

INSPECTION REPORT

Isle of Wight LEA

17 June 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** 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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Isle of Wight LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Isle of Wight Local Education Authority (LEA) adult and community learning service (the service) is in the cultural and leisure services directorate of the council which is based at Newport. It works towards and contributes to some of the council's key corporate objectives such as promoting learning among island communities and the social and economic regeneration of the island. The adult and community learning manager is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the provision. She reports to the associate director of cultural and leisure services who has overall responsibility for the provision. During term time, the service caters for approximately 2,000 learners. At the time of the inspection, approximately 450 learners were actively involved in adult and community learning classes and projects. Family learning programmes operate in partnership with local schools. A family learning manager and a team of tutors are responsible for this provision. They are employed by the council. Much of the adult and community provision is non-accredited and subcontracted to other providers. The Isle of Wight College's adult education department offers 94 courses involving seven areas of learning at the college in Newport, or at community locations throughout the island. These courses are mainly personal development programmes in areas such as the arts, languages and humanities. The service also works with the college's learning opportunities department to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Other personal development programmes aimed mainly at women in disadvantaged communities are subcontracted to the WEA. The service also works in partnership with two other subcontracted providers, Platform One and the Isle of Wight Council's arts unit, to deliver short arts-based programmes which mainly centre around island carnival and event activities.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

2. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** The service's leadership and management of adult and community learning are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Its arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. The family learning programme is outstanding and the provision in visual and performing arts and media is satisfactory.

3. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Staff are involved in the self-assessment process and contribute well to it. Most staff understand the significance of self-assessment and its relationship to development planning. The service makes satisfactory use of learners' views. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in April 2005. It provides a realistic assessment of some areas of the provision. Inspectors' findings matched most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. However, the service's teaching and learning observation grade profile, which provided evidence for many of the judgements about the quality of education and training, was considered to be over-generous.

4. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The service has developed significantly in its three years of operation. A clear focus on

ISLE OF WIGHT LEA

strategic management and quality improvement has enabled it to identify development needs in most areas. Efforts have been made to use the results of each self-assessment to provide a focus for further change and improvement. The quality improvement system is not yet reliable or well established enough.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR ISLE OF WIGHT LEA:

- maintain the good learning opportunities in carnival activities and the outstanding family learning provision
- make better use of the outcomes of quality improvement
- improve assessment practices
- plan and develop the provision more effectively
- improve the sharing of good practice
- introduce a more innovative arts programme linked to other subcontractors' provision
- improve the college-based curriculum

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

Visual & performing arts & media			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Other contributory areas</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	666	3	

Family learning			1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		1	
Adult and community learning	140	1	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

5. The service offers provision in a range of areas of learning including visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, humanities, and family learning. At the time of the inspection, only a few classes were being offered in

many of these areas of learning. The inspection team reported on and graded the provision in visual and performing arts and media and family learning. Inspectors did not visit the Isle of Wight LEA adult and community learning service for inspection activities during the period before the final visit. All inspection evidence was gathered during the final visit.

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	30
Number of learners interviewed	70
Number of staff interviewed	55
Number of subcontractors interviewed	21
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	28
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	10

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

6. **Retention and achievement rates are very good in family learning.** Learners are very successful in gaining skills which help them work with their children. They develop good parenting skills and a good understanding of the way their children learn at school. Learners work enthusiastically and confidently with their children and gain nationally recognised accreditation for their work. They make good use of well-integrated opportunities to practise and reinforce their own literacy and numeracy skills. In visual and performing arts and media programmes, learners make good progress in information technology (IT), developing a sound understanding of professional graphic design software. They apply newly acquired skills to design excellent products and publications. Learners achieve very good standards of performance work for carnival, gaining self-confidence and health benefits. Learners produce dynamic music and dance sequences and design and make very imaginative costumes.

The quality of provision

7. **Standards of teaching and learning are good in family learning.** Very effective planning is carried out by learning support assistants, schoolteachers and college tutors. Learning activities relate well to learners' family lives and focus well on their children's development needs. Tutors work well to ensure that the learners' language and numeracy skills develop as they work on activities with their children. Teaching sessions are lively and productive. Learners are very well motivated and they develop learning materials and activities with their children. **However, learners' evaluative skills are not developed sufficiently.** Target-setting is too generalised. Learners depend too much on tutors' assessments of their progress and do not always have the skills to assess their own learning constructively.

