

INSPECTION REPORT

Corporation of London LEA

09 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
- **learnndirect** 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. The Corporation of London (the Corporation) adult and community learning service (the service) forms part of the education service, itself a constituent part of the economic development and education office. The service is managed by the city education officer, who is the Corporation's statutory chief education officer and reports to the education committee. The assistant education officer responsible for adult and community learning has been on long-term sick leave since December 2004 and an interim head of adult and community learning was brought in to support the service in February 2005. In addition to the interim head, the service administration and management team currently comprises two part-time officers with responsibility for widening participation and family learning, one full-time administrator with responsibility for the database and statistical returns to the Learning and Skills Council, one full-time administrator and two part-time administrators at the service's community education centre, and one part-time temporary administrator, who works between the community education centre and the education department's offices. In addition, the service employs 17 part-time tutors and six crèche workers to support the directly delivered programmes of learning across the city. Approximately 62 per cent of total provision, excluding one-off, usually day-long events, is delivered by contracted partners.

2. The Corporation is currently in the process of establishing a new department of education and community services, bringing together education, social services, housing and leisure by October 2005. The reorganisation will bring together adult learning, leisure and care.

3. The service runs courses at the Corporation of London Community Education Centre, Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School, Middlesex Street estate, The Guinness Trust's Mansell Street property, the Barbican, and Fortune Park. Classes include computing, humanities, modern foreign languages, health and social care, arts and crafts, family learning, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and exercise.

4. The City of London has 8,043 residents and a working population of 311,000. Employment is concentrated principally in the financial and business services sectors. According to the 2001 census, 3,647 people living in the City of London are qualified to degree level or higher, but 10 per cent of its residents have no qualifications at all and a further 16 per cent of residents possess a level 2 qualification or below. Unemployment figures for residents of the City of London show that only 1.5 per cent of the working age population were claiming benefit in February 2005. However, in Portsoken Ward, on the eastern edge of the City of London, 4.7 per cent of the population are claiming unemployment benefit and an estimated 27.4 per cent of residents are economically inactive.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 4

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate.** The Corporation's leadership and management are inadequate, as are its arrangements for quality improvement. Arrangements to secure equality of opportunity are satisfactory. In visual and performing arts and media, English languages and communications, and foundation programmes, the provision is inadequate.

6. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** In the past 12 months, the Corporation has improved the self-assessment process considerably. Activities to prepare for self-assessment are now more inclusive, and the service's management team has developed a self-critical culture. The most recent report identifies a number of key strengths and key weaknesses in the areas of learning and leadership and management that the inspectors identified.

7. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The Corporation has been effective in identifying areas for improvement. Proposed actions to improve quality include specific details and realistic timescales for the secure management of provision. Data collection and review have improved considerably and managers are now starting to carry out reviews of retention and enrolment data for quality improvement purposes. Strategic plans are in place for complete review of programme management and delivery, and these plans are in the early stages of implementation.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CORPORATION OF LONDON LEA:

- establish complete and effective quality improvement arrangements
- implement the strategies developed for future provision
- provide effective curriculum leadership
- maintain the broad range of partnership links
- refine and develop arrangements for identifying and meeting the needs of the community

GRADES

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

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

Visual & performing arts & media			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Arts			
Adult and community learning	133	4	
Crafts			
Adult and community learning	59	4	

English, languages & communications			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Languages			
Adult and community learning	262	4	

Foundation programmes			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ESOL			
Adult and community learning	87	4	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. The inspection reported on and graded three areas of learning that the Corporation offers. Other areas had insufficient numbers of learners to afford secure judgements on the quality of provision. Inspectors visited the Corporation on one weekend to observe Saturday ESOL classes and during the four weekdays of the final inspection visit.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learners interviewed	140
Number of staff interviewed	36
Number of subcontractors interviewed	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	21
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	3
Number of visits	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Learners develop good technical skills in visual arts.** In sewing, craft and art classes, all learners demonstrate good application of skills. In the better classes, they are able to articulate their understanding of the techniques they are applying. In the better art classes, tutors effectively encourage learners to use a range of media such as pens, charcoal, watercolours, pastels and oils. Some learners apply their skills outside of the classroom by selling their craftwork or engaging in activities they have carried out in class with their own young children.

10. **Many learners have grown in confidence as a result of their participation in language programmes.** For example, those who had been to Spain were delighted to find that they were able to communicate with their hosts. Others felt better able to appreciate foreign films. Almost all learners confirmed that they had made progress towards attaining their personal goals.

11. **Many learners benefit from attending ESOL programmes.** In particular, they meet new people and increase their confidence in speaking with other learners, tutors and other staff working in the learning centres. Most learners make satisfactory progress in developing language and literacy skills. However, some learners' progress is slow.

12. Attainment in language sessions was generally satisfactory. However, learners' speaking skills vary markedly and attainment in this area was inadequate. Most learners are able to express themselves satisfactorily, but their fluency was judged to be good in only 11 per cent of the lessons that the inspectors visited. The most fluent learners are able to express themselves convincingly in the foreign language studied, but in 22 per cent of lessons observed, fluency was unsatisfactory.

13. **The collection and interpretation of achievement and retention data are inadequate across all curriculum areas.** The Corporation has no data from before 2003-04, and data for 2004-05 is still not accurate in all areas.

14. **Attendance rates are poor on many ESOL courses.** On some courses, fewer than half of the learners attend more than half of the learning sessions. Punctuality is also poor and

learning is often disrupted when learners arrive significantly late.

