

REINSPECTION REPORT

Devon LEA Reinspection

03 February 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

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 over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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

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Devon LEA Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Devon Local Education Authority (the LEA) is contracted by Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning services to more than 20,000 learners each year from rural and urban communities across the county. The LEA's adult and community learning service (the service) is part of Devon County Council's (the council's) extended learning group, which comes under the education, arts and libraries directorate. The service's main objective is to maintain and extend high-quality and responsive adult learning opportunities for people in Devon. The provision of foundation courses is a key priority for the service.

2. The service is a direct provider of adult learning funded through the LSC, with fees generated by learners and a range of other funds. The adult and community learning provision is made up of a range of accredited and non-accredited courses. Since the previous inspection, the council has carried out a significant restructuring of the service. The 24 locally managed adult and community learning units have been replaced by a central management structure. The curriculum has been divided into five main areas and integrated with four geographical regions to cover groups of centres and staff.

3. The service is managed by the principal adult and community learning officer, who reports to the extended learning group manager. The management team comprises an adult and community learning officer, five county curriculum managers who are responsible for the curriculum, and four locality managers, each responsible for the centres and staff in one of four regions throughout the county. They are supported by a team of curriculum managers with particular responsibility for courses and teaching staff in each region, curriculum support workers and badged observers. There is a health and safety manager and a systems manager who is responsible for funding, data and central administration. The current service structure is a transitional one for the 2005-06 academic year and will be subject to review and revision in 2006-07. The provision is delivered by more than 550 tutors, all of whom are part time.

4. Devon has a population of just over 700,000 and is the third largest county in England. It is a mainly rural county. Most of the population is located around the coastal areas while inland areas are sparsely populated. The lack of strategic road or rail links makes transport a major issue. The county does not have extremes of affluence or poverty but pockets of deprivation exist, particularly in some areas of Exeter and North Devon. The area is well known for its tourist industry and other major employers include the wholesale and retail trade, and health and social work. Employment is high, but wages are low, leading to an exodus of young people from the county. Residents aged 55 or over comprise 40 per cent of the population. The unemployment rate in December 2005 was 1.3 per cent, compared with a national unemployment rate of 2.4 per cent. According to the 2001 census, 1.1 per cent of the county's population was from minority ethnic groups, compared with 9.1 per cent of the population nationally.

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5. Courses take place at 24 adult learning centres and approximately 118 community venues, including schools, libraries, village halls and youth centres. Courses range from drop-in sessions and workshops to programmes lasting a full academic year. In 2004-05, 22,592 learners took part in courses provided by the adult and community learning service. Twenty-four per cent of the learners were men, which is in line with the national average, and almost half were aged 55 or over.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. Leisure and recreation courses account for approximately 20 per cent of the LEA's provision and, at the time of the inspection, 742 learners were enrolled on 57 leisure and recreation courses. The service has ceased the provision of sport courses since the previous inspection. From September 2005 to the time of the inspection, 1,467 learners enrolled on leisure and recreation courses, of whom 88 per cent were women. In 2004-05, there were 6,138 enrolments on 458 courses. All courses are non-accredited and are offered at beginners' and improvers' levels. They include yoga, tai chi, circuit training, bridge and general fitness and exercise classes. Lessons last from one to one and a half hours and most take place during weekday evenings, with some daytime classes. They are offered at 23 venues across the county, including community colleges, community centres, village halls and the service's own centres. A county curriculum manager and a curriculum manager are responsible for the leisure and recreation provision and they manage 24 part-time tutors.

English, languages & communications

7. In 2004-05, 2,405 learners enrolled on 273 courses in modern foreign languages. The LEA is currently providing courses for 1,075 modern foreign language learners on 93 programmes. Almost 65 per cent of learners are women and 45 per cent are aged over 55. The languages offered include French, Spanish, Italian, German, Greek and Latin. French and Spanish courses make up almost 90 per cent of the provision. Seventy-three of the courses are accredited and range from entry level to level 2. Non-accredited programmes are mostly offered at levels 2 and 3. Courses take place in a variety of venues across the county including community colleges and the service's own centres. They are offered during the daytime and evenings, with a small number of classes on Saturdays. Most accredited courses run for two hours each week, for 30 weeks. Non-accredited programmes run for between one and a half and two hours, for 10 weeks. In 2004-05, the service employed 75 part-time tutors in modern foreign languages. Courses are now taught by 37 part-time tutors who are managed by a county curriculum manager and a curriculum manager.

Foundation programmes

8. Foundation programmes include literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Numeracy was not inspected as part of this visit. At the time of the inspection, there were 277 adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 241 literacy learners and 280 ESOL learners taking part in 103 courses. Fifty-seven per cent of learners are women. In 2004-05, 553 adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 722 literacy learners and 385 ESOL learners were enrolled on 333 courses. Courses take place at 24 venues across the county, including community colleges, community centres, church halls and the service's own centres. Courses are offered from pre-entry level to level 2 and run for between two and six hours a week, for 15 to 30 weeks. Independent living and leisure courses include craft, cookery, pottery, drama and life choices. Classes are taught by 73 part-time tutors who are managed by a skills for life officer. There are five managers who have curriculum and geographical responsibilities, and 12 local co-ordinators. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	17
Number of inspection days	86
Number of learners interviewed	138
Number of staff interviewed	149
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	7
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. At the previous inspection in November 2004, the LEA's leadership and management were unsatisfactory as were its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The provision was good in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in visual and performing arts and media. It was satisfactory in business administration, management and professional, in information and communications technology (ICT), in health, social care and public services and in family learning. Provision in English, languages and communications and foundation programmes was unsatisfactory, while hospitality, sport, leisure and travel courses were very weak. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision reinspected were judged to be satisfactory. Provision in business administration, management and professional, ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts and media and family learning was not reinspected.