8. In visual and performing arts and media, standards of teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory. In the better lessons, teaching is well planned and learning is well managed. Tutors support learners to build their skills in a sequential way. Learners are encouraged to

be expressive and develop some very innovative work. **However, many lessons do not focus sufficiently on learning** and insufficient checks are made on learners' understanding. Teaching methods are not varied enough and learners are not challenged sufficiently. Tutors do not use assessment sufficiently to measure progress and feedback is often too generalised.

9. **Learners are well supported in family learning** programmes and they receive satisfactory support in visual and performing arts and media. Learning support assistants work very effectively in family learning alongside the course tutors. The support assistants help learners to extend their information and communications technology (ICT) skills and set good examples of how to work appropriately with children. The assistants work competently with the less confident learners to enable them to interact more successfully with the rest of the group.

Leadership and management

10. **The LEA has clear objectives for strategic development.** Senior managers have a good knowledge of lifelong learning and value the important contribution that adult and community learning makes to the economic and social regeneration of the island. The adult and community learning manager takes a particularly active role in strategic decision-making. The service makes good use of community links to promote the role of adult and community learning. The adult and community learning team's business plan and three-year development plan are clearly linked to the council's corporate and strategic objectives, as well as the island's community strategy. The setting and monitoring of targets throughout the service clearly reflect the LEA's priority to use learning to improve social cohesion and widen participation. Providers have a good awareness of the service's strategic objectives.

11. **The service has a good network of partnerships to meet community needs.** Partnership arrangements operate at all levels throughout the service and demonstrate a strong commitment to partnership working. The service takes a leading role in the island's key strategic partnerships. It has worked very successfully with a number of subcontracted providers to help them to develop new project initiatives into sustainable provision. At their management meetings, senior council managers identify opportunities for internal partnership working. The service works closely with other council departments to offer imaginative programmes to local residents and employees of the council.

12. Good use is made of traditional local interests to increase social inclusion. The service works effectively to meet its key corporate objectives to involve residents in wider learning and to regenerate the island community. The very effective revival of the island carnivals has encouraged many residents with specialist performance skills to work with local communities. Through carnival activities the number and range of learning opportunities have increased significantly. Ideas which began as small experimental projects have developed into activities and classes for large groups of learners. Carnival has brought together diverse local groups.

13. **The service has introduced good initiatives to promote an understanding of cultural diversity.** The percentage of island residents from minority ethnic groups is low but learners have a good awareness of cultural diversity. The service has been involved with a wide range of multi-cultural events. Expert practitioners from other cultures regularly visit

the island. Practices and performances from other cultures are shared successfully. Good links have been made with minority ethnic communities in other parts of the country which enhance learners' knowledge of diversity.

14. **The college's curriculum is not developed sufficiently.** The range of courses offered is not wide enough and most courses planned for next year are in art. The college has begun to develop accredited courses, but there are few progression opportunities or courses for learners motivated by carnival-based activities.

15. **Assessment practices in non-accredited learning are weak.** A considerable proportion of the service's provision is non-accredited. Initial assessment arrangements vary among the subcontracted providers, and are not always formal enough. In family learning, tutors use a good range of imaginative methods to develop learners' individual learning plans and targets for achievements. However, the monitoring and recording of learners' progress are weak on many courses. In visual and performing arts and media, tutors do not concentrate enough on learners' understanding of important concepts. Tutors do not use the views of peers to develop learners' self-critical skills. Learning outcomes are not sufficiently accurate or detailed. **Learners' evaluative skills are not developed sufficiently in family learning.**

16. **Good practice is not shared on a formal basis.** Quality improvement is now a standing agenda item at provider group meetings, but is not being used to share good practice effectively. Clear performance targets are set out in contractual agreements, but these are quantitative targets rather than being about the quality of teaching and learning. The service has recognised that the grades given for the observed teaching and learning sessions are too generous. The observation system is not thorough or well established enough to identify good practice clearly.