15. Most current ESOL learners are not working towards a national qualification in literacy or language skills.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
English, languages & communications	0	1	6	2	9
Foundation programmes	0	0	3	2	5
Visual & performing arts & media	0	3	4	1	8
Total	0	4	13	5	22

16. **Resources are good for visual arts courses.** Craft material is made available for learners, in some cases at no additional cost, and the accommodation for visual arts courses is particularly good. The courses are located in well-lit, spacious accommodation, which is well resourced in terms of materials, work areas, easels, and display and storage. In one class, learners have good access to the outstanding visual art resource provided by the Guildhall Gallery.

17. **Tutors on language programmes directly provided by the Corporation make good use of individual learning plans.** Tutors have given learners a good understanding of the purpose of the plans. The documents are well maintained and provide an accurate and reliable guide to learning. They effectively record a valuable process of negotiation and monitoring of personal goals that takes place between tutors and learners. Learners and tutors devote appropriate time and commitment to the process. However, on subcontracted programmes, individual learning plans are not used.

18. **The Corporation provides an impressive range of modern foreign languages programmes responsive to the needs of the local business community.** Business learners welcome the timing and location of these programmes, which are readily accessible to them, for instance during lunchtimes. Tutors are mainly professionals paid directly by the learners, but a significant minority, some 35 per cent, are volunteers with no language teaching qualification. In addition to the weekly meetings, associated clubs and events complement the business community's programme. Good enrichment activities, such as foreign visits, also exist within the Corporation's direct provision.

19. **Some ESOL learners benefit from good systems to support their learning.** Most learners take part in comprehensive initial and diagnostic assessments when they join a course. Tutors analyse the results of the assessments well to identify learners' levels in each of the four main language skills. Some tutors ensure that learners receive appropriate guidance on other ESOL provision in the area. However, some individual learning plans do not contain an adequate range of information. For example, many tutors do not keep adequate records of learners' prior experience and attainment in language learning, education or employment.

20. Teaching and learning resources for languages are satisfactory overall. Some tutors make good use of up-to-date texts. A volunteer French tutor chose a particularly effective text concerning the vocabulary of the internet and its users. A Spanish tutor and an Italian

tutor made good use of recent editions of magazines and newspapers. Some tutors use well-chosen audio tapes and CD-ROM to help learners develop their listening, expand their vocabulary or hear good linguistic role models.

21. Planning for individual learners' needs is insufficiently thorough in visual arts.

Lesson plans are poorly structured to identify individual learning needs. All the visual arts classes are of mixed ability and are able to attract new learners throughout the year. In the weaker classes, this process is poorly managed and learners who have been with the class for some considerable time find themselves repeating basic technical exercises. In another class, learners were left to work on their own projects with little input from the tutor. In the minority of better classes, learners' mixed abilities are managed well.

22. Learners receive insufficient pre-course information about learning opportunities in visual arts.

The marketing of visual arts courses is inconsistent and often confused. Publicity leaflets for one course were not issued until after the start of a course, which was then threatened with closure, leading to learners raising a complaint. Some publicity material omits one arts course completely. The course information sheets do not always provide clear guidance on additional costs for materials in advance of the first session.

23. The Corporation's provision of ESOL is very small. The number of current courses is smaller than in 2003-04, when the Corporation offered 16 programmes in ESOL. However, each course provides different arrangements that successfully widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups. These courses effectively complement the more established ESOL provision of other local providers and meet some individual learners' needs well. For example, learners attending the weekly drop-in facility benefit from effective individual support to help them develop useful skills to compete relevant tasks, such as completing a curriculum vitae or writing letters to employers.

24. Some language tutors use English excessively. They use English needlessly when giving simple instructions or explanations. The learners do not have adequate opportunity to improve their listening skills or hear authentic language on which to model their own speech. Such classes do not help the learners to develop fluency in the target language. The learners frequently lack the confidence to experiment with material they have still to master. Lesson planning often pays insufficient attention to ways of sustaining the use of the foreign language. Tutors make insufficient use of pair and small-group work to stimulate the learners' use of the foreign language.

25. Assessment in languages is inadequate. There is no formal initial assessment, although some tutors do operate their own arrangements. There is no formal continuous assessment, for instance of the skills of listening and speaking. Learners receive insufficient feedback on the standards they achieve or on what they should do to improve. Few tutors maintain adequate records of learners' progress in their development of language skills. None of the courses are accredited and learners have no objective criteria against which to compare their progress.

Leadership and management

26. The service has engaged in effective review and good strategic planning for future provision. It communicates its strategy clearly through the service's self-assessment document, the three-year development plan and the education business plan. All of these

documents have clear links to the City of London's community strategy. The Corporation is establishing a new department of education and community services, bringing together education, social services, housing and leisure to provide clearer links between services for residents.

27. The Corporation has developed and maintained a good range of partnerships to secure wider learning opportunities for workers and residents. There are good working relationships with three higher education institutions leading, for example, to developments in language teaching and City of London guide courses. The service has good partnership links with a number of specialist and further education colleges in neighbouring boroughs. There are also good links with primary and secondary schools across the City of London and in neighbouring boroughs. The service maintains good partnerships with the Corporation's training and development department, through which it is developing plans for workforce training.

28. Learners and tutors have a satisfactory awareness of the Corporation's equal opportunities policy. However, in one class a learner made an inappropriate comment relating to sexual orientation that the tutor did not challenge. Access to facilities is good for learners with restricted mobility and, where additional language support is needed, tutors have access to a telephone translation service.

