterned and textured vases to inspire drawings and paintings based on the work of Matisse. Some tutors prepare extensive handouts about the cultural background of the art form they are teaching, with information on where learners can find costumes, art materials, music or reference books about the subject area. However, in some classes, learning resources are uninspiring with too much drawing from second-hand source material such as postcards and magazines. There is limited use of information for teaching, learning and research purposes.

137. Tutors make good arrangements to celebrate learners' work through exhibitions, concerts and performances. At the end of the puppetry courses, there is a performance in a professional theatre space. One dance tutor organises a full formal dance at the end of each term for couples to show their completed routines and to recreate the social elements of dance. Older learners and those with disabilities are enabled to participate fully in sessions. Some routines are modified so that people can dance within their own abilities but still have a fulfilling experience.

138. Most tutors in performance-based subjects are proficient musicians, dancers and performers with extensive practical and teaching experience. Tutors in other subjects are well qualified and a few are practicing artists and makers who bring extensive practical knowledge and experience to the provision. However, some tutors do not have teaching qualifications, and in a few cases, tutors do not have sufficient qualifications or expertise in the subject they are teaching.

139. Accommodation and resources are generally suitable for purpose. Light and airy studio space is available for most art and craft classes, and there is access to basic essential equipment. In some venues the space for art classes is cramped, affecting the scale of learners' work and the media they can use, and in some venues the pianos are out of tune. There are insufficient mirrors for many dance sessions. Dance tutors do not have vocal amplification and sometimes have to shout to unacceptable levels to give instructions and guidance. There are crèche facilities for learners attending the courses based at SureStart centres but there are insufficient childcare facilities for most daytime or Saturday classes.

140. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Pre-course information is satisfactory and is presented through a website, course information sheets and a brochure. New learners have the opportunity to meet tutors before they enrol. Participation is promoted well through a no-fees policy for courses such as access to higher education in art and new media, and those given in partnership with SureStart. Learners on these courses also receive basic materials to support their learning.

141. There is insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress. Some course tutors have no record of learners' prior skill level, the standards of musicianship or dance they have achieved or the progress they are making with their learning goals. In many cases, tutors know that they must record progress but do not do so in any depth. When tutors do monitor learners' progress they often do so by ticking completed tasks or products, rather than making qualitative statements on progress and standards, and on what learners need to do to improve. Learning agreements are not used consistently and are rarely completed fully by learners or tutors. In the few sessions where tutors keep good records, they use them to help learners to progress and improve. One tutor produces a score strip for each learner to show how they are progressing in their ability to sight-read music. Another asks learners to complete their own reflective learning diary after each session, and then annotates their comments.

Leadership and management

142. Improved curriculum planning systems are enabling managers to rationalise the provision. Some unsuccessful courses are being discontinued and popular new courses such as digital photography are being extended. There is not enough accurate data that can be used to support planning and target-setting in the curriculum. Arrangements for

equality of opportunity are satisfactory. All learners have adequate access to classes. However, there is insufficient promotion of cultural diversity in the curriculum. Communication with the hourly paid tutors takes place mainly by newsletter and post, and is unsatisfactory. Fewer that 10 per cent of tutors attend subject-specific staff development events. Many classes are cancelled without explanation. In some cases, tutors change class times without telling managers.

143. Arrangements for quality improvement are inadequate. Records of observations of teaching and learning do not contain sufficient evaluative comment, particularly on teaching and learning. Tutors are not given adequate feedback on their performance. Observers are not always subject specialists nor do they all have teaching qualifications. Good practice is not effectively shared. End-of-course reports do not include sufficient evaluative comment and they are not systematically analysed or used in curriculum planning. Records of internal verification do not adequately comment on assessment practices.

Humanities   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
Adult and community learning	402	3

144. NAES's humanities provision comprises access to higher education courses, AS and A level courses in psychology, GCSE courses in psychology and archaeology, and entry-level short courses in, for instance, child behaviour, ancient Egyptian writing, and tracing your family tree. Some are accredited by the OCN. There are two access to higher education courses, in law and social sciences. In law, learners must attend six units over two years and can join at any stage. The units are not accredited separately. In social science, accredited units can be accumulated over a longer period to suit the needs of individual learners.

145. Four hundred and two learners are enrolled on humanities courses, and there are 19 part-time tutors. Sixteen per cent of learners are men, 11 per cent are from ethnic minorities, and 2 per cent are registered as having physical disabilities. Courses are offered at a total of 44 venues in the county, but most take place in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, North Walsham, and Fakenham. Some venues are dedicated adult education centres and others are in schools.

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on access to higher education courses
- good teaching
- very effective support in many lessons

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on non-access courses
- unsatisfactory accommodation and resources at many centres

Achievement and standards

146. Retention and achievement rates are good on access to higher education courses. In 2002-03 and 2003-04, 80 per cent of learners successfully completed all the units they studied, and 95 per cent remained in learning for the full year. Many learners on these courses have little prior achievement, and experience very difficult or demanding personal circumstances. Many learners who completed their courses in 2002-03 and 2003-04, have gained places on degree courses.