17. Subcontractors are required to produce an annual self-assessment report. Staff are involved in the process and most of them are aware of the role of self-assessment and its relationship to development planning. The LEA supports most of the subcontractors well in self-assessment and offers various training workshops.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear focus on the strategic development of the service
- good network of partnerships to meet community needs
- good use of traditional local interests to promote social inclusion
- good initiatives to promote understanding of cultural diversity

Weaknesses

- inadequate assessment practices for non-accredited learning
- insufficient formal sharing of good practice

Visual & performing arts & media

Other contributory areas

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of vocational IT skills
- very good standards of performance for carnival
- particularly effective promotion of equality and diversity through arts development activities

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on learning in many lessons
- insufficient use of assessments to measure progress
- insufficient development of college-based curriculum

Family learning

Adult and community learning

Grade 1

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- excellent range of achievements
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- very productive partnerships
- particularly good management of the curriculum area

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' evaluative skills

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ISLE OF WIGHT LEA:

- 'the way that teachers are skilful at imparting their knowledge'
- 'therapeutic classes'
- learning new things - 'a wonderful creative experience'
- learning in local venues
- 'the way teachers build confidence and are patient'
- 'being treated as a person rather than a statistic'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK ISLE OF WIGHT LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the way the courses are marketed
- the availability of suitable progression routes
- the number of courses and the length of waiting lists
- the organisation of some classrooms
- the equipment available to learners - 'a data projector that works'

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- clear focus on the strategic development of the service
- good network of partnerships to meet community needs
- good use of traditional local interests to promote social inclusion
- good initiatives to promote understanding of cultural diversity

Weaknesses

- inadequate assessment practices for non-accredited learning
- insufficient formal sharing of good practice

18. The LEA has clear objectives for the strategic development of the service. Senior managers throughout the LEA have a good knowledge of lifelong learning and value the important contribution that adult and community learning makes to the economic and social regeneration of the island. The associate director for cultural and leisure services chairs the adult and community learning provider group meetings. The adult and community learning manager takes a particularly active role in strategic decision-making about the role of adult and community learning on the island. For example, she has supported the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the development of a framework for their local area review. The service uses the good community links developed by cultural and leisure services to promote the role of the adult and community learning provision. Managers have recognised the need for an effective strategy to move the focus of the provision away from an over-reliance on the traditional personal development programme at the college. The service's mission, values and beliefs have been rewritten as the profile of the provision has changed. The adult and community learning team's business plan and three-year development plan are linked clearly to the council's corporate and strategic objectives, as well as the island's community strategy. The setting and monitoring of targets throughout the service clearly reflect the LEA's priority to use learning to improve social cohesion and widen participation. Providers are well aware of the service's strategic objectives.

19. The service has a good network of partnerships to meet community needs. Partnership arrangements operate at all levels throughout the service and demonstrate a strong commitment to partnership working. The service takes a leading role in the island's local learning partnership and adult and community learning strategy group, bringing together providers of post-19 education such as the college, work-based learning companies and Connexions. For example, the strategy group organised a very successful learning and guidance event in 2004, which was attended by more than 4,000 young people and adults. The group has also recently produced a useful quick guide to adult learning on the island. The adult and community learning manager sits on the Connexions local management group to ensure that strategic links are maintained between providers involved in the training of young people and adults. The service has worked very successfully with a number of subcontracted providers to help them develop new project initiatives into sustainable provision. These providers value the advice and support that

they receive in developing their programmes at different levels and in new curriculum areas. At their management meetings, senior council managers identify opportunities for internal partnership working. The service works closely with other council departments to offer imaginative programmes for local residents and employees of the council. The service has developed a partnership with the council's library service and a new learning centre has been opened in the east of the island. Learners on adult and community learning courses will help to design the interior furnishings for the learning centre. The service has supported senior council managers in raising their awareness of employees' literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy and numeracy skills training has been developed through the council's training centre in partnership with the college. Multi-agency teams work closely with the family learning staff to support vulnerable families in attending family learning courses. The service's family learning team has developed good partnerships with a range of local employers. Work-based family learning programmes are now on offer to those employees who cannot attend courses with their children in schools.

20. Curriculum planning and management are satisfactory, but the effectiveness of the arrangements varies widely throughout the service. Detailed contracts exist between the service and each subcontracted provider, which clearly state the responsibilities of both partners. Targets are set for all providers, which reflect the main strategic priority of the service to attract more learners from disadvantaged and under-represented groups of adults. Detailed course proposals and impact reports are written for all programmes. In some parts of the service, curriculum management is good, as in the case of family learning and community-based visual arts and media. Staff in these areas have developed a wide range of imaginative and successful courses. Partnership working is good and providers communicate well. However, curriculum planning and management are not developed sufficiently in visual arts and media at the college. The range of courses is restricted and there are not enough links with other providers to develop the provision.