29. Modern foreign languages courses promote tolerance and enthusiasm for the cultures of the languages studied. However, there are few learners from minority ethnic groups across the provision. **Although the Corporation meets the needs of the major employers in the business community adequately, there is insufficient attention to provision in other segments of its population.** Learners in the subcontractor's provision are not protected by a rational charging policy, nor by formal equal opportunities and complaints policies.

30. The Corporation's ESOL tutors are sensitive to learners' cultural and religious practices. For example, some classes are specifically for women only. In mixed classes, tutors carefully negotiate the most appropriate seating arrangements for different learning activities with the women in the class. **However, some learning materials do not sufficiently reflect the learners' diverse cultures.**

31. **Management of all curriculum areas is ineffective.** The Corporation does not plan them coherently, with courses offered on the basis of tutor availability, ideas from staff and feedback from learners. There is no planned enhancement or accreditation of learners' achievements. The Corporation does not sufficiently consider onward progression for existing learners. The curriculum has not been managed by curriculum specialists. There are insufficient opportunities for tutors to meet and share good practice.

32. The Corporation has many good one-day events and courses, but they do not form part of a curriculum development initiative integrated with the main course provision.

33. There is virtually no monitoring of the qualifications or work of the languages' subcontractor's language tutors, whether by the Corporation or the subcontracted co-ordinator.

34. Quality improvement in visual and performing arts, languages and ESOL is

inadequate. Observations are insufficiently thorough to provide adequately critical and evaluative quality improvement measures. There is insufficient use of specialist knowledge to help develop the quality improvement process, and insufficient follow-up action-planning as a result of observations carried out in 2004.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic planning for future provision
- good range of partnerships
- good additional support for learners with language needs
- effective improvements to self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- ineffective management of some subcontractors
- ineffective management of most learning programmes
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good development of learners' technical skills
- good resources

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning for individual learners' needs
- insufficient pre-course information for learners
- inadequate curriculum management

English, languages & communications

Languages

Grade 4

Strengths

- good use of individual learning plans by the Corporation's own tutors
- extensive range of provision in the business community

Weaknesses

- excessive use of English by some tutors
- inadequate assessment
- inadequate curriculum management

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Grade 4

Strengths

- some good initial assessments
- some effective arrangements that widen participation of learners from under-represented groups

Weaknesses

- poor attendance in many classes
- inadequate planning of learning
- inadequate management of many aspects of the provision

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CORPORATION OF LONDON LEA:

- the crèche provision
- the relaxed atmosphere in classes
- the frequent and sensitive language support
- the kind and considerate tutors
- the convenience of learning times and locations
- the cross-cultural links that bring the community together
- 'the opportunities to learn with my children'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CORPORATION OF LONDON LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the frequency of classes - they should happen more often
- the range of the offer in some areas of learning
- the attitudes to attendance - managers need to be stricter with learners not attending
- the number of venues for learning
- the marketing of courses
- the number of weekend classes

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good strategic planning for future provision
- good range of partnerships
- good additional support for learners with language needs
- effective improvements to self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- ineffective management of some subcontractors
- ineffective management of most learning programmes
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

35. The service has engaged in effective review and good strategic planning for future provision. It communicates its strategy clearly through the service self-assessment document, the three-year development plan and the education business plan. All these documents have clear links to the City of London's community strategy. The Corporation is in the process of establishing a new department of education and community services, bringing together education, social services, housing and leisure to provide clearer links between services for residents. During 2004, the Corporation took the decision to end the voucher schemes used as an entitlement to learning for residents and City of London workers. Since the end of the voucher system, there have been major improvements in the collection of management information to assist strategic planning. The service is reorganising most of its provision under the management of a local college. The arrangements provide for improved quality improvement and monitoring, and provide enhanced progression opportunities for learners.

36. The Corporation has developed and maintained a good range of partnerships to secure wider learning opportunities for workers and residents. There are good working partnerships with three higher education institutions, leading to developments in language teaching and in City of London guide courses. The service has good partnership links with a number of specialist and further education colleges in neighbouring boroughs, and has taken part in the early planning for the 'Learning Ladder' initiative in neighbouring Tower Hamlets. There are good links with primary and secondary schools across the City of London and in neighbouring boroughs, and good family learning provision has been developed. Discussions are also underway to make use of school premises to provide further learning venues for the service. In addition, the service maintains good partnerships with the Corporation's training and development department, through which it is developing plans for workforce training.

37. The management of some subcontracted provision is ineffective. For most subcontractors there are contracts and service level agreements, but in some cases these have only been established very recently. For some subcontractors, there are either no contracts in place or there are contracts which do not set any clear targets or expectations of service standards. Monitoring of most subcontractors has been poor until very recently

and, in the case of some contractors, there is still no monitoring of performance or outcomes.

38. The management of most learning programmes is ineffective. There is often poor communication between contractors and the service about timetables, learner numbers and sometimes the location and level of classes. During inspection, inspectors were unable to find a number of classes advertised, and there were discrepancies in the information held by tutors, subcontractors and the service. The arrangements to provide curriculum leadership are ineffective, and in most curriculum areas there is no specialist to give support or guidance to tutors. Arrangements for sharing good practice are ineffective.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

39. Support for learners with additional language needs is good. Some of the marketing of courses to learners who are speakers of English as a second or other language is carried out door-to-door by bilingual staff and volunteers. Promotional material is translated into the significant languages that residents in the City of London use. Taster and drop-in sessions involve bilingual staff, and interpreters are available at these sessions. Also, during lessons, staff have the appropriate language ability or there are interpreters available. Learners value this support and say that it contributes significantly to the cultural integration of the community. Some learners have only been able to complete their courses because of the support provided by staff and volunteers.