147. In all learning sessions, learners make very well-informed and balanced contributions to discussion, which often show a good grasp of previous learning and a wider awareness of what is going on in the world. Learners in two different AS level psychology classes were able to explain confidently the significance of Milgram's experiment on obedience, and why it was not ethical. In a lesson on the access to social science course, learners talked with genuine interest and knowledge about whether or not the recent general election had been truly democratic. Many learners express themselves fluently both in writing and

verbally. Some make basic errors in grammar and spelling, which they are trying to overcome.

148. Retention rates on non-access courses are poor. Achievement has declined from an already low level in 2002-03. The combined success rates for GCSE and AS level psychology fell from 58 per cent in 2002-03 to 28 per cent in 2003-04. Most of those who failed to achieve did not complete their course.

The quality of provision

149. Most teaching is good. Many lessons are well planned and thorough, with confident and often lively teaching. Tutors give learners good opportunities to take an active part in learning and to contribute their own ideas. In an access to law lesson, learners were able to relate their own experiences of how positive discrimination worked, and to express their views on it. They also worked in groups to review a range of press cuttings dealing with how the law operated in various cases, and decide what principles of justice were demonstrated or compromised in each case. In some sessions, tutors offer learners too much information without giving them enough opportunity to research, think for themselves and frame their ideas into structured responses. Some sessions rely too much on discussion with insufficient alternative learning activities. At the time of the inspection, many learners were close to important examinations or assignments. In several sessions, tutors focused on issues raised by the learners themselves and helped them overcome uncertainties about how they should construct and present answers.

150. Learners are supported very effectively with good-quality handouts on topics and study skills. Tutors are fully aware of the different needs and abilities of their learners. They recognise that many learners have difficulty reconciling the demands of their studies with their other responsibilities. They offer very effective individual help with assignments, suggestions for improving performance, and help with catching up on missed work. Some tutors give individual learners very substantial help in overcoming deficiencies in basic written skills, such as spelling and sentence structure. Learners' assignments are marked carefully. On access courses, two tutors mark a substantial sample of learners' work independently to ensure consistency of standards. Some written feedback on learners' work gives insufficient guidance on how they could improve. The targets set in many individual learning plans are too vague to enable progress towards them to be evaluated effectively.

151. Some centres have good accommodation but not enough resources. At others these are both poor. At two centres this seriously restricts the range of possible teaching methods and learning activities. Overall there is very little use of ICT, although tutors encourage learners to use websites. In two centres, computers are available but are not used by tutors in humanities lessons. Crèches are available at two centres for daytime learners, but not at others. Social and refreshment facilities are rudimentary at some centres, and at one school the toilets are unpleasant.

Leadership and management

152. There is a clear strategy to give opportunities to learners from all backgrounds and circumstance and to sustain small groups in some disadvantaged areas. However, there is no clearly stated rationale for the range of courses offered outside the access provision.

153. The access courses are well managed. There are full-time and part-time options, and learners join at different times of the year and complete courses at different rates. Moderators' reports testify to efficient course planning and administration and good assessment practice. The main group of tutors, who share much of the access teaching, works well as a team. Tutors share ideas and good practice effectively. A humanities support tutor works well with this main team, and with some of the tutors on other courses. However, too little time is allowed for regular contact to be maintained with all tutors, particularly those working well away from Norwich. Some need more help to ensure consistency of practice.

154. The self-assessment report identifies many strengths and weaknesses very clearly, in spite of incomplete achievement data. However, precise targets are not set for recruitment and achievement. There is insufficient analysis of the reasons for the decline in achievement on AS, A2, GCSE and OCN-accredited courses in 2004. Insufficient use is made of lesson observations, both to support individual tutors and to improve teaching and learning as a whole.

English, languages & communications   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas Adult and community learning	3,166	2

155. NAES provides classes in 14 foreign languages, and in English, BSL, lip reading and Braille. There are 3,166 learners, of whom 34 per cent are men. Eighty-four per cent of learners are on courses in modern foreign languages. Learners can study up to level 3 in Spanish, German, English and Japanese, and beyond level 3 in Italian and French. The other languages offered are Arabic, Russian, Turkish, Greek, Polish, Mandarin, Danish, Dutch and Portuguese. In some language classes, beginners and improvers are taught together. Most courses run for two hours a week over 32 weeks and are accredited. In 2004-05, the proportion of non-accredited courses rose from 5 per cent to 9 per cent. Classes are taught in 119 venues across the county. Thirty-six per cent of the classes are held outside Norwich and 70 per cent are held in the evening. The provision is managed by a curriculum adviser who reports to a director of operations. There are seven specialist curriculum support tutors and 107 sessional tutors, 96 per cent of whom are qualified teachers.

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- good range of provision
- very good curriculum development initiatives
- good staff development in modern foreign languages

Weaknesses

- poor management of the BSL curriculum
- poor use of data in management

Achievement and standards

156. The achievement rate is satisfactory. In modern foreign languages, where there is some resistance from learners to formal assessment, 50 per cent of learners achieved full awards, and a further 29 per cent achieved a partial award. Learners have particularly well-developed listening skills, and report increased confidence in using the foreign language for work and leisure purposes. Advanced learners successfully tackle demanding texts and can express their views in debates on current affairs. Attendance rates in most classes are good, and the retention rate is satisfactory at 81 per cent.