21. Arrangements to support learners who have additional literacy, numeracy and language needs are generally satisfactory. The service does not have an overall strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support, but clearly recognises the importance of helping learners with such needs. The college working with the family learning service supports learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs well. Learning support assistants give good support to family learning tutors in schools to help them work with learners who have poor literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Some community-based visual arts and media tutors have been encouraged by the service to develop their literacy and numeracy teaching skills through the college's learning opportunities programme. However, the service does not routinely support all its subcontracted providers in this way, and the arrangements to support the learners with additional needs on subcontracted community-based programmes are not clear enough.

22. Staff development and training are satisfactory. The service's own staff have an annual appraisal where they are set individual targets, which are linked to the directorate's and the council's strategic objectives. Targets and any training needs are monitored at review meetings, which take place every six months. The members of the service's adult and community learning team are appropriately qualified, but do not have extensive experience of working in the adult and community learning sector. Staff development is good for the service's own family learning tutors. A number of staff were previously learners on family learning courses. The service has made good use of its management contract with the college to identify funding to support the mentoring of new tutors and classroom

observations of learning sessions, although it is too soon to judge the effects of some of these initiatives. The service has provided a series of useful workshops for staff from subcontracted providers.

23. The management of resources is generally satisfactory. The service's performance management plan is reviewed on a regular basis by the associate director and the adult and community learning manager. A wide range of funding sources is used well to develop new projects. Carnival initiatives have generated significant amounts of income for the island's economy. Subcontractors' teaching accommodation is generally satisfactory, although some classrooms are cramped.

24. The service makes effective use of management information for target-setting. The reliability of the service's data has improved considerably, and it shares data with its subcontractors. Targets for different groups of learners are agreed with each subcontracted provider as part of the contracting process. These targets reflect the service's strategic priorities. The targets are then monitored frequently during the reviews which are carried out with providers each term. Where the detailed data reports produced for the reviews show that targets are not being met, the service discusses the reasons with providers and amends targets where appropriate.

25. Assessment practices in non-accredited learning are inadequate. A considerable proportion of the service's provision is non-accredited. Initial assessment arrangements vary among the subcontracted providers, and do not always follow a sufficiently formal structure. In family learning, tutors use a good range of imaginative methods to develop learners' individual learning plans and targets for achievements. However, the monitoring and recording of learners' progress are weak on many courses. In visual and performing arts and media, tutors do not focus enough on learners' understanding of important concepts. Tutors do not use peer group analysis to develop learners' self-critical skills. Learning outcomes are not sufficiently accurate or detailed. Learners' evaluative skills are not developed sufficiently in family learning. The service uses the LSC definition of completion of the programme as an achievement for non-accredited courses. This weakness has been identified in the self-assessment report and in some of the providers' termly reviews. The service plans to support providers in improving the recording of learners' progress and achievements in the 2005-06 period.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

26. The service makes good use of traditional local interests to increase social inclusion. It works effectively to meet its key corporate objectives to involve residents in wider learning and to regenerate the island community. The very effective revival of the island carnivals has encouraged many local residents with specialist performance skills to work with local communities. Through carnival activities, the number and range of learning opportunities have increased significantly. These imaginative initiatives have been very successful in building community capacity. Many of the current tutors began as learners, and appreciate their increased self-confidence and the many opportunities that carnival has given them to develop their own teaching skills and knowledge. Many local groups have learnt skills which have enabled them to become independent. For example, the samba group progressed from beginners to advanced level and now operates as an independent samba band, organising its own events and raising money for performance and training. Tutors and learners have raised their skill levels and aspirations significantly through carnival activities.

27. The growth of carnival has generated the need for wider transferable skills, such as technical and event management, costume design and production, and IT, communication and performance skills. Local participation has been increased still further. These skills are recognised as important to the island in building and sustaining a more dynamic economy. The island's communities have benefited considerably as carnival has brought together diverse local groups of varying ages and social backgrounds. They have shared their resources and established new community venues.

28. The service has introduced good initiatives to promote understanding of cultural diversity. The percentage of the island's residents from minority ethnic groups is low, but learners are well aware of cultural diversity. The service has been involved with a wide range of multi-cultural events, and multi-cultural themes are regularly incorporated into island events through music, costume and dance. Expert practitioners from other cultures, such as African-Caribbean, Asian and other European communities, visit the island regularly. Practices and performances portraying different cultures are shared successfully through master classes and advice and guidance facilities. Good links have been made with minority ethnic communities in other parts of the country such as Notting Hill and Luton. The events and performances include fund-raising activities for other communities.