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grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		4
Quality assurance		4

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Teacher/trainer awards		
- Adult and community learning	109	3

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Adult and community learning	2104	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		5
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		
- Adult and community learning	3600	5

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Beauty therapy		
- Adult and community learning	337	2

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years		
- Adult and community learning	121	3

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	1779	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	1300	2

English, languages & communications		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
English - Adult and community learning	121	2
Languages - Adult and community learning	2206	4

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy - Adult and community learning	267	4
Numeracy - Adult and community learning	171	2
ESOL - Adult and community learning	219	4
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	440	5

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	583	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	742	3
English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Languages</i> - Adult and community learning	1075	3
Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy</i> - Adult and community learning	241	3
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	280	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	277	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

10. The development of learners' physical skills is good in leisure and recreation.

Learners perform postures, sequences and exercises well and enhance their flexibility, balance and sense of wellbeing. Many learners on fitness courses develop all-round fitness and strength through a wide range of activities involving different pieces of equipment. They value the social benefits from participating in courses.

11. The development of language skills is good in many modern foreign language classes.

Learners' written and oral work is of a good standard. They develop good listening skills and confidence in speaking their chosen language. Most learners achieve the aim of being able to use the target language for a variety of purposes.

12. Learners on ESOL courses develop good language skills. They make good progress to develop their spoken English and many achieve their personal learning goals. Learners gain confidence in acquiring new skills, which they use to take part in everyday activities from which they have previously felt excluded.

13. The development of learners' skills is good in most independent living and leisure

lessons. Learners gain important social skills and increase their confidence and self-esteem. Their speaking and listening skills improve and they develop the ability to carry over information they have gained in one task and use it in other tasks.

14. Achievement rates are poor on language courses. In 2004-05, the overall achievement rate was 48 per cent. Many learners who enrol on courses which lead to a qualification choose not to complete the assessment.

15. Achievement rates are poor on literacy programmes and independent living and leisure courses. In 2004-05, only 42 per cent of learners passed the national literacy tests. In the same year, the achievement rate for independent living and leisure courses was 51 per cent.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2	4	4	0	10
English, languages & communications	2	10	9	0	21
Foundation programmes	1	15	16	4	36
Total	5	29	29	4	67

16. Tutors make very effective use of the target language during modern foreign language lessons. They use very effective methods to improve learners' understanding of languages and to encourage them to communicate with each other. Learners have many opportunities to practise speaking the foreign language.

17. Target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress are good in literacy and ESOL programmes. In literacy, the setting of specific and measurable learning targets is good. Learning outcomes in individual learning plans are detailed and realistic. Learners monitor their own progress well each week. In ESOL, learners' records are kept well and tutors use detailed paperwork to record learners' progress. They monitor learners' progress well.

18. Curriculum planning is good in independent living and leisure. The service has reviewed its offer of courses in the light of the judgements made in the previous inspection report. Learners can now choose from an imaginative range of programmes which encourage them to take an active role in their local communities. They develop creative awareness in subjects such as drama and pottery.

19. Teaching and learning are satisfactory on leisure and recreation courses. In the good or better classes, tutors plan well to include a variety of activities and changes to exercises that enable all learners to participate. Tutors manage classes well and learners receive good individual feedback on their performance. In the less successful lessons, tutors perform too many of the exercises themselves and do not give sufficient attention to learners' individual needs.

20. Teaching and learning are satisfactory on literacy and ESOL courses. In literacy, the supportive tutors develop learners' confidence and ensure they are well motivated. Tutors pay particular attention to learners' reading, writing and speaking skills in individual and group work. ESOL tutors plan lessons well to include a good range of relevant and interesting activities for learners.

21. Individual learning is not effectively planned or monitored in leisure and recreation.

Tutors do not use initial assessments effectively to identify learners' pre-existing knowledge and skills. Learners are not set sufficiently challenging targets and some comment that they have the same learning goals for each term. The use of health questionnaires has improved since the previous inspection.

22. Inadequate use is made of a range of learning resources in some modern foreign language lessons. Many tutors do not use the equipment available and rely too much on paper-based and written resources.

23. Insufficient planning takes place to meet individual needs in literacy learning sessions. Most classes are mixed ability, made up of learners who are working at different levels, but lessons are not planned sufficiently carefully to take account of individuals' learning needs. Many learners do not progress at a pace which suits their particular needs.

24. Much of the teaching on independent living and leisure courses is unsatisfactory. Some tutors do not consider the individual needs of learners sufficiently when planning and carrying out classroom activities. Learners are set unrealistic tasks and lose interest in the lessons.

25. Inadequate use is made of ICT and audio resources in ESOL lessons. Learners on many ESOL programmes do not use ICT sufficiently as part of their courses. Audio equipment is rarely used to give learners the opportunity to listen to other voices and accents. It is not available for them to use to practise their listening and speaking skills.