157. In lip reading, learners have a good understanding of their hearing impairment and a positive self-help attitude. They acquire very good practical strategies which enable them to lead full and independent lives. Some have taken up voluntary work in their communities including membership of committees. All learners report improved public and social interaction as a consequence of attending classes. In 2003-04, of 234 learners, 84 per cent, gained credits under the assessment scheme.

158. In 2003-04, achievement in GCSE and A level English was satisfactory. Learners demonstrate confidence in articulating and justifying their opinions, and show good skills in critical analysis.

159. For BSL, which accounted for 9 per cent of the provision in 2003-04, the achievement rate at level 1 was less than satisfactory at 61 per cent, and at level 2 it was poor at 33 per cent. A bridging course, developed to help learners with the difficult transition from level 1 to level 2, had a 91 per cent success rate, with 41 learners achieving accreditation in 2003-04.

The quality of provision

160. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Language tutors use the taught language effectively. They speak it almost exclusively when presenting new vocabulary and even when explaining instructions and grammar points. In the better sessions, tutors draw on a good selection of imaginative and creative activities to cater for learners' different learning styles and create good opportunities for learning. For example, they often use activities carried out in pairs and groups in which learners circulate around the room. In many classes, learners use the target language throughout the session as the natural medium of communication. In English, learners are encouraged to contribute to discussions and justify their opinions by skilful elicitation from the tutor. In poorer sessions there is no planned differentiation other than by outcome, and some learners struggle to carry out tasks. In a few sessions the language used by tutors was too complicated and instructions were not clear.

161. Outside the classroom, tutors have recently organised a range of events to enhance learning. These include visits to France, taster days in Chinese, Italian and Spanish, visits to restaurants, cookery demonstrations and foreign film showings, and talks on other aspects of culture.

162. During sessions, tutors give good individual support to learners and create a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere. NAES has developed a very good modern languages handbook for learners. This contains friendly, clear information on the types of courses available and what to expect during sessions, including a section on teaching methods and tips on being a good language learner. A guide for learners of BSL was mentioned in the self-assessment report but has not yet been produced. Publicity about courses is satisfactory, and learners can obtain further advice from centre staff by telephone or e-mail. Centre staff have been given grids containing very clear criteria to help them explain the different levels of language classes to new learners. However, there are no level descriptors for BSL courses. Additional learning needs can be identified on enrolment forms and learner agreements, and English staff have received one training session on how to support learners with literacy needs.

163. NAES offers a good range of provision including less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Dutch, Danish and Polish. In response to a request from a local district council, a course in Portuguese is offered to employees who deal with Portuguese migrant workers. One imaginative initiative has been a taster course in Italian run at a local pizza outlet. Learners can progress to level 3 in English, German, and Japanese and to level 4 in French, Italian and Spanish. Classes are offered in 65 venues across the county.

164. Learning materials are usually appropriate and attractively presented. Many tutors use games to encourage everyone in the group to participate. Some, particularly in more advanced classes, use up-to-date materials taken from the internet. There is a satisfactory materials library at one centre and a smaller resource bank at another. Access to the former is restricted as it is in a classroom which is often in use. In some sessions, teaching resources are limited. In one BSL class the tutor had no overhead projector or video recorder. In another centre the learners had brought in their own audio equipment to supplement that provided, as the acoustics and sound reproduction were poor. Many language tutors are native speakers of the language they teach, and all are competent linguists. Almost all tutors have a teaching qualification and those that do not are on relevant training programmes.

165. Assessments are carried out in accordance with the requirements of awarding bodies, and internal moderation is very thorough. All tutors set homework regularly and it is marked promptly with helpful comments in most cases. Learners' language skills are assessed at the start of each course. The assessment is often informal and is not always recorded in any detail. Most tutors use the standard learner agreement to identify learners' individual aims. However, the aims recorded are often vague and not specific to the subject being studied. In many cases this document is not updated to take into account the progress learners make.

Leadership and management

166. Curriculum development initiatives are very good. NAES is now in its second cycle of an award-winning language programme for small and medium-sized enterprises. This project has recruited and retained new and non-traditional learners. It is already well on target to exceed its goal of 100 companies and 100 learners by March 2006. Learners receive help with promoting their companies, including designing simple websites, and with speaking and writing to clients in their mother tongue. NAES has been particularly good at devising appropriate accreditation. It has developed a level 3 qualification in the four main European languages and this is currently being improved to more closely match learners' assessment needs. The new OCN scheme for lip reading has been well received by learners. Working in partnership with two local universities, NAES has designed an access programme for French and Spanish. NAES piloted the national languages ladder assessment scheme in five languages including Arabic. Tutors' practice in assessment of levels and against descriptors has sharpened. They demonstrate resourcefulness in using assessment methods sympathetic to adult learners. NAES has also piloted an e-learning initiative to assess the value of ICT in language learning.

167. Staff development is good in modern foreign languages. There is an in-house programme for new tutors who do not have a teaching qualification, as well as open sessions on specific competences, such as differentiation, target language teaching and materials development. Tutors can attend relevant conferences and training in Britain and abroad. Continuing professional development in lip reading is good, with tutors able to take up opportunities at county, regional and national level.

168. In modern foreign languages and lip reading, managers have clear policies for teaching and learning, which are communicated well to tutors and learners. There is an effective staffing structure for curriculum development and support and a very good team ethos. Regular, well-attended tutor meetings focus on sharing good practice, and language-specific meetings are held in the foreign language.