40. The Corporation has a satisfactory equality of opportunity policy. Courses are available to residents and workers and the Corporation effectively ensures that barriers to participation are overcome. Crèche facilities are available at all of the centres that the service uses, and they are provided at low or no cost to the learners. The learners value the free and low-cost crèche facilities. The Corporation works effectively with learners and potential learners to identify their needs. For example, there has been an increasing amount of Saturday provision to meet the needs of parents who only have access to their children at weekends. These courses allow the parent and child to learn together and they value the life-enhancing opportunity.

41. The Corporation has a member of staff responsible for family learning and one responsible for widening the participation of learners from under-represented groups. These members of staff work together very effectively, particularly with the resident population, to identify their needs and provide support. These staff work effectively with a range of local organisations to ensure that support is available when needed. For example, the service uses a telephone translation service effectively to support the learners. There is good use of outreach to improve participation in education and effective targeting of priority groups, such as men in full-time employment. Another successful initiative was to involve a group of young people and provide them with training for the British Red Cross first-aid and babysitting certificate. Learning opportunities are tailored to specific groups. Arrangements to monitor some subcontractors' equality of opportunity are satisfactory. However, for some subcontractors the monitoring of equality of opportunity is inadequate and not covered effectively in a contract or service level agreement.

42. The Corporation's implementation of legislative requirements is satisfactory. Documents are clear and cover equality and diversity. However, on the service enrolment form there is a lack of clarity about how learners can identify additional needs or disabilities. The Corporation now captures data and uses it effectively to monitor participation by

gender and ethnicity. However, there is insufficient use of data to monitor achievement by different groups.

43. Access to locations is satisfactory and the Corporation has a wide range of adaptive technologies available to enable learners with particular needs to access information technology training. Audits of sites and training courses are routinely carried out to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the learners and that suitable resources are available. This work is not yet fully systematic and not always recorded in detail. Some courses that are available to all are not promoted satisfactorily to all. Other provision, for example language training, is not effectively open to all entitled members of the community. The arrangement for paying for these courses lacks clarity.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 4

44. The Corporation has made effective improvements to the self-assessment process. The process for 2003-04 was not inclusive and was insufficiently thorough. Consultation with partner agencies was inadequate. The report that was published was not a complete document and contained few evaluative judgements. During 2004, the Corporation's management reviewed the process and it is now satisfactory. Staff were consulted during the production of the most recent self-assessment report. The Corporation makes effective use of learners' feedback to inform staff. Consultation with subcontractors and partner organisations is now good. The outputs of the process include the self-assessment report and a quality improvement plan. The plan is detailed and the Corporation monitors it regularly and effectively. There have been some improvements to the provision as a result of the revised self-assessment procedures, such as dealing effectively with some under-performing staff. Also, staff are more informed and aware of the need to improve the quality of provision. The self-assessment report considered by inspectors is suitably critical of the provision. Not all of the weaknesses that the inspectors found were identified in the report. However, it contained a lot of detail and identified many of the weaknesses that the inspectors found.

45. Quality improvement arrangements are incomplete. The Corporation does not yet have an overall quality improvement policy. It is developing a policy to meet the needs of wholly subcontracted provision from September 2005. The Corporation and its subcontractors use a range of appropriately designed and version-controlled documents for capturing learners' information. However, in some cases these contain insufficient detail and the forms are not always completed accurately. There is insufficient specialist curriculum monitoring of the quality and use of this information. Inspectors in all areas of learning have identified some weaknesses in aspects of quality improvement.

46. The Corporation captures feedback from learners, staff and subcontractors adequately and carries out some analysis to provide solutions to immediate and specific concerns. However, there is no detailed analysis yet to identify trends in performance. There have been recent improvements in the arrangements for observation of teaching and learning. Few observations were carried out in 2004, but in 2005 a full programme of observations has been carried out. The programme is clear and detailed and covers all of the provision directly taught, although there are areas of subcontracted provision where classes are not observed and where no arrangements exist for shared observations. Joint observations have been successfully trialled with one subcontractor to help standardisation. The results of the observations are now analysed and the Corporation intends to develop this process to further help develop quality improvement, but these improvements have not yet had

sufficient time to be fully effective. The observation process is still not sufficiently developed to identify some of the weaknesses in teaching and learning that inspectors have observed. Some lesson observations are over-graded, and are insufficiently clear, detailed and relevant. There is insufficient use of specialist knowledge to help develop the quality improvement process, and insufficient follow-up action-planning as a result of observations carried out in 2004.

47. The monitoring of some subcontracted delivery is satisfactory. The Corporation has contractual rights to observe training by some subcontractors and it also receives a range of information from the subcontractors' own quality improvement processes. However, monitoring of other subcontractors is inadequate. In some cases, subcontracted provision is not monitored sufficiently and in one case it is not monitored at all. There are no contractual arrangements for monitoring this provision and the Corporation does not carry out any quality assurance activity. Inspectors identified a number of weaknesses with this provision. The Corporation intends to improve the monitoring of the quality of subcontractors, or to revise its contracting arrangements. Draft contracts for the next academic year show good attention to detail in the sections about quality assurance. They also contain clear learners' achievement targets that each subcontractor has to meet. Current negotiations with most subcontractors pay particular attention to how they will monitor and improve quality.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts Adult and community learning	133	4
Crafts Adult and community learning	59	4

48. The Corporation has 192 learner enrolments on visual and performing arts courses, 78 per cent of whom are women, 67 per cent are aged from 19 to 59 and 22 per cent are aged 60 or over. There is a small range of classes, including craft, sewing, art, painting and drawing, sewing and textiles, gallery art, as well as family art and family learning arts and craft. These courses run for 10 or 12 weeks and several of them repeat over the year. There are six part-time tutors delivering the courses. The Corporation also offers one-off and annual events, which it uses to attract new learners to the provision. Classes are run during the week throughout the day, twilight and evening, with some weekend classes available. Gallery art classes take place at the Barbican and at the Guildhall Gallery.