Leadership and management

26. The LEA has strong leadership. Managers have a decisive and active leadership style, which has clearly focused on making immediate improvements since the previous inspection. Managers are willing to make difficult decisions where necessary and are honest and self-critical about the influence of the changes they have made. The LEA has successfully restructured the management of the service and made good appointments to many of the management positions. The service now has a clear corporate image and a consistent approach to working practices.

27. The LEA provides good support for staff. Managers have focused their energies on providing staff with greater support through the appointment of badged observers and tutor co-ordinators. The identity of curriculum teams has improved through the well-planned compulsory staff development programme. Staff appreciate the support they

receive to gain appropriate teaching and subject-based qualifications. Communications have improved and managers now hold regular meetings with staff. Staff value the good operational support and curriculum expertise and find managers approachable and supportive.

28. **The LEA focuses well on learners' access and entitlement.** Learners receive a clear statement of their entitlements as part of the pre-course information. Publicity and promotional materials have been reviewed carefully and redesigned to promote a clear corporate image of the service. They include standard information about fees, fee concessions, additional support and learners' rights and responsibilities. Learners now have better access to all the information they require before enrolment.

29. **The LEA's arrangements to improve teaching and learning are highly effective.** The policies and procedures for classroom observations are now very good and teaching and learning have improved significantly in most areas of learning since the previous inspection. The service has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning through a comprehensive programme of staff development. Managers have carried out important improvements to increase the effectiveness of classroom observations and to raise standards.

30. **Insufficient planning takes place to meet strategic objectives in leisure and recreation.** The revised curriculum offer is not yet fully responsive to the needs of local communities and the interests of some learners. Very few classes take place at the weekend or during holiday periods. The service does not offer sufficient guidance for learners who want, or need, to progress to higher-level courses.

31. **The LEA does not focus sufficiently on planning to meet targets.** Strategic planning has not been integrated sufficiently with initiatives to improve the quality of the existing provision. Programme planning for 2005-06 was delayed because of uncertainties about staffing and decisions about course viability were not clear at the start of the academic year. The number of enrolments in the current year is substantially fewer than the targets set, and the service is forecasting a significant financial deficit against its planned budget. Approximately 50 per cent of the programmes planned for 2005-06 have been cancelled. Some staff are not sufficiently aware of the numbers of enrolments and cancelled courses.

32. **Insufficient monitoring is carried out of achievements in non-accredited learning.** In some areas of learning, tutors do not keep accurate records of learners' achievements and targets are not sufficiently specific. The service's definition of an achievement on courses which do not lead to a qualification is inappropriate and achievement rates are wrongly recorded as being 100 per cent for most programmes. Managers do not analyse and use data on achievement rates to bring about continuous improvements.

33. **Insufficient attention is given to the promotion of cultural diversity through teaching and learning.** Some tutors are not clear about the need to promote cultural diversity, or how to do so. It is not routinely incorporated into lesson planning.

34. The sharing of good practice across the service is insufficiently well established.

Some improvements have been made since the previous inspection, but the arrangements have not been in place for sufficient time to bring about systematic and routine sharing of good practice at all levels of the service.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong leadership
- good support for staff
- good focus on learners' access and entitlement
- highly effective arrangements to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on planning to meet targets
- insufficient monitoring of achievements in non-accredited learning
- insufficient attention to the promotion of cultural diversity in teaching and learning
- insufficiently well-established sharing of good practice across the service

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of learners' physical skills
- particularly good actions to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- ineffective planning and monitoring of individual learning
- insufficient planning to meet strategic objectives

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good development of language skills in many classes
- very effective use of the target language by tutors during lessons
- good curriculum support for tutors

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- inadequate use of learning resources in some lessons

Foundation programmes

Literacy

Strengths

- good setting of specific and measurable learning targets
- good initiatives to manage improvements

Weaknesses

- insufficient lesson planning to meet individual needs
- insufficient use of data in the management of the curriculum

ESOL

Strengths

- good development of language skills
- good target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress
- good strategies to resolve weaknesses from the previous inspection

Weaknesses

- inadequate ICT and audio resources
- very poor reporting of achievements for non-accredited learning

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills in most lessons
- good curriculum planning

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective actions to improve staff knowledge and expertise

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

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

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- strong leadership
- good support for staff
- good focus on learners' access and entitlement
- highly effective arrangements to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on planning to meet targets
- insufficient monitoring of achievements in non-accredited learning
- insufficient attention to the promotion of cultural diversity in teaching and learning
- insufficiently well-established sharing of good practice across the service

35. The LEA has strong leadership. Managers have a decisive and active leadership style, which has clearly focused on making immediate improvements since the previous inspection. They have worked quickly and efficiently to decide what the main priorities are, and to rectify significant weaknesses in the provision. Curriculum planning and strategy documents make clear references to the service's priorities and main objectives. Managers are willing to make difficult decisions where necessary. Staff who do not carry out their roles to the required standards leave the service, or are mentored to improve their performance. Managers are honest and self-critical about the influence of the changes they have made, and the effect they have had on the quality of the provision. The LEA has successfully restructured the management of the service and made good appointments to many of the management positions from the pre-existing unit managers. The service now has a clear corporate image and a consistent approach to working practices. Managers have developed a more professional and business-orientated approach to their work. Since the previous inspection, a number of very significant and successful changes have been made in the unsatisfactory or very weak areas of learning. Curriculum and locality management teams have developed clear identities and are starting to work well together. Important systems such as budgeting and health and safety have been centralised and improved. The service has consulted effectively with a number of other successful adult and community learning providers to improve particular aspects of the provision.