169. The quality assurance systems are effective. The process for the appointment of new staff is rigorous. There are many session observations, which are well reported and lead to good follow-up actions, but the grade profile is consistently higher than at the inspection. The self-assessment process has incorporated feedback from learners and tutors, but responses are patchy. The self-assessment report is thorough and its findings broadly match those of the inspectors, although some weaknesses have been overlooked. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

170. The curriculum management of BSL is poor. There is no curriculum support tutor and the team ethos is poor. Tutors feel isolated. Responsibility for examination administration is unclear between centre staff and tutors. Learners do not know the criteria for success in courses, the pass rates, or the progression opportunities. Some accommodation is inappropriate, with poor lighting and teaching resources. One room is too hot and another venue is unwelcoming. Support in English classes is not always satisfactory. New tutors teaching in remoter venues are inadequately supported.

171. Managers in the programme area make poor use of data. Curriculum managers and curriculum support staff do not have access to the management information system. They do not have a detailed overview of current performance or trends to use in decision-making. Data on achievement is incomplete, slow to be produced and, in some instances, unreliable.

Foundation programmes   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		*3*
Adult and community learning	866	3
Literacy and numeracy		*2*
Adult and community learning	2,879	2
Independent living and leisure skills		*2*
Adult and community learning	842	2

172. Nineteen per cent of foundation learners are enrolled on courses in ESOL. In 2003-04, there were 648 learners, and the number has increased to 866 in 2004-05. Courses, including taster courses, are provided at pre-entry level, entry levels 1 to 3, and levels 1 and 2. Most are run over 60 hours. Courses are held in a wide range of community venues, and also in care homes, factories and schools. Accreditation is provided through national awarding bodies. The programme has a full-time curriculum manager who is also responsible for literacy and numeracy. Professional support is provided by a half-time ESOL adviser. There are 28 tutors and two bilingual support tutors. Some of the ESOL tutors also teach literacy and numeracy.

173. Nearly two-thirds of foundation learners are enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses. In 2003-04, there were 2,520 learners, and the number has increased to 2,879 in 2004-05. Courses are provided at entry levels 1 to 3, and levels 1 and 2, and range from taster sessions, through short courses lasting up to 30 hours, to academic year-long courses of 60 hours. Accreditation is provided through national literacy and numeracy awards and entry level OCN units. Classes are held at a wide range of locations including workplaces, community centres, village halls, voluntary organisations and SureStart premises. There is a full-time curriculum manager, 69 tutors, two curriculum support tutors, seven advisers, six project workers and one workplace officer.

174. Eighteen per cent of foundation learners are enrolled on independent living and leisure skills programmes. In 2003-04, there were 892 learners and at present there are 842. Courses are designed to develop learners' skills in literacy and numeracy and to promote their confidence, self-esteem and independence through the study of a broad range of subjects, including health, well-being and personal development, arts, media and craft, ICT and vocational preparation. Accreditation is provided through regional OCN units. Courses are held at a wide range of venues including day centres, residential care centres, libraries, schools, and community centres. Courses are attended by learners with a diverse range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The area is managed by a full-time curriculum manager who is also responsible for managing learner support. There are 56 tutors.

ESOL   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good use of individual learning plans to support learning
- good targeted provision to meet identified needs

- very good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently flexible course structure
- insufficient management capacity to support the ESOL programme
- insufficient use of data to monitor achievements

Achievement and standards

175. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners' needs are identified through continuous assessment and diagnosis and most learners make evident progress towards their goals. Learners describe progress in speaking to colleagues at work, and understanding health and safety notices, and improvements in social communication. Advanced learners can discuss aspects of language such as context and formality.

176. There is some evidence of good progression within the programme, for example to level 1 and 2 national tests, and of progression to work and further study, but this is not monitored systematically.

177. In 2003-04, the overall retention rate on ESOL courses was satisfactory at 80 per cent. However, on long courses it was low at 58 per cent. No figures are yet available for 2004-05. Attendance in some classes was poor, but in most it was satisfactory. Registers are monitored and failure to attend is followed up.

178. Data on achievement is unreliable. This weakness has been identified and action is being taken to improve it.

The quality of provision

179. There is good use of individual learning plans to support learning. The plans are well designed and learner-centred, and include assessment information, long- and short-term goals, specific targets to achieve the short-term goals, and tutors' and learners' assessments of attendance and punctuality. Individual learning plans are used consistently for all classes. They are regularly reviewed and new targets set. In most cases, relevant assessed work is included, with good feedback to show that targets have been achieved. In some cases, targets are not in a language that learners can understand.

180. There is good targeted provision to meet identified needs. Courses are provided where there are many new migrant workers and also where longer-established ESOL learners live. Managers use local data and first-hand knowledge of the area to plan the provision. Some classes are in remote areas, and there are clusters in Norwich and King's Lynn, where there is a lot of demand. There has been significant growth in ESOL programmes in the past two years. Learner numbers have increased from 648 in 2003-04 to 866 in 2004-05.