29. The associate director of cultural and leisure services has overall responsibility for equality of opportunity. Management of the operational aspects is the responsibility of the adult and community learning manager. One member of the adult and community learning management team has extensive experience of equality of opportunity and takes a lead in providing appropriate advice and guidance to the management team. Staff training and awareness of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Fifty-eight per cent of staff have been trained in equality and diversity and four senior adult and community learning staff are currently working towards a level 2 qualification. The qualification is soon to be made available to all staff and can be accessed electronically. A resource library containing copies of all relevant legislation and a range of appropriate publications is available to all staff. The service works closely with the local authority to ensure compliance with current legislation. A range of equality of opportunity data is collected and analysed. All subcontractors are required to submit equal opportunities data within identified timescales. The service has provided appropriate training for its subcontractors to help them fulfil this requirement.

30. Several surveys of current and former learners have been conducted, the results of which have been incorporated into the service's planning. Comparative data about learners' completion of programmes and their achievements is collected for different types of learners. The service is successful in attracting learners from minority ethnic groups. It has also been very successful in attracting learners from local disadvantaged communities. Realistic annual targets are set for the recruitment of learners from under-represented groups. Often, additional funding becomes available for specific initiatives during the year and these targets are then exceeded significantly. An English for speakers of other languages course has been introduced recently to support a diverse group of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds.

31. The service provides a satisfactory range of specialist equipment for learners with additional needs. Most premises are accessible to learners with mobility difficulties. However, some venues have no ramps and some teaching accommodation is too small to

allow sufficient space for wheelchair users. Learners receive detailed learner entitlement information, which is available in Braille and in a format using signs for those with learning difficulties. The equality and diversity policy statement is displayed prominently in this document. However, not all learners are aware of its contents and not all tutors are aware of the help available to learners.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

32. The service has developed a clear, systematic and well-documented quality assurance framework. The framework is cross-referenced to the Common Inspection Framework and is used effectively by subcontractors. The contractual agreement between the LEA and the subcontractor is the recognised starting point and sets out expectations and responsibilities. Regular and frequent provider group meetings, chaired by the associate director of cultural and leisure services, provide an effective forum for the provision of support for quality improvement and the exchange of information.

33. The service has a clearly written policy for observing teaching and learning. During the three years since the programme began, 76 per cent of tutors have been observed. Tutors are currently graded against a seven-point scale and comments are recorded on a standardised form. Tutors are given verbal and written feedback about teaching and learning. Any identified unsatisfactory practices are quickly followed up with support and an action plan. A further observation takes place within six months. The focus for each year of observations is clearly identified with the quality improvement programme.

34. Comprehensive reports have been written about recent observations, which highlight the current strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and make recommendations for improvements. The staff development programme has been planned in response to these identified strengths and weaknesses. Nine staff development workshops were provided during 2003-04 on topics which included curriculum management and peer observation. Further workshops, including self-assessment and learning styles, have been offered during the current year.

35. The current four-year cycle for the observation of all tutors is too long to effectively identify the quality of teaching and learning and to allow appropriate responses. Earlier observations were not thorough enough and many were not completed. Written comments about teaching and learning standards are too general and not enough specific guidance is given to tutors about how they might improve their standards. Many observation records are not signed or dated and contain no tutor comments about the graded assessments of teaching and learning. Often, no follow-up action points are recorded. Overall, grading levels are high in relation to the comments made. The service has recognised this situation and has employed an outside contractor to carry out some joint observations. Some earlier grades have been moderated down and recent comments show a more realistic approach to grading observed teaching and learning.

36. A learners' questionnaire is sent out each term to a random sample of 10 per cent of learners. Completed questionnaires show generally very good and improving levels of learners' satisfaction. The results are analysed thoroughly and responses are compared with national findings and those for previous years in the Isle of Wight. However, the overall response rate to the questionnaire is low. The adult and community learning service responds appropriately to concerns raised by learners. For example, the most recent survey showed some concerns about the cleanliness and tidiness of some teaching

accommodation and action was taken to resolve this problem. A review of the questionnaire has been carried out recently and additional questions relating to the wider strategic objectives of the service are now included.

37. The service's contract with subcontractors requires them to produce an annual self-assessment report and staff are involved to a satisfactory level in the self-assessment process. Most staff are well aware of the role of self-assessment and its relationship to development planning. The service supports most of its subcontractors and managers effectively in their self-assessments. An external consultant has been used to devise a clear and useful template to collect relevant information, and a training workshop has been offered to guide subcontracted staff. This year, the service has offered a self-assessment moderation workshop to develop greater consistency. This facility was appreciated by subcontractors.