36. The LEA provides good support for staff. It has invested a significant amount of resources in the restructuring of the service to ensure that managers and staff with appropriate expertise are employed in the correct roles. Managers have focused their energies successfully on providing staff with greater support through the appointment of badged observers and tutor co-ordinators. The identity of curriculum teams has been improved through the well-planned compulsory staff development programme, which

has included general and subject-specific training. Staff appreciate the support they receive to gain appropriate teaching and subject-based qualifications. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Managers have introduced particularly effective methods of communication, including pre-term meetings with tutors to brief them on changes and new developments. They now hold regular meetings with staff in many areas of learning. Staff value the good operational support and curriculum expertise and are enthusiastic about improving their teaching practices. They find managers approachable and supportive. Staff use the comprehensive tutors' and administrators' handbooks well to understand their roles and to reinforce standard working practices. The service has developed useful information packs and informative newsletters for tutors in a number of curriculum areas, including ESOL and numeracy. Managers support each other well and teamwork is good, particularly where members of the management team have been absent from work with personal problems. Managers receive good support themselves in their new roles and careful consideration has been given to their capacity to deal with so many changes in the service in a short space of time. The restructuring of the service has allowed some good career development for tutors who have been promoted into management roles.

37. Resources are satisfactory overall. Most accommodation is fit for purpose. The service's own centres are welcoming, bright and provide good classroom accommodation. There are some shortcomings in teaching and learning resources in languages and courses for ESOL learners. The service operates a particularly effective procedure for checking the health and safety of all venues and has good systems for tutors to carry out risk assessments of classroom activities.

38. Curriculum planning and management are satisfactory overall. Curriculum management has been changed significantly through the restructuring of the service and it is too early to judge the effect on the quality of provision of some actions carried out. Curriculum management has improved significantly in some parts of the service, including languages, ESOL, literacy, independent living and leisure, and teacher training. However, curriculum planning and management are less well developed in other areas of learning, such as leisure and recreation. Partnership working to support projects for under-represented groups of learners is good, particularly in the north of the county. Internal partnerships with other areas of the council to promote workforce development are at the early stages of development.

39. The service's management of the arrangements to support learners with additional literacy, numeracy and language needs is 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 their additional support needs. Arrangements have been made within the restructure to integrate the literacy and numeracy areas of learning with other mainstream curriculum areas.

40. The LEA does not focus sufficiently on planning to meet targets. The main aim of the service since the previous inspection has been to improve the quality of the existing provision and to take actions in some areas of learning to reduce the amount of poor teaching and learning. However, strategic planning has not been integrated sufficiently

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with initiatives to improve the provision. Programme planning for 2005-06 was delayed because of uncertainties over staffing. Decisions about course viability were not clear at the beginning of the academic year and staff found the delays caused by this to be very time consuming and stressful, although the procedures have since improved.

Promotional activities to support the new corporate image of the service have not been sufficiently co-ordinated with curriculum planning. Targets for learner numbers have been revised downwards during 2005-06, but the service has currently only achieved 25 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively, of its previous targets for learners on non-accredited courses and accredited programmes. Only just over 8,800 learners had enrolled on courses in 2005-06 at the time of the inspection and the service is forecasting a significant financial deficit against its planned budget. Managers have not given sufficient consideration in their curriculum planning to the likely numbers of cancelled courses. Approximately 50 per cent of the programmes planned for 2005-06 have been cancelled. Some staff are not sufficiently aware of the numbers of enrolments and cancelled courses and too little focus is given to monitoring the service's performance against targets at management meetings. The service does not target its provision to recruit particular groups of under-represented learners, such as men. A recovery plan has been introduced to increase enrolments and income during the remainder of 2005-06, but some of the actions do not meet the service's priority targets.

41. Insufficient monitoring is carried out of achievements in non-accredited learning. The use and analysis of data has improved since the previous inspection and managers now have better access to reliable data, which they use to monitor the provision. There has been good progress in the monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievements in non-accredited learning in some parts of the service. For example, tutors successfully encourage arts and crafts learners to use a wide range of resources such as digital cameras and CD-ROMs to record their achievements. However, progress has been poor in other areas of learning. In language classes and leisure and recreation sessions, many tutors do not keep accurate records of learners' achievements and targets are not sufficiently specific. Tutors do not make sufficient use of initial assessment to identify learners' prior knowledge and skills. The service's definition of an achievement in non-accredited learning is inappropriate and achievement rates are wrongly recorded as being 100 per cent for most courses. Staff responsible for management information are not aware of what evidence constitutes an achievement in non-accredited learning. They are not presented with any evidence by tutors to validate the achievement rates. Managers do not analyse and use data on achievement rates to bring about continuous improvements.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

42. The LEA now focuses well on learners' access and entitlement. This area was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Learners now receive a clear statement of their entitlements as part of the pre-course information. The statement is easy to understand and is available in a range of different formats. At the time of the previous inspection, each of the units around the county which made up the service produced its own marketing materials. The service had very little central control over what details were included in leaflets and advertisements for courses. Publicity and

promotional materials have now been reviewed carefully and redesigned to promote a clear corporate image of the service. Each of the three prospectuses for the county includes consistent information about fees, concessions, additional support and learners' rights and responsibilities. Learners have better access to all the information they require before enrolment. Fees and concessions have been standardised to promote equality of opportunity across the service. Managers and administrative staff have a very good understanding and awareness of their responsibilities towards learners.