181. Support for learners is very good. Additional funding has been obtained to provide individual teaching and personal support for learners who are geographically isolated, do not have enough confidence to attend a class, need specific help in order to progress, or cannot attend a class at a time that suits their work pattern. There is good crèche provision for ESOL classes. In the Breckland area, where there is a large number of migrant workers,

a support worker provides bilingual support and taster courses mainly for Portuguese learners. Learners receive very good personal support from their tutors, which helps them become more confident and recognise their achievements. Tutors provide good tutorial support in reviewing learning plans. Learners are encouraged to use their own languages to support their learning, for example by keeping bilingual notebooks and vocabularies. In some cases, good support is provided for learners with disabilities, for example through large-print materials. Tutors are given a list of agencies to refer to for help.

182. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons there are well-planned communicative activities, good use of authentic and learner-centred materials and good use of pair and group work. Work includes interesting tasks such as planning a visit to a local tourist attraction, or dealing with a problem in the workplace. Higher-level learners are challenged and given complex and interesting tasks relevant to their work or personal needs. Lower-level learners are encouraged to extend their language skills through games and interactive activities, and activities are based on their own experience, for example understanding a real weather forecast, or using photographs to identify local shops. Errors are corrected appropriately and sensitively, and work on grammar rules is closely related to the lesson aims. In other lessons, although learning takes place, the better learners are not sufficiently challenged. The activities are not relevant enough to the learners' lives, and there is too much reliance on textbook activities and worksheets that are not adapted to the needs of the group or individual learners. In some cases there is insufficient evidence of progressive development of language skills.

183. Initial assessment is used to place learners in classes at an appropriate level, or to plan learning in mixed-ability groups. Some of the diagnostic assessment is good, but it is not consistently implemented. Learners are not always given enough written feedback during their programme.

184. Resources are satisfactory at most sites. Laptop computers are available for tutors to borrow but they get little use. There was no use of ICT in the ESOL lessons observed, apart from some materials printed from the internet. Accommodation is good or satisfactory in most cases, although there is some poor accommodation. Four ESOL tutors have recently completed level 4 training, but a few still do not have the minimum qualification for teaching ESOL. NAES has identified this as an action point.

185. The course structure is not flexible enough. Nearly all courses run for two hours a week over 30 weeks. Many learners interviewed said they would like to attend for more hours each week. Many have irregular work patterns. Registers show that attendance and retention rates are often poor on long courses, and this affects learning and achievement. There are plans to pilot more intensive courses.

Leadership and management

186. There is a good programme of staff development to support ESOL teaching, and some good partnerships with other providers and local organisations. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good, and individuals who find it difficult to access classes or who need specific help to progress are well supported. Local knowledge is used to plan provision. Guidance for tutors emphasises the importance of equality and diversity, and teaching materials are monitored for their compliance with equal opportunities guidelines.

187. At present there is insufficient management capacity to support the development of

the ESOL programme. It has been recognised in the self-assessment report that because of the recent rapid expansion in the programme, the current staffing level is too low. Few observations of teaching and learning have taken place and some of them have been carried out by non-specialists. Quality monitoring of individual learning plans and sampling of internal accreditation is done by basic skills advisers. They are not trained to assess the specifics of ESOL including speaking and listening. The ESOL co-ordinator has produced a number of useful good practice guides but cannot ensure that these are being consistently implemented. There is no staff appraisal. Courses are evaluated, taking into account the views of learners and staff, but no evidence has been produced of improvements taking place as a result, apart from some cases where learners have been referred for individual support. Data is not sufficiently reliable for managers to use it to plan or set targets or to monitor achievement. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and identifies the same strengths and weaknesses as were found during inspection.

Literacy and numeracy *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals and qualifications
- challenging and interesting teaching in most lessons
- highly effective assessment
- wide range of responsive programmes to widen participation in learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on literacy and numeracy skills development in some contextualised and themed courses
- insufficient use of ICT

Achievement and standards

188. There is good achievement of qualifications. In 2003-04, 82 per cent of the learners who took national qualifications passed them, and 91 per cent of these gained qualifications at levels 1 or 2.

189. A good proportion of learners achieve the learning goals identified on their individual learning plans. Learners acquire useful new skills. For example, learners in a computer/literacy class who had not used computers before they started the class were able to word process documents independently and use clip art in their work. Learners apply their newly acquired skills in their daily life and many comment on their increased confidence in reading aloud to their children and helping them with their school work, making everyday numerical calculations such as percentage discounts, or applying for jobs.

190. The retention rate is satisfactory. In 2003-04, 77 per cent of learners on longer courses remained on their programme, while on short courses the proportion was 91 per cent.

191. Overall, the standard of work is satisfactory. There are some very good examples of work, and some has been published on the local BBC website. Learners make satisfactory progress. Some continue their studies, in some cases up to GCSE level, or take up opportunities for volunteering or employment.

The quality of provision

192. There is challenging and engaging teaching in many lessons. Tutors' preparation is thorough and lessons are well structured. Tutors meet the needs of individual learners well, both in whole group work and when they are studying on their own. Tutors provide clear explanations and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They make effective use of prompting and questioning techniques to stretch learners' understanding. They are highly skilled in linking teaching to everyday life to ensure that learning is interesting and meaningful. Good use is made of practical objects and everyday materials. For example, in numeracy lessons, a collection of groceries was used for estimating and comparing weights. Tutors supportively question learners and challenge them to explain how they arrive at the answers to calculations. In literacy lessons, tutors ask learners about the different approaches they use to help them to remember difficult spellings, and stimulating discussions take place about the different methods used. However, in some classes, tutors rely too much on handouts.