38. Good practice is not shared sufficiently in any formalised way. The service is developing a variety of methods of passing on current national and local information through its meetings and staff development workshops. These provide useful forums for the informal exchange of information and ideas. Quality improvement is now a standing agenda item at provider group meetings, but this is not being used to share good practice effectively. Clear performance targets are set out in contractual agreements, but these are quantitative targets rather than being related to the quality of teaching and learning. A useful core competency framework has been devised which sets out the minimum qualifications for tutors. There are no clear, time-related achievement deadlines for those tutors who are working towards teaching qualifications. There are no suggested development targets for tutors to encourage them to work towards higher-level qualifications. A new event has been organised this year to celebrate and share best practice among the subcontracting providers, but it is too soon to be able to measure its success in improving standards of teaching and learning.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		3
Adult and community learning	666	3

39. Currently, 666 learners are on visual and performing arts courses which include arts, crafts, dance and drama. Most courses are non-accredited. Classes are provided throughout the day and in the evening, with some provision at weekends. They take place over six to 10 weeks. Courses are taught at the local further education college and various other venues, including community centres, church halls and schools throughout the island. Currently, 7.5 per cent of learners are from minority groups and 19 per cent are men. The ACL manager has overall responsibility for the provision. The service uses two main subcontractors and the council's own arts development unit, which offers visual and performing arts and media courses, to develop arts-related activities.

Other contributory areas

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of vocational IT skills
- very good standards of performance for carnival
- particularly effective promotion of equality and diversity through arts development activities

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on learning in many lessons
- insufficient use of assessments to measure progress
- insufficient development of college-based curriculum

Achievement and standards

40. Learners make good progress in IT, developing sound understanding of professional graphic design software. In IT courses at beginner and intermediate levels, learners show a good understanding of complex software programmes. Learners apply the skills that they develop to design products such as calendars, posters and community leaflets. In digital photography courses, learners have used these skills to produce excellent publications and products to a professional standard. Learners produce an excellent magazine, which illustrates other learners' creative writing and celebrates through photographs the areas in which they live. They achieve very good standards of performance work for carnival, gaining self-confidence, increased self-esteem and health benefits. Learners produce music and dance sequences as well as designing and making very imaginative costumes. Work is creative, exciting and on a large and impressive scale. In one outstanding festival set piece, learners combined fireworks with the costume design. Learners become increasingly aware of their community through the festival activities and the part they can play in it.

Most learners who begin courses complete them.

The quality of provision

41. Inspectors observed 17 teaching and learning sessions. Of these, one was outstanding, seven were good, eight were satisfactory and one was inadequate. In the better lessons, teaching is well planned, with clear direction and sound management of learning. Tutors take learners through tasks and activities step by step, building skills in a sequential way. Learners quickly find that they can complete the work successfully and remember how to apply their skills to change and amend their work. In a life-drawing class, learners were given the task of drawing the model inside a gauze bag, where the contours and outline of the figure were obscured. The tutor carefully structured the tasks so that learners felt able to draw one aspect after another, creating strong and confident images without worrying if they had captured the proportions and figure accurately. In a creative movement lesson, learners were taught various steps then put into groups where they had to improvise and be creative with these steps. Learners developed innovative and expressive choreographed pieces.

42. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learning assistants are employed to help learners in lessons. Tutors take care to meet individual needs with comprehensive induction sessions at the beginning of courses. Arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are too informal. Procedures exist to refer students to specific courses if they have literacy, numeracy and language needs, but no formal assessments take place. Too much teaching and learning is satisfactory and not enough is good or outstanding.

43. Many lessons do not concentrate sufficiently on learning. Tutors do not carry out sufficient checks of learners' understanding. Teaching methods are not varied enough and tutors do not challenge learners sufficiently. Learners are not encouraged to be experimental and to vary the scale and design of their work, and there is too much use of secondary source materials which learners copy.

44. Tutors do not use assessments sufficiently to measure learners' progress. Feedback is often too generalised. The objectives set for learners are often lists of tasks or activities and do not outline the criteria against which learning and progress are measured. Tutors concentrate on completing various forms, asking learners to identify their development rather than establishing what they have achieved and to what standard.