43. The recently formed access and appeals panel has a clear remit to receive and process learners' requests for support to attend classes. In addition, the panel takes action to resolve any formal complaints made by learners or staff members. It monitors the use of hardship and access fund budgets well. Access to the curriculum has been reduced for some learners in certain subject areas since the previous inspection. The availability of most subject areas across the county is satisfactory, but some learners are unhappy about the cuts in the sports and leisure provision. The service has carried out a thorough audit of its accommodation and has a clear view of the improvements needed across the county. A number of unsuitable venues have been removed from the accommodation list and renovation work has been carried out on other buildings to improve access for learners with restricted mobility.

44. The service uses the council's equal opportunities policies and procedures. In addition, it has a satisfactory range of policies and procedures which have been developed specifically for adult and community learning. They include policies for inclusion and disclosure and procedures for complaints and appeals, which are available in different formats. Managers use a 'cause for concern' checklist to highlight and resolve potential problems quickly before they become more serious. Staff discuss issues of equality of opportunity at the regular curriculum managers' and locality managers' meetings. The service has identified a manager who is responsible for equality of opportunity and health and safety. She acts as an effective link between different parts of the service and works well with the council's equality officer. The council's equality and diversity team provides good support for the service. Most staff have received satisfactory training and information on equality of opportunity and risk assessments. Managers, and most tutors, have a good awareness of the need to provide additional support for learners and respond appropriately when such needs are identified. Information on the range of adaptive technology and equipment available within the service has improved since the previous inspection.

45. The service collects data on recruitment of learners by age, ethnicity, disability and gender. However, it does not routinely collect accurate data on retention and achievement rates in all curriculum areas. Managers do not use the information to analyse trends or to set targets to meet the strategic priorities of the service, such as attracting more men and new learners. Learners' work and achievements are celebrated appropriately through displays, exhibitions, award ceremonies and publicity in newspapers.

46. Insufficient attention is given to the promotion of cultural diversity through teaching and learning. Some tutors are not clear about the need to promote cultural diversity, or

how to do so. It is not routinely incorporated into lesson planning. The paperwork used to record observations of teaching and learning does not make any reference to the promotion of cultural diversity. However, some tutors in languages and classes for ESOL learners are sensitive to the diverse range of learners' family backgrounds.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

47. The LEA's arrangements to improve teaching and learning are highly effective. The policies and procedures for the observation of teaching and learning have been reviewed and revised thoroughly since the previous inspection. The arrangements are now very good and teaching and learning have improved significantly in most areas of learning. The service has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning through a comprehensive programme of staff development. Managers have carried out important improvements to increase the effectiveness of classroom observations and to raise standards. They plan a clear schedule of observations each year. Tutors are prepared well through detailed guidance notes and most observations are carried out thoroughly. Staff appreciate the opportunity to be observed and most view the process as being supportive and informative. At the time of the previous inspection, observations of teaching and learning were carried out by staff who were not subject specialists and tutors were only observed once every three years. Trained subject specialists now carry out most classroom observations and the service plans to observe all tutors once a year. A significant proportion of tutors have been observed in 2005-06 to date. Managers and the observation team review and agree the observation grades at regular standardisation meetings. Most of the observation reports accurately reflect the grades given for observed learning sessions. However, in some areas of learning such as independent living and leisure skills, the reports are less detailed. The service has recently started to carry out some external moderation of classroom observation reports with a neighbouring adult and community learning service.

48. Managers carry out regular quality monitoring visits to curriculum areas to check that tutors are using the correct procedures and paperwork. The visits are used effectively to support observations of teaching and learning and to highlight any early concerns about tutors' performance. Curriculum managers and tutor co-ordinators support tutors well.

49. The service has a satisfactory approach to the management of quality improvement. Staff make frequent references to the post-inspection action plan, quality improvement plan and self-assessment report, to monitor progress against the identified actions. Policies and procedures have been clearly rewritten to reflect the new structure of the service. Managers have reviewed the service's minimum requirements for tutors' qualifications and increased the provision of teacher-training programmes. A new quality improvement panel has been set up recently, but it is too early to judge the influence of this group on the quality of the provision.

50. The service has continued with its effective collection and use of the views of learners since the previous inspection. The outcomes are analysed and used to contribute towards action-planning for improvements. Learners are encouraged to

complete course evaluations, which link to the end-of-year course reviews carried out by tutors.

51. The self-assessment process is generally satisfactory. Tutors contribute to the self-assessment report for curriculum areas through the course reviews they carry out. Curriculum managers write the report using the feedback from tutors. Some tutors have a good awareness of the self-assessment report and how they have contributed to it. However, other tutors are much less knowledgeable about its contents. The most recent self-assessment report for 2004-05 was written for the inspection and is the fifth report produced by the service. It is critical and evaluative. The grades given by the service matched those given by inspectors, in most areas of learning and leadership and management. Many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report matched inspectors' judgements.