193. Assessment is thorough and highly effective. Learners take initial and further diagnostic assessments, usually over the first six hours of a course. Tutors identify the skills they need to work on by carefully analysing the results. In negotiation with learners, tutors record clear, measurable and easily understood learning goals on each individual's learning plan. Learning goals are reviewed regularly, and an excellent system of continuous assessment enables tutors, managers and learners to clearly identify whether targets have been achieved and progress made.

194. There is a wide range of responsive programmes to widen participation in learning. Productive partnerships enable easier access to provision for some of the hardest-to-reach groups of learners, including those living in very isolated rural communities in the west of the county. Provision has also been developed in consultation with a range of employers. Programmes are available during the daytime and evening, and include taster sessions, short courses, and traditional three-term courses. There are clear progression routes. Many literacy and numeracy courses are based on an imaginative theme or context such as skills for health, working with children, or committee skills, and successfully attract diverse groups of learners. However, there are not enough numeracy classes to meet current needs. This was identified in the self-assessment report.

195. There is good individual support for learners. An extensive range of support systems is available to enable learners to join programmes, including crèche provision and transport. Much of this support is the result of effective partnerships with local community organisations. Information, advice and guidance provided at recruitment are effective in placing learners in the correct class, and tutors and information, advice and guidance specialists provide appropriate information about progression options. Although staff have a good awareness of how to identify learners who may have dyslexia, there are too few specialist dyslexia tutors to meet demand. This has been identified in the self-assessment report.

196. Resources are satisfactory. Most venues visited have appropriate furniture for adults to use, although access to some of the rooms is difficult as external doors are locked and classes take place on the first floor of buildings without lifts. Tutors are appropriately qualified or are working towards relevant qualifications. A range of suitable books and other paper-based teaching and learning materials is available in most classes. Handouts

produced by tutors are generally of a high standard and easy to read. However, a minority are poorly copied and contain too much text for entry level learners.

197. There is insufficient focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills in some lessons. Lesson plans for some contextualised and themed courses fail to specify literacy learning objectives. The focus of the teaching is on the context and there is not enough literacy teaching. In some numeracy classes, too many new concepts are introduced and the pace is too fast. In other lessons, tutors confuse learners by using too many technical terms and the main learning objectives are lost.

198. There is insufficient use of ICT. Although there are specific 'computers for writing' courses in some areas of the county, very little use is made of computers in other lessons. In some centres, there are computers either in the classroom or nearby, and in others there are laptop computers available to borrow, but few tutors use them. Although many tutors use word-processing to prepare their lessons, they make little use of internet websites as a resource for teaching materials or for learners to practise skills on their own at home.

Leadership and management

199. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Communication between all staff is good. There is a system of regular and effective meetings as well as frequent informal contact between staff by telephone and e-mail. Sessional and part-time staff are well supported by their managers. Internal verification is thorough.

200. Effective use is made of national data to identify the areas of greatest literacy and numeracy need and to plan the location of courses. Data is successfully used to monitor progress against externally set targets. However, there is not enough timely local data available to use in decision-making. Very little data is available to quantify or identify learners' progression routes. The only targets are those set by funding agencies. No specific targets are set to meet local priorities such as recruitment of particular groups of under-represented learners.

201. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory with staff having an appropriate understanding of diversity issues and how to work with learners. Although local data on disability, gender and ethnicity has recently been produced, it is unreliable and not used in planning.

202. There is no staff appraisal system in operation. Staff either identify their own training needs or these emerge through course evaluations, learners' feedback, and the general monitoring of schemes of work and lesson plans. The system for observing teaching and learning is inadequate to bring about continuing improvements in the classroom.

Independent living and leisure skills   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement
- good teaching and learning
- very effective use of individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress
- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for progression
- inadequate resources

Achievement and standards

203. There is good achievement of learners' personal and social goals. Many learners with profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in developing communication and social skills. They learn to communicate effectively with their peers and work constructively in groups. For example, one group of learners with very challenging behaviour started their course unable to remain in the classroom for a whole session. They now stay and make a positive contribution. In craft classes the standard of learners' work is good and their achievements are celebrated. In a 'Making Music' class, learners with mental health difficulties compose and record their own songs, which are performed publicly.

204. Some programmes include modules accredited locally by the OCN. For many learners, this is the first time they have been able to achieve a recognised qualification. Tutors recognise the multiple difficulties many learners face, but set them challenging targets to consolidate their existing skills and encourage progress towards their learning goals. In a computing class, learners with a range of profound difficulties achieved introductory OCN computing modules before the end of the course.

The quality of provision

205. Teaching and learning are good. Most lesson plans are detailed and reflect the needs identified in the learners' individual learning plans. Staff set clear, appropriate targets and review progress at the end of each session. Initial assessment is effective, and tutors continue to assess learners' needs throughout the programmes. Tutors are aware of learners' complex and diverse needs, and give clear and sensitive instructions to enable them to complete tasks successfully. In one session a tutor prepared a detailed lesson plan to take into account the needs of hearing impaired learners, learners with physical disabilities and learners with mental health difficulties. Tutors have good relationships with learners, encouraging good participation in learning activities. In the best sessions, tutors use a variety of learning activities that successfully involve learners. For example, a tutor in a healthy eating class successfully introduced basic literacy and numeracy to learners with diverse needs, through the preparation of a meal.