Leadership and management

45. The promotion of equality and diversity through arts development activities is particularly effective. The council's arts unit plans and manages the curriculum effectively. Strong partnerships exist with other providers to develop learning opportunities that are responsive to local community and individual learners' needs. For example, the learning through island events project is extending learning opportunities throughout the many island festivals. Work targeted at specific communities around the island is successfully widening participation in learning. Ideas which began as small experimental projects have developed into activities and classes for large groups of learners. For example, classes are provided for samba and for African drumming and large numbers of learners of all ages and backgrounds take part. Demand for other types of learning, such as specific IT courses, has grown.

46. Managers ensure that tutors know what is expected of them. They strive for consistency in the completion of paperwork, but follow-up monitoring is weak. Most tutors are involved in the self-assessment process and there is a culture of critical review. However, the monitoring of tutors' performance is not critical enough.

47. The standard of resources varies. Overall, they are satisfactory, but some accommodation is very cramped. Some tutors do not have whiteboards, flip charts or access to data projectors.

48. The college curriculum is not developed sufficiently. The range of courses offered is restricted, and most courses planned for next year are in art. The college has begun to develop accredited courses, but there are few progression opportunities or further courses for learners motivated by carnival-based activities. There is not enough liaison and effective partnership working to develop the curriculum. Provider group meetings are helping to develop links, but little is happening to extend and develop courses to engage learners from specific communities.

Family learning**Grade 1**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		<i>1</i>
Adult and community learning	140	1

49. The service provides LSC-funded family literacy, numeracy and language programmes and projects for wider family learning. These are aimed at people new to learning and those from disadvantaged groups in local communities. At the time of the inspection, 140 learners were enrolled on 21 family learning programmes. Two hundred and nineteen learners have enrolled on family learning courses since September 2004, which represents almost 10 per cent of the service's total number of learners. In 2003-04, 177 learners were enrolled in family learning. Ninety-five per cent of the learners are women. Courses take place at 12 venues throughout the island in local primary schools, or the family learning centre in East Cowes. Accredited family literacy and numeracy courses include a national programme to engage parents in learning with their children. Examples of wider family learning courses include sign language and healthy families. Courses are provided for between two and 20 weeks during the daytime. One full-time and two part-time tutors teach courses in this curriculum area. They are supported by a family learning manager and two learning support assistants. A tutor from the college is seconded part time to the service to support accreditation for learners in schools delivering the national Share programme.

Adult and community learning***Grade 1****Strengths*

- very good retention rates
- excellent range of achievements
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- very productive partnerships
- particularly good management of the curriculum area

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' evaluative skills

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates are very good. In 2003-04, 96 per cent of learners were retained on family learning programmes. This represents an increase of 5 per cent on the previous year. The range of achievements is excellent. Achievement rates have improved from 85 per cent to 88 per cent over the same period. Learners are very successful in gaining skills which help them work with their children. Learners develop good parenting skills and a greater understanding of the way their children are taught in schools. On longer courses, learners work enthusiastically and confidently with their children for part of the lessons, as well as observing their children's learning in the school classrooms. Learners gain nationally

recognised accreditation for this work. Forty-nine learners have already gained national certificates this year. Learners have good opportunities to practise and reinforce their own literacy and numeracy skills while working alongside their children. Learners attend regularly and they are punctual. They gain in confidence in working with others and developing new ways to motivate their children to enjoy learning. They appreciate the significant improvements in their relationships with their children and their children's progress at school.

51. In 2003-04, 73 per cent of learners progressed to further learning opportunities. Many learners routinely move to positions of responsibility in the community or school-related contexts. For example, some become involved in voluntary work at school, others take on roles as school governors or become involved in local community projects. Other learners gain employment. Family learning programmes operate in schools over a two-year cycle. Many learners take the opportunity to remain in these programmes for the whole two-year period so that all their children can benefit from the individual attention and the positive effects of learning as a family. Learners celebrate their learning and achievements through the production of very good-quality booklets, wall displays in schools, and in the local press. They gain confidence and involve themselves in school fund-raising projects. In one school, learners helped to organise a round-the-island race by boat and motorcycle to raise funds to develop a new library. They also worked with their children to decorate the room with a seaside theme.