52. The sharing of good practice across the service is insufficiently well established. Some improvements have been made since the previous inspection. For example, a regular newsletter is sent to tutors in some curriculum areas. Good practice identified in classroom observations of teaching and learning is sometimes shared within the curriculum area. Some curriculum areas such as languages and arts and crafts have arranged joint staff development events. However, many of these arrangements have not been in place for long enough to bring about systematic and routine sharing of good practice at all levels of the service.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	742	3

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of learners' physical skills
- particularly good actions to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- ineffective planning and monitoring of individual learning
- insufficient planning to meet strategic objectives

Achievement and standards

53. The development of learners' physical skills is good. In yoga, tai chi and fitness classes, learners perform postures, sequences and exercises well. They enhance their flexibility, balance and sense of wellbeing. Tutors use pair-work well to enable learners to learn from each other, as well as from the tutor. In a tai chi class observed by inspectors, the learners were practising a challenging sequence of movements and reinforcing sequences learnt the previous week. Some tai chi learners practise routines at home to make sure they are competent before coming to each class. Learners are able to identify improvements they need to make in their posture and balance. Many learners on fitness courses develop good all-round fitness, strength and flexibility through a wide range of activities involving different pieces of equipment. Learners take responsibility for their own learning. For example, learners in a fitness class know how to take their pulse rate, understand what the reading means, and know how to use it to evaluate their performance during the lesson. Learners compete well with each other in some classes, such as circuit training. They have a good understanding of the benefits of their chosen activity. They comment that attendance at exercise and fitness classes helps them to maintain their mobility and improves their relaxation. For example, tai chi learners enjoy focusing on their spiritual development. They value the social benefits from participating in courses and the opportunity to be with others.

54. Retention rates have remained satisfactory since the previous inspection. In 2004-05, the overall retention rate was 97.5 per cent. Attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection, when they were poor at 73 per cent. The attendance rate on courses running at the time of the inspection was 81 per cent.

Quality of education and training

55. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory. They have improved since the previous inspection, when one third of the classes observed were poor. Sixty per cent of the classes observed during the reinspection were good or better, and no sessions were inadequate. In the good or better classes, tutors plan well to include a variety of activities and modifications to exercises that enable all learners to participate. Tutors' management of the classes is good and their clear demonstrations let learners see how to perform exercises correctly. Learners receive good individual feedback on their performance and correction, which helps them to improve their exercise practices. Some tutors make good use of examples from other cultures to reinforce learners' technical knowledge. For example, tutors in tai chi and yoga classes use Sanskrit terms to help learners understand Chinese astrology. In the satisfactory learning sessions observed by inspectors, tutors perform too many of the exercises themselves and do not give sufficient attention to learners' individual needs.

56. Accommodation and resources have improved since the previous inspection, and are now satisfactory overall. The service has carried out a detailed audit of its accommodation since the inspection and no longer uses venues with inadequate facilities. Lessons take place in spacious classrooms, some of which need redecorating. Learners in some classes provide their own exercise equipment, such as mats and blankets, and tutors often use their own audio systems and specialist exercise equipment.

57. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Tutors support learners well in classes. Promotional materials have been improved since the previous inspection so that learners have access to consistent information about courses across the county. The service has started to give clearer definitions of what is meant by beginners', intermediate and improvers' courses.

58. The planning and monitoring of individual learning are ineffective and have not improved since the previous inspection. Tutors do not use initial assessments sufficiently to identify learners' pre-existing knowledge and skills. Individual learners are not set sufficiently challenging targets. Learners' achievement records are not used to identify specific learning outcomes. Some learners comment that they have the same learning goals for each term. The learning outcomes in many classes are for the whole group and are inappropriate for the setting of individual learning objectives and targets. Tutors do not use the learners' achievement records sufficiently during lessons to record learners' progress and learners are not always aware of any feedback that has been recorded from their feedback. However, some learners value the opportunity to reflect on their learning. The use of health questionnaires has improved since the previous inspection, but some tutors do not have completed records available to them at the start of the course.

Leadership and management

59. The service has carried out particularly good actions to improve teaching and learning. Managers have focused very effectively on resolving the weaknesses from the previous inspection. The service has revised its quality assurance procedures and set minimum qualification standards for tutors. Most tutors are now well qualified. Staff attendance at compulsory training events is good. Tutors have found the health and safety and first aid training particularly useful.

60. A planned programme of lesson observations is carried out by a subject specialist. Tutors' classroom management has improved and learning sessions are planned more carefully. Tutors receive supportive feedback on their classroom observations which accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. In 2005-06, 16 of the 24 tutors have been observed.

61. Curriculum leadership and management are now satisfactory overall, having improved from the previous inspection when they were weak. Tutors value the help they receive from administrative staff and the improved communications with curriculum managers. They feel well supported and have good access to a wide range of resources to support their teaching. The tutors' handbook sets out the expectations that the service has of staff, and what paperwork to use. Most tutors understand the quality assurance procedures. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners have a good knowledge of how to obtain additional support and how to complain if they need to.