206. Tutors make very effective use of individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress. The plans are derived from the results of good initial assessment and a sensitive induction process. Learners' needs are continually assessed throughout their programmes. Individual learning plans show progress clearly and effectively and accurately reflect the small steps in learning that have taken place. Recording is carried out in partnership with learners, and, where necessary, with carers and professional agencies. Every effort is made to capture learners' views, and learners are encouraged to participate in planning their learning goals.

207. Learners receive good individual support. In the best sessions, tutors and learning support assistants repeatedly reinforce small steps in learning. Tutors ensure that all learners are given individual attention, both for their specific needs and when reviewing the

progress of their learning at the end of a session. There are learning support assistants available in all sessions and they make a positive contribution to achievement of the learning goals. Further specialist support is available if necessary. For example, in one session, a signer is available for a learner with hearing difficulties.

208. The range of provision is satisfactory. The service has effective partnerships with a range of charitable, statutory and other organisations that allow it to provide for a diverse range of learners with varying difficulties and/or disabilities.

209. There are insufficient opportunities for learners to progress to alternative provision. Although some learners' progress is limited by their profound disabilities, and a few learners do progress to other courses or to further education, many do not have the opportunity to move on to alternative provision. Some learners have been attending the same centre for many years, and following a similar curriculum. There is little provision of suitable work placements or work experience. Although learners do make progress in developing skills, there are few opportunities for them to integrate with the wider curriculum provision.

210. Resources are inadequate. Many of the sessions take place in outreach locations such as day centres, church halls, community centres, libraries and community homes. Tutors have little access to resources and many have to produce their own materials. In some classes the limited budget allocated to consumables restricts the activities available. There is little access to audio-visual equipment and ICT, denying many learners an opportunity to develop further skills. Some accommodation is unsuitable for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities, and some of the learning environments are unsuitable. For example, a class for learners with mental health difficulties was held in a large room in a library, next to a very noisy public space. Many rooms where classes are held are sparsely furnished.

Leadership and management

211. The operational management of learning enhancement programmes is effective and tutors are supported well by area advisers. There is a weekly newsletter to inform tutors of operational matters, and the area advisers visit all centres regularly. There are staff meetings once a term to share good practice, but the wide geographical spread of centres means that some staff find it difficult to attend.

212. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. The area advisers regularly visit all centres and monitor course and learner files. There is organised observation of teaching and learning, and all staff interviewed had been observed. After the observations, tutors' development needs are discussed with them. Training events focus on the needs of learners, the curriculum and the tutors, but some tutors find it difficult to attend because of their timing and the distance they have to travel.

213. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Staff are aware of learners' needs and the problems they face, and treat them with consideration and respect. They make good efforts to communicate with learners and consult them about courses and other matters. However, there is little overt promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum.

Family learning   **Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2,034	3

214. NAES offers provision in FLLN, and wider family learning, and progression courses from these. Courses are offered during the day and in the evening, mostly in schools but also in village halls and community and children's centres. FLLN programmes are aimed at learners who want to develop entry level, level 1 and level 2 skills. Learners have the opportunity to take the national literacy and numeracy tests on FLLN courses and to gain OCN accreditation on wider family learning courses. There are four wider family learning courses, 35 FLLN courses and 11 progression courses. Courses run for between 12 and 72 hours, and there are also a number of workshops and short events. There are 186 learners on FLLN programmes, 47 on wider family learning programmes and 41 on progression courses. In 2003-04, learners enrolled on 1,488 courses and completed 1,879 short taster events and workshops. In 2004-05, 1,213 learners have completed short taster events and workshops, 711 learners have enrolled on family learning courses and 110 have joined progression courses. The provision is managed by a full-time family learning manager who is supported by a post-16 curriculum adviser. Fourteen tutors teach on the programmes, two of whom work full time. In addition, three 'Books for Babies' development workers offer pre-school provision in areas of rural and urban deprivation.

Strengths

- good achievement
- good range of targeted provision
- effective collaboration to promote family learning

Weaknesses

- some poor teaching
- inadequate individual learning plans
- inadequate monitoring of the quality of teaching

Achievement and standards

215. Learners achieve well. In 2003-04, all the learners on wider family learning programmes gained an OCN qualification. On FLLN programmes, 87 per cent of learners entered for the national tests in literacy or numeracy passed. So far in 2004-05, the achievement rate is 93 per cent in literacy and 82 per cent in numeracy.

216. Learners make good progress towards achieving their personal goals, both in FLLN and in wider family learning. Parents and carers gain confidence in talking to teachers and in supporting their children's development. They also increase their understanding of how children learn and teachers teach, and of the specialist language used in teaching literacy and numeracy in schools. Learners acquire good transferable skills to use with their children at home. For example, some parents and carers learn craft activities such as

puppet making and printing and use these very well to develop their young children's use of mathematical language. Many learners who initially lack confidence enjoy working with other adults and children and gain many social benefits from participation in family learning programmes.