The quality of provision

52. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Of the eight sessions observed, one was outstanding and five were good. Two were satisfactory. Tutors produce detailed lesson plans and make good use of them in classes. Very effective planning is carried out in close liaison with the learning support assistants, schoolteachers and the college tutors. Tutors ensure that learning activities relate well to learners' own lives and family situations, as well as focusing on the children's development needs. Tutors provide learners with a good range of learning activities to meet individual needs. Tutors also work well to ensure that the learners' numeracy and language skills develop as they work on activities with their children. Learners reported that practising learning techniques with their children had significantly improved their own and their children's confidence, enjoyment and abilities in writing. Sessions are lively and productive and learners are very well motivated. Tutors use a wide range of learning resources including laminators, computers, craft materials and a variety of children's reading materials and activities. These are carefully and constructively used to develop learners' understanding of how to create innovative learning materials for children.

53. Learners are well supported. All parents are informed of family learning programmes through the weekly school newsletters. They are invited to informal meetings and given comprehensive and attractive brochures, as well as being able to see examples of the excellent work produced by previous learners and their children. A well-produced learner handbook explains the purpose of the programmes and answers a range of frequently asked questions. It also covers equality and diversity matters in a simple and clear manner. In one observed session, a new learner arrived unexpectedly and was carefully welcomed and integrated with the activities in which the small group were engaged. She was made to feel valued and welcomed. Learning support assistants work very effectively with course tutors to help with the preparation of suitable materials. They skilfully help learners to improve their ICT skills, and also set good examples for the learners in how to work with

children. The assistants work competently with less confident learners to enable them to interact more successfully with the rest of the group. The family learning and development officer supports the family learning team in providing effective advice and guidance to learners. Those learners with specific needs are often referred to other agencies as appropriate. The family learning team has very good relationships with these groups.

54. The family learning service provides a satisfactory range of courses to meet the needs and interests of learners throughout the island. Tutors negotiate course content and programmes effectively with learners. A new series of two-session environmental taster courses is being trialled to attract new learners. These have successfully attracted 12 per cent more fathers into programmes. The 'eco workshops' involve parents and children in taking responsibility for the environment in their local communities. For example, a recent campaign about litter designed by learners raised community awareness. Local councillors and the press were used well to generate more publicity.

55. Learners' evaluative skills are not developed sufficiently. Tutors assess learners' skills informally and formally at the beginning of their programmes. They use a range of creative methods to help learners set individual objectives and targets for themselves and their children. The targets are usually broad and general. Learners review these targets at the end of the course in collaboration with their tutors. However, learners depend too much on tutors to assess the full extent of their progress. Tutors do not give sufficient constructive feedback to learners in group sessions. Learners do not always have the confidence or the skills to be able to assess their own learning constructively and gain the independence to progress without support. Peer assessment is not used sufficiently in learning sessions to develop learners' self-critical and analytical skills.

Leadership and management

56. The service has developed very productive partnerships with schools, the information, advice and guidance service, and an external education organisation, to provide a seamless and relevant provision for learners throughout the island. Service-level agreements carefully set out each of the partner's roles in developing successful programmes. Partners meet regularly every six weeks to monitor progress. The college and the service carefully plan the range of courses to be offered. Schemes of work are jointly planned to provide a good programme of learning for parents and their children. Learners are supported in attending these programmes to access learning and gain information about other learning opportunities. When setting up the programme, the family learning manager liaises very successfully with local schools. Careful and successful planning provides family learning programmes which are fully integrated with the schools. Over 50 per cent of the schools that are involved in family learning have used an available programme to train one of their teachers to continue the work. Family learning tutors have also identified parents to support this work. Very good links have been developed with local employers to take family learning into the workplace.

57. The management of family learning is particularly good. A clear strategy has been developed to target resources on areas in the greatest need. Family learning has gained accreditation to improve its marketing and advice and guidance services for learners. The family learning team meets every month to co-ordinate work, share good practice and identify training and support needs. Tutors work particularly well as a team to develop new initiatives, and to make improvements to procedures, practice and the quality of teaching and learning. For example, recent developments of creative ways of capturing learners'

aspirations and course expectations, have been received very positively and used effectively by parents.

58. Tutors receive regular training and development, which is carefully planned to reflect individual appraisals, as well as matters which arise from observations of teaching and learning. Schemes of work are well planned and focus on quality improvement and consistency of provision throughout the island. The family learning manager works very effectively and in close consultation with the adult and family learning development officer to liaise with schools, colleges and other agencies to plan developments. After careful consultation, a revised strategy has been produced for 2005-06. It focuses on new developments, such as children's centres, extended schools and some middle schools, to respond effectively to changing community needs.