62. There is insufficient planning to meet strategic objectives. The service has reduced the number of courses significantly since the previous inspection, and no longer runs any sport programmes. The main objectives of the service are to attract learners new to exercise, to meet the health needs of older learners and to provide a satisfactory range of community-based activities. However, the revised curriculum offer is not yet fully responsive to the needs of local communities, and is not planned sufficiently well to meet the interests of some learners. Yoga, fitness and exercise classes make up almost all the provision. Very few classes are held at the weekend or on Fridays. Many classes stop during holiday periods. The service offers only a small number of courses specifically for older learners and many classes contain beginners and intermediate learners in the same group. The service does not offer sufficient guidance for learners who want, or need, to progress to higher-level courses so that sufficient places are created for new learners.

63. The service's self-assessment report for sport and leisure accurately identifies some of the improvements in the provision. However, some tutors are not sufficiently aware of the self-assessment process and have not been given the opportunity to see the final report. The grade given by the service matched that identified by inspectors.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	1075	3

Languages

Strengths

- good development of language skills in many classes
- very effective use of the target language by tutors during lessons
- good curriculum support for tutors

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- inadequate use of learning resources in some lessons

Achievement and standards

64. The development of language skills is good in many classes. This strength was identified at the previous inspection. Learners produce written and oral work of a good standard, particularly at level 2. They develop good listening skills and confidence in speaking. Learners use a wide range of language structures and vocabulary. Most achieve the aim of being able to use the target language for a variety of purposes, such as communicating with friends and family members.

65. Attendance and retention rates are satisfactory. At the time of the reinspection, the average attendance rate was 81 per cent. In 2004-05, the overall retention rates on non-accredited and accredited courses were 89 per cent and 73 per cent respectively.

66. Achievement rates are poor. In 2004-05, the overall achievement rate was 48 per cent. Many learners who enrol on accredited courses choose not to complete the assessments. They are interested in acquiring language skills, but do not want to achieve a qualification.

Quality of education and training

67. Tutors make very effective use of the target language during lessons. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Tutors use very effective methods to improve learners' understanding of languages and to encourage them to communicate with each other. Tutors frequently explain new vocabulary in the foreign language. Learners now have many opportunities to practise

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speaking the foreign language. In some learning sessions observed by inspectors, tutors use large cards to prompt learners to use only the foreign language to ask routine questions. Most learning sessions are planned well. In the best lessons, tutors make good use of a wide range of activities including games to develop language skills. In an Italian class observed by inspectors, the learners stood in two rows facing each other and carried out a short role-play in pairs. As each pair completed the task they were given, they moved quickly to the next partner to practise using additional language structures and vocabulary. There was very effective interaction between the learners, who had many opportunities to use the language in a meaningful way.

68. The language provision has changed significantly since the previous inspection. Fewer courses are offered, and many programmes which were previously non-accredited are now accredited. Curriculum planning is now carried out on a countywide basis with standard course fees and easily identifiable progression routes. At the previous inspection, courses were planned on the basis of what provision had been offered over a number of years. Despite the reduction in the number of courses, the range of language programmes is adequate across the county and clear progression routes exist. The awarding body for accredited courses has been carefully chosen to meet learners' preferred styles of assessment.

69. Learners receive satisfactory support and guidance. Promotional materials contain consistent information on all language courses. This information includes an outline of the type of accreditation, an explanation of the level of the course and any pre-existing knowledge requirements. Learners receive comprehensive and detailed pre-course information once they enrol on a course. The information includes full details of the course, including any additional costs and the tutor's home telephone number, which learners can ring to discuss any problems before they start the course.

70. Inadequate use is made of a range of learning resources in some lessons. Most classrooms are equipped with a wide range of equipment, such as overhead projectors and whiteboards. The rooms are carpeted, which improves acoustics for language learners. The service has a small number of laptop computers and data projectors available for language tutors. However, many tutors use only paper-based and written resources. In these learning sessions, the teaching and learning are dull and uninspiring. Some learners are not sufficiently challenged. One tutor does use e-mails in the foreign language she teaches to contact learners between classes. In a good French class on food and recipes, observed by inspectors, the learners were asked to search the internet for recipes in a foreign language and present them to the rest of the group in the next lesson.

Leadership and management

71. Tutors receive good curriculum support. The service has made significant improvements in its support for tutors since the previous inspection, when the area was identified as a weakness. Most tutors find the curriculum managers supportive and approachable. Curriculum support workers communicate well with tutors.

Administrative staff in the main centres give good support to tutors, particularly when they are required to teach in remote locations. Staff feel much more like part of a team. They value the good staff development and training they receive for general and language-specific topics. Staff training sessions are repeated at several venues across the county, and these events are well attended. Some sharing of good practice takes place at the meetings.

72. The procedures for classroom observations of teaching and learning have been improved since the previous inspection. Tutors view classroom observations as being supportive and as a contribution to their personal development. The new badged observers are experienced subject specialists who have carried out relevant training for their roles. All tutors have been observed within the past year. Grades for classroom observations accurately reflect the feedback given to tutors. The observation reports are well written and clearly identify strengths and weaknesses in the lessons observed. All tutors are required to have a minimum teaching qualification. Many staff are native speakers and display an excellent knowledge of the language they teach.

73. Much of the accommodation used for language courses is old and some of the venues are listed buildings. Access is satisfactory for learners with restricted mobility. Learners are asked during enrolment whether they have a disability or any additional support needs and the information is passed to tutors before courses begin.