217. In 2003-04, the retention rate was satisfactory at 89 per cent, and the attendance was also satisfactory at 78 per cent. Learners' aspirations are raised through attending courses, and many have progressed to other programmes, including computing, childcare, classroom support assistance and GCSE courses.

The quality of provision

218. There is a good range of family learning provision to meet the needs of learners and to widen participation. There is a variety of first-step courses to attract new learners. These include family arts and crafts, storytelling workshops and sessions using local radio. Three 'Books for Babies' development workers successfully organise regular sessions for adults and their pre-school children in areas where there are high levels of economic and social disadvantage. Family ESOL programmes have been developed in response to the increase in minority ethnic communities in the county. FLLN courses are offered in over 80 locations throughout the county during term time and in the holidays. There are good progression opportunities within family learning, from informal workshops for parents and carers and their pre-school children, through wider family learning courses offering accreditation, to longer, intensive family literacy and numeracy courses. Family learning staff establish very good links with other partners, such as family centres, health visitors, libraries, museums, national charities, local radio and television, to involve a wide range of parents from identified target groups.

219. Resources are generally satisfactory. Most locations are suitable for learning sessions for adults. However, the computer suite used for some family ESOL classes is not suitable. It is cramped and restricts group work and the use of a wide range of learning resources. There is a good stock of laptop computers and digital cameras for tutors to borrow, and they use multimedia resources imaginatively to support digital storytelling courses. There is a good range of arts and crafts resources for wider family learning courses. Tutors attend regular staff development sessions, and most are appropriately qualified.

220. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Tutors are supportive of learners and sensitive to their needs, and relationships between learners and tutors are good. Learners are given advice and guidance on accreditation as courses progress. All tutors have a progression pack containing information on progression opportunities and contact details, and they discuss progression with learners. Childcare provision is good. Additional funding is used to provide transport to ESOL classes so that parents with babies and young children can attend.

221. There is some poor teaching on FLLN and wider family learning programmes. In the weaker sessions, tutors use a narrow range of teaching and learning approaches. There is often too much explanation by tutors, and learners have few opportunities to take part in group work, discussion and practical activities. There is insufficient modelling of approaches that parents and carers could use with their children at home. In some numeracy sessions, too many concepts and approaches are introduced in quick succession without adequate explanation, and learners do not have sufficient opportunities to practise skills and consolidate their learning. In some sessions, learners are not always sufficiently

challenged. Some session plans refer to skills levels in the core curriculum but these do not reflect the needs of individual learners in the group.

222. However, in the best classes, sessions are well planned with clear objectives understood by learners. The needs of individual learners are met through the use of differentiated materials. There is a good mix of participatory activities, discussions and games that successfully motivate learners and encourage effective interaction with their children and others in the group. In a successful session about schools' daily mathematics lesson, all the numeracy activities were made relevant to learners. There was skilful integration of learners' experiences and contributions with the tutor's specialist knowledge and the requirements of the school curriculum. Learners were encouraged to explore the mathematical language and knowledge used in games such as snakes and ladders and jigsaws, and the potential of devising fun mathematics activities using everyday items such as mail order catalogues.

223. Individual learning plans are inadequate. Many are not completed or updated to show progress, and they are not used effectively by learners or tutors. They do not adequately reflect the personal learning goals and needs of individual learners, and are not sufficiently detailed or specific to enable learners to monitor and evaluate their progress. Learners record brief descriptions of their learning goals and aspirations but do not agree short-term targets with tutors. Some learners find it difficult to articulate their goals and have difficulty recognising their achievements without this input from their tutors. The effective use of individual learning plans has been identified as an area for staff development.

Leadership and management

224. There is effective collaboration with a range of partners to promote family learning and develop programmes. Key partners, such as the funding body and headteachers, are represented on the family learning advisory group. This encourages co-operative working and supports new developments. Members of the group are currently working with the family learning manager to promote family learning to children's centres and to more schools. The family learning manager works closely with colleagues in the advisory service to ensure that schools have a good understanding of family learning. For example, plans are in place to offer an awareness raising session to parent governors in the autumn. Staff have established links with other organisations in areas of social and economic deprivation to develop coherent provision and make best use of resources.

225. Other aspects of the management of family learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned. Communications between the family learning team and tutors are good and tutors understand the roles and responsibilities in the team. Staff are well supported and have satisfactory opportunities for development. There are written agreements outlining the respective roles of schools and the provider. Paperwork has been standardised and is used consistently. However, there is not enough use of data in programme planning and there is no regular, comprehensive review of specific family learning programmes to use in self-assessment and planning.

226. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of equality of opportunity. Tutors adapt learning materials to take account of specific learning difficulties such as visual impairment and dyslexia. Learning materials are free of charge.

227. The service collects and analyses learners' views and course reports and uses this information to plan improvements. The self-assessment report is not sufficiently self-critical and the development plan does not reflect key areas for development identified in the text of the report or in the annual strategy review.

228. There is inadequate monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Only one adult tutor has been observed in 2004-05. There is a system of formal, informal and peer observations, but their role and intended function is unclear. There is no policy on the observation of new tutors. Observation reports are detailed and provide helpful feedback but contain too few judgements on the quality of learning, and the timescale for the implementation of agreed action plans is not always clear.