Strengths

- good development of learners' technical skills
- good resources

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning for individual learners' needs
- insufficient pre-course information for learners
- inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

49. Learners develop good technical skills. In sewing, craft and art classes, all learners demonstrate good application of skills and, in the better classes, they are able to articulate their understanding of the techniques they are applying. In the better art classes, tutors effectively encourage learners to use a range of media, such as pens, charcoal, watercolours, pastels and oils. In sewing classes, learners express a greater confidence in the use of sewing machines. Along with improving their technical skills, the learning experience enriches the learners' lives personally and professionally. In one class, a professional designer acknowledges that she has enhanced her own practice and commercial work through the classes. Others find the two-hour classes socially and psychologically beneficial. One learner who broke her back finds the class activities help maintain her mobility as well as keep her engaged mentally. Good application of learnt skills outside of the classroom includes learners who are able to sell their craftwork commercially, as well as those who are able to include activities they carry out in class with their own young children.

50. The Corporation's approach to the collection and interpretation of achievement and retention data is inadequate. It has not collected data before 2004-05. Data for 2004-05 supplied by the provider indicates retention rates of 74 per cent and achievement rates of 65 per cent. However, this data is incomplete and contains inaccuracies. Managers cannot reliably plan provision or review quality using the current data. Attendance on inspection was 58 per cent.

The quality of provision

51. Resources are good. Craft material is made available for learners, in some cases at no additional cost. Accommodation for visual arts courses is particularly good. The courses are located in well-lit, spacious accommodation, which is well resourced in terms of materials, work areas, easels and display and storage. Most classes have direct access to sinks, which are essential for many art and craft subjects. In one class, learners have good access to the outstanding visual art resource provided by the Guildhall Gallery. The gallery's artwork is used for still-life studies or to act as a stimulus for new work. The gallery also provides some nominal storage of course materials on site.

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from inadequate to good. In the weaker classes, the learning is inadequately managed. The learning activities do not match the planned activities and little teaching or planned learning takes place. In the better classes, tutors use a range of successful activities to engage the learners and encourage skills development and the understanding of background technique. In one painting and drawing class, the tutor effectively nurtures a range of skills development through particularly well-planned and challenging activities. In the family art class, parents are engaged in the learning process with their children. This is a well-managed session.

53. Assessment is satisfactory, although little formal recording takes place. Assessment is primarily through product evidence, for example through bags, dresses, landscapes or other works. Where learners have a portfolio of work it is clear to see their progress. In the better classes, tutors carry out an informal initial assessment to gauge learners' ability levels but this is rarely documented effectively. Individual learning plans are used ineffectively on most courses. In the better classes, all of the learners complete them. However, many learners and some tutors do not fully appreciate their value as a learning aid. Target-setting is vague in most sessions and absent in the poorer classes.

54. Planning for individual learners' needs is insufficiently thorough. Lesson plans are poorly structured to identify individual learning needs. In three courses, the lesson plans are identical for each week, with just the topic for the session changed. All the visual arts classes are of mixed ability and are able to attract new learners throughout the year. In the weaker classes, this process is poorly managed and learners who have been with the class for some considerable time find themselves repeating basic technical exercises. In another class, learners were left to work on their own projects with little input from the tutor. In the minority of better classes, learners' mixed abilities are managed well. Some learners are working to a high standard. However, they have inadequate opportunities to gain formal recognition for their learning. There is no accredited visual arts provision. The Corporation publishes a booklet on possible progression within London but the opportunities for progression within the provider's own courses are inadequate. Some learners want to explore three-dimensional art forms, such as sculpture or woodwork, and are unsure how to go about this. There are some good one-day event initiatives to widen participation but

these are not adequately linked into the standard curriculum offer to provide onward progression for the learners.

55. Learners receive insufficient pre-course information. The marketing of visual arts courses is inconsistent and often confused. Publicity leaflets for one course were not issued until after the start of a course, which was then threatened with closure, leading to the learners raising a complaint. Some publicity material omits one arts course completely. The course information sheets do not always provide clear guidance on additional costs for materials in advance of the first session. A couple of learners who have lived in the Barbican area for 20 years only found out about the local offer by word of mouth recently. Advice and guidance on additional support are generally satisfactory, with the Corporation producing a useful booklet for learners. However, it did not give them this until midway through the year at two learning centres.

Leadership and management

56. Management of this curriculum area is inadequate. The Corporation does not plan it coherently, with courses offered on the basis of tutor availability, ideas from staff and feedback from learners. The Corporation did not collect or use data to help develop decisions about management of provision till 2004-05. There is no planned enhancement or accreditation of learners' achievements. The Corporation gives insufficient consideration to learners' progress. There are many good one-day events and courses but they do not form part of a curriculum development initiative integrated with the main course provision. For example, a one-day singing event attracted in excess of 85 learners who, after the course, had nothing to enrol upon to further their learning experience. The curriculum has not been managed by curriculum specialists. Generally, communication between management and the tutors is satisfactory. However, in one case, a decision relating to a class was made without informing the tutor and the tutor only discovered that the course registers had been split on their first day of term.

57. Learners and tutors have a satisfactory awareness of the Corporation's equal opportunities policy. However, in one class a learner made an inappropriate comment relating to sexual orientation that the tutor did not challenge. Access to facilities is good for learners with restricted mobility and, where additional language support is needed, tutors have access to a telephone translation service.

58. Quality improvement of visual and performing arts is inadequate. Observations are insufficiently thorough to provide adequately critical and evaluative quality improvement measures. The forms do not identify any weaknesses within the teaching and learning taking place. All visual arts classes have been observed as part of the quality assurance procedure before inspection, although the grade profile of the provider is more generous than that given by inspectors. Where observations take place, action plans have not been drawn up, despite evidence that areas for development have been identified. The self-assessment report for the area is satisfactory, although it contains some inaccuracies.

English, languages & communications**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages		4
Adult and community learning	262	4

59. The Corporation has 262 learners enrolled on nine programmes in French, six in Italian, two in German, one in Japanese, one in Mandarin, three in Portuguese, two in Russian and 17 in Spanish. The Corporation's own tutors teach five of the French and four of the Spanish programmes in three venues across the City of London. A subcontractor arranges all other programmes and some language clubs in a further 19 venues, all of which are business premises provided by their owners. None of the programmes lead to accreditation. There are beginners', intermediate and advanced programmes in French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, although those in Italian and Portuguese are aimed at employees of the City of London's business community. Programmes are provided for families in French and Spanish. There is also a holiday Spanish programme.

60. The business community's programmes in German, Japanese, Mandarin and Russian do not cover the full range of levels available in other languages. Programmes are taught by 16 tutors, six of whom are volunteers. All volunteer tutors work in the subcontractor's provision. All classes are held from Monday to Friday. Most sessions for the business community last for an hour, although some other sessions last for up to two hours. Classes are held once each week, or sometimes fortnightly, in the morning, afternoon or early evening.

Languages**Grade 4***Strengths*

- good use of individual learning plans by the Corporation's own tutors
- extensive range of provision in the business community

Weaknesses

- excessive use of English by some tutors
- inadequate assessment
- inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

61. The Corporation did not collect achievement data until 2004-05. Achievement data collected in 2004-05 only relates to the provider's directly taught programmes. As these programmes account for only 22 per cent of the modern foreign languages provision, and as the data is not yet fully accurate, it is not possible for inspectors to make sound judgements about achievement based on the current statistical information.

62. Attainment in sessions was generally satisfactory. However, learners' speaking skills vary markedly and attainment in this area was inadequate. Most learners are able to

express themselves satisfactorily, but their fluency was judged to be good in only 11 per cent of the lessons visited. The most fluent learners are able to express themselves convincingly in the foreign language studied. They answer and, in some cases, ask questions which a sympathetic native speaker would understand. In one Spanish class observed, learners were able to talk about their recent experiences at work. However, in 22 per cent of the lessons observed, fluency was unsatisfactory. Learners were not encouraged to make sentences from the words and expressions that they knew. Tutors use English too frequently and the language of the classroom is frequently English. The learners were having to rely too heavily on translation from English and became frustrated when their foreign language vocabulary was inadequate to provide the translation. Even in some satisfactory sessions, learners' fluency is to some extent compromised by sporadic reliance on English.

63. Attainment of listening skills is satisfactory. In 44 per cent of sessions that the inspectors observed, many learners were judged to have attained a good standard. They understood questions and answers of an appropriate level of difficulty. In an Italian class, they understood the tutor's explanation of a point of grammar. However, even in these sessions some learners' listening skills were not developed sufficiently. Learners who find difficulty in understanding the spoken language too frequently seek support in English. They have not yet been provided with strategies for seeking clarification in the foreign language.

64. Reading and writing figure too infrequently in learning sessions for judgements to be made from the sample taken. This is entirely appropriate, as no courses lead to accreditation and aim instead to develop learners' conversational skills.

65. Many learners have grown in confidence as a result of the programmes. For example, those who went to Spain were delighted to find that they were able to communicate with their hosts. Others felt better able to appreciate foreign films. Almost all learners confirmed that they had made progress towards attaining their personal goals.

The quality of provision

66. Tutors on programmes directly provided by the Corporation make good use of individual learning plans. Tutors have given learners a good understanding of the purpose of the plans. The documents are well maintained and provide an accurate and reliable guide to learning. They effectively record a valuable process of negotiation and monitoring of personal goals that takes place between tutors and learners. Learners and tutors devote appropriate time and commitment to the process and learners value it. In a holiday Spanish class, for instance, the session opened with a most effective look at the documents and some useful discussion of learners' individual goals. However, there is no use of individual learning plans in the subcontracted provision, which accounts for almost 80 per cent of modern foreign languages programmes.

67. Working through the subcontractor, the Corporation facilitates an impressive range of modern foreign languages programmes responsive to the needs of the local business community. Business learners welcome the timing and location of these programmes, which are readily accessible to them, for instance during lunchtimes. Most learners make very good efforts to attend and they work hard and enjoy the sessions. Tutors are mainly professionals paid directly by the learners, but a significant minority, some 35 per cent, are volunteers with no language teaching qualification. In addition to the weekly meetings,

associated clubs and events complement the business community's programme. For example, visits to Russian films and from speakers from embassies have featured in recent months. This provision, and the commitment to modern foreign languages that it represents, are unique features of the Corporation's adult and community learning. Learners value its ideals. Good enrichment activities, such as foreign visits, also exist within the Corporation's direct provision.

68. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory overall. Some tutors make good use of up-to-date texts. A volunteer French tutor chose a particularly effective text concerning the vocabulary of the internet and its users. A Spanish tutor and an Italian tutor made good use of recent editions of magazines and newspapers. Some tutors use well-chosen audio tapes and CD-ROMs to help learners develop their listening, expand their vocabulary or hear good linguistic role models. Some 20 learners of French in the subcontractor's programme have embarked on a promising e-learning initiative in conjunction with a university. In the main, however, tutors rely excessively on relatively unstimulating paper-based resources. They make insufficient use of video and little or no use of the internet. One tutor made no use of an interactive whiteboard available in the room where the class was held, even though it would have been beneficial. Too often, classes held in the well-resourced surroundings of various business premises have no access to basic facilities such as flip-charts or whiteboards.

69. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Family learning sessions are provided in French and Spanish as part of an initiative to support parents and children learning foreign languages. Tutors work hard to help both age groups with their learning. One Spanish group successfully encourages older learners into learning the language. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in the Corporation's own programmes. Publicity materials contain brief details of courses offered. However, important information concerning teaching methods and learning activities is sparse. The meaning of the different levels for classes is unclear and varies across the provision. Insufficient publicity is given to modern foreign languages programmes in the business community. Few learners not employed by the larger corporations are aware of them. Marketing and publicity are haphazard.

70. Some tutors make excessive use of English. This significant weakness is not identified in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. Some tutors use English needlessly when giving simple instructions or explanations. They talk about the foreign language rather than use it. The learners do not have adequate opportunity to improve their listening skills or hear authentic language on which to model their own speech. Such classes do not help the learners to develop this fluency in the target language. The learners frequently lack the confidence to experiment with material they have still to master. Lesson planning in these sessions is unsatisfactory. It pays insufficient attention to ways of sustaining the use of the foreign language. Tutors make insufficient use of pair and small-group work to stimulate the learners' use of the foreign language. Even in the generally satisfactory modern foreign languages sessions, there is still some unhelpful and intrusive English. However, a small number of tutors avoid the use of English for most of the time. Their learners are generally markedly more fluent than those in groups in which tutors commonly use English.

71. Assessment is inadequate. The Corporation's self-assessment report does not identify this weakness. There is no formal initial assessment, although some tutors do operate their own arrangements with varying degrees of success. There is no formal continuous

assessment, for instance of the skills of listening and speaking. Learners receive insufficient feedback on the standards they achieve or on what they should do to improve. Few tutors maintain adequate records of learners' progress in the development of languages skills. Even when individual learning plans are used, learners are denied important developmental information because of the lack of assessment. Because no courses are accredited, learners have no objective criteria against which to chart their progress.

Leadership and management

72. Management of the curriculum is inadequate, a weakness partly identified in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. There is no individual who is in charge of, or who has a secure overview of, the curriculum. The Corporation has not set out a strategy for the area of learning that all tutors can understand and play their part in implementing. It makes insufficient use of data to understand the quality of the curriculum or help make plans for its improvement. Even the timetables of classes contained significant errors during the inspection, relating to the day on which a programme is offered or the venue in which it takes place. Tutors work in isolation and do not meet to share good practice or develop teaching and learning materials. Many teaching groups are too small to provide the conditions that help tutors of modern foreign languages facilitate high-quality learning. For example, one Spanish group in the subcontractor's provision contains only two learners.

73. Measures to bring about quality improvement are inadequate. Despite a recent increase in the frequency of observations of teaching and learning, grades awarded are too high. There is virtually no monitoring of the qualifications or work of the subcontractor's tutors, whether by the Corporation or the subcontracted co-ordinator. The subcontract works more to facilitate the allocation of tutors to groups of learners than to plan for their progress. Excessive reliance is placed upon learner satisfaction surveys in all modern foreign languages programmes. Important though these are, the Corporation does not fulfil its obligation adequately to direct and take responsibility for the work of those who teach and learn in its programmes.

74. There is satisfactory regard for equality of opportunity during learning sessions. Modern foreign languages courses promote tolerance and enthusiasm for the cultures of the languages studied. However, there are few learners from minority ethnic groups across the provision. Although the Corporation meets the needs of the major employers in the business community adequately, there is insufficient attention to provision in other segments of its population. Learners in the subcontractor's provision are not protected by a rational charging policy, nor by formal equal opportunities and complaints policies.

Foundation programmes**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL Adult and community learning	87	4 4

75. The Corporation currently provides funds for seven ESOL programmes. Seventeen learners are currently on the two courses the Corporation directly provides at a local children's centre for learners wishing to improve their literacy and language skills. Many learners attend both sessions, which take place on the same day of the week. Five learners currently regularly attend a drop-in facility that takes place in a local library and has been subcontracted to a local further education college since January 2005. They receive individual support in literacy and language skills. Some potential learners use this facility to receive advice and guidance on learning programmes in ESOL. In April 2005, the same college started ESOL classes on Saturdays, on behalf of the Corporation. Thirty-six learners have registered on the two courses that take place on Saturday mornings at the Corporation's main community learning centre. The Corporation contracts with another provider of adult and community learning to provide two ESOL programmes in a designated room for parents in a primary school in the south of the City of London. Nineteen learners are on these programmes. Ten learners are on the course to help learners develop the language skills required to enable them progress to a short course in childcare. Most foundation programmes last between six and 12 weeks, and most learners enrol to rejoin the same class to continue their studies. The Corporation's part-time family learning and widening participation officers co-ordinate this provision.

ESOL**Grade 4***Strengths*

- some good initial assessments
- some effective arrangements that widen participation of learners from under-represented groups

Weaknesses

- poor attendance in many classes
- inadequate planning of learning
- inadequate management of many aspects of the provision

Achievement and standards

76. Many learners benefit from attending the ESOL programmes funded through the Corporation. In particular, they meet new people and increase their confidence in speaking with other learners, tutors and other staff working in the learning centres. Most learners make satisfactory progress in developing language and literacy skills. However, some learners' progress is slow, especially in classes where learning activities are not adapted to meet their needs adequately.

77. Attendance rates are poor on many courses. For example, on some courses, fewer than half of the learners attend more than half of the learning sessions. Punctuality is also poor. Learning is often disrupted when learners arrive significantly late. The Corporation does not adequately measure retention rates or learners' achievements. Prior to 2004-05, it collected no data about attendance, retention or achievement. Most current learners are not working towards a national qualification in literacy or language skills.

The quality of provision

78. Some learners benefit from good systems to support their learning. Most learners take part in comprehensive initial and diagnostic assessments when they join a course. This often involves them carrying out interesting and relevant assessment activities in listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing. Tutors analyse the results of the assessments well to identify learners' levels in each of the four main language skills. Some tutors use the forms their employers provide well to record this information. Similarly, some tutors follow agreed procedures well to discuss learners' progress and successfully identify learning goals at individual tutorials. Some tutors ensure that learners receive appropriate guidance on other ESOL provision available in the area. However, not all learners benefit from these systems. Some individual learning plans do not contain an adequate range of information. For example, many tutors do not keep adequate records of learners' prior experience and attainment in language learning, education or employment. Similarly, some learners do not receive sufficient information on other courses until they are about to complete their current course.

79. The Corporation's provision of ESOL is very small. The number of current courses is smaller than in 2003-04, when it offered 16 programmes in ESOL. However, each course provides different arrangements that successfully widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups. These courses effectively complement the more established ESOL provision of other local providers and meet some individual learners' needs well. For example, learners attending the weekly drop-in facility benefit from effective individual support to help them develop useful skills to compete relevant tasks, such as completing a curriculum vitae or writing letters to employers. Successful outreach carried out by a subcontractor has identified a wider need for ESOL provision. Saturday classes have recruited well. Learners appreciate the opportunities to attend a class that suits their personal circumstances well. The Corporation continues to develop these appropriate strategies to develop the provision to meet the needs of local residents, including the refugees and asylum seekers who have recently arrived in the City of London. The Corporation plans to provide training leading to national vocational qualifications at levels 1 and 2 in cleaning, with literacy, numeracy and language support.

80. Learning resources are satisfactory. Most rooms used for ESOL classes are well lit, are appropriate in size for the number of learners attending and have satisfactory equipment, such as whiteboards and flipcharts. However, the temporary crèche arrangements at one venue are unsuitable. Learning is sometimes severely disrupted by children in a crèche in the same room as the adult learners. A few tutors use a wide range of imaginative and relevant learning materials. However, some tutors rely too much on worksheets and exercises in published materials and do not adequately help learners practise language and literacy skills in contexts that are relevant to them. Too few learners benefit from the use of ICT to support their language learning. Some tutors have appropriate qualifications in teaching ESOL or are participating in relevant courses, but some of them do not have expertise in working with learners at different levels in one group.

81. Most learning sessions are appropriately structured and include a satisfactory range of learning activities. Some tutors are skilled at explaining vocabulary and grammar effectively, using interesting and memorable examples. However, most learning sessions are inadequately planned to meet learners' individual learning needs. Although some tutors use the results of initial assessments and identified learning goals well to plan learning, some tutors do not adequately consider learners' interests, employment aspirations or agreed priorities when planning learning. Many tutors dominate the learning activities. They do not give learners sufficient opportunities to practise using the language. Too few tutors make sufficient use of group and pair work to help learners develop confidence and accuracy in speaking and listening. Many tutors and learners rely on the use of text too much for speaking and listening activities. Similarly, learners receive insufficient feedback on their progress in developing speaking and listening skills. Most tutors use written tests or activities to assess learners' progress and do not use a sufficient range of activities to assess all learners' language skills.

Leadership and management

82. Tutors and staff promote equal opportunities appropriately to learners on ESOL programmes. They provide useful and relevant individual personal and learning support. Tutors are sensitive to learners' cultural and religious practices. For example, some classes are specifically for women only. In mixed classes, tutors carefully negotiate the most appropriate seating arrangements for different learning activities with the women in the class. However, some learning materials do not sufficiently reflect the learners' diverse cultures.

83. Many aspects of learning programmes are poorly managed. Communication between the Corporation and subcontractors is sometimes poor. For example, the Corporation does not routinely receive accurate information on the number or nature of classes running at any one time, or the numbers of learners attending. Although some arrangements for classes successfully widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups, some learners need to wait for many months before joining a class, especially in the summer. Waiting lists for the Saturday provision are managed inadequately. Some information on potential learners waiting for a place on a programme is inaccurate. Managers and tutors do not sufficiently emphasise the importance of good attendance with learners. Some classes with waiting lists have very poor attendance. Some systems for assessing and recording learners' progress are weak. Most learners do not have the opportunity to work towards the national certificate in ESOL and literacy. Some managers, tutors and learners are not clear about whether accreditation has been arranged or is available.

84. Quality improvement arrangements are weak. Observations of the quality of teaching are not comprehensive or sufficiently critical. Many grades given were too high. Most records of observed learning sessions do not provide tutors with sufficient information on the quality of their skills in helping learners to improve their English. Too few records contain sufficient actions for improvement or how agreed action will be reviewed. Tutors teaching ESOL programmes funded through the Corporation do not meet to share ideas and good practice.