74. Learners' views are collected and analysed at the end of each year. Curriculum managers use classroom observations to resolve any academic problems that learners identify in their feedback. Retention and attendance rates are monitored through register checks, which are carried out monthly. The judgements in the self-assessment report broadly matched those of inspectors. Some of the weaknesses identified in the most recent report for 2004-05 have now been resolved. Some tutors are not sufficiently aware of the self-assessment process. The grade identified by the service for the area of learning matched that identified by inspectors.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy</i> - Adult and community learning	241	3
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	280	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	277	4

Literacy*Strengths*

- good setting of specific and measurable learning targets
- good initiatives to manage improvements

Weaknesses

- insufficient lesson planning to meet individual needs
- insufficient use of data in the management of the curriculum

ESOL*Strengths*

- good development of language skills
- good target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress
- good strategies to resolve weaknesses from the previous inspection

Weaknesses

- inadequate ICT and audio resources
- very poor reporting of achievements for non-accredited learning

Independent living and leisure skills*Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills in most lessons
- good curriculum planning

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective actions to improve staff knowledge and expertise

Achievement and standards

75. Learners on ESOL courses develop good language skills. They make good progress to develop their spoken English and many achieve their personal learning goals. In many sessions, tutors encourage well-led discussions which include all learners. Tutors place a particular emphasis on correct pronunciation and good use of grammar. They use very good revision techniques to reinforce new vocabulary. Learners gain confidence in acquiring new skills, which they use to carry out everyday activities from which they have previously felt excluded.

76. Learners develop good skills in most independent living and leisure lessons. They gain social skills and increase their confidence and self-esteem. Their speaking and listening skills improve and they develop the ability to transfer information from one task to another. Most learners achieve good standards of work and practical skills. For example, in an arts and crafts learning session observed by inspectors, learners contributed successfully to a theatre performance. They were sufficiently confident to perform in front of an audience and were able to tell those watching how they had developed as individuals. One learner said that the drama classes had helped her with her anger management. Attendance rates and punctuality are good.

77. Achievement rates are poor on literacy and independent living and leisure courses. In 2004-05, only 42 per cent of learners passed the national literacy tests. Retention rates on literacy programmes are satisfactory. In 2004-05, the overall retention rate was 89 per cent. In 2004-05, the achievement rate for independent living and leisure courses was 51 per cent. No complete data was available for any foundation programmes at the previous inspection.

Quality of education and training

78. There is good target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress in literacy and ESOL programmes. This area was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. In literacy, the setting of specific and measurable learning targets is good. Learning co-ordinators support learners well during their initial interviews and assessments. They check learners' paperwork thoroughly and ensure that additional learning support is made available to those learners who need it. Learning outcomes in individual learning plans are detailed and realistic. Most learners are clear about the levels of literacy skills they are working towards and which of their skills need further development. Learners monitor their own progress each week. In ESOL, learners' records are kept well and tutors use detailed paperwork to record learners' progress. Individual learning plans contain specific and measurable targets, which are agreed with each individual learner. Tutors monitor learners' progress well and learners have a good awareness of the progress they make.

79. Curriculum planning is good in independent living and leisure. It has improved since the previous inspection, when it was weak. The service has reviewed its offer of courses

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in the light of the judgements made in the previous inspection report. It now offers a choice of two-hour arts and crafts courses and six-hour life choices programmes, which are available during the daytime and evening across the county. Learners can choose courses from an imaginative range of programmes which encourage them to take an active role in their local communities. They develop creative awareness in subjects such as drama and pottery. The life choices programme helps to develop learners' awareness of the community they live in. For example, they visit shops during trips to the local town and improve their communication and money-handling skills through visits to cafes and restaurants. There is good reinforcement of health and safety in most learning sessions.

80. The range of literacy and ESOL courses available is satisfactory. Programmes are offered from pre-entry level to level 2. Literacy courses take place in 24 community-based venues across the county, which learners are easily able to reach.

81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory on literacy and ESOL courses. Ninety per cent and 100 per cent, respectively, of the literacy and ESOL learning sessions observed by inspectors were satisfactory or better. In literacy, the supportive tutors develop learners' confidence and ensure they are well motivated. Tutors pay particular attention to learners' reading, writing and speaking skills in individual and group work. In the better lessons, tutors plan a wide range of activities to support learning. The accommodation at most centres is good. ESOL tutors plan lessons well to include a good range of relevant and interesting activities for learners. In the best ESOL classes, tutors ensure that learners' individual needs are met. Tutors make good use of the resources available to them and bring in their own additional resources to classes.

82. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learning co-ordinators support learners well during enrolment, using their knowledge of local communities' interests and needs. Staff work closely with external specialist agencies to support learners with particular needs. Staff contact learners who do not attend for three weeks to offer them additional support.

83. Insufficient lesson planning takes place in literacy learning sessions to meet learners' particular needs. Most classes are mixed ability, made up of learners who are working at different levels from entry level 1 to level 2. However, lessons are not planned sufficiently carefully to take account of individual learning needs. Many learners do not progress at a pace which suits their particular needs. Lesson planning does not always incorporate the outcomes of learners' initial assessments and progress reviews. Multimedia resources are not used to support individual learning.

84. Much of the teaching on independent living and leisure courses is unsatisfactory. Teaching has not improved since the previous inspection. Almost one third of the learning sessions observed by inspectors were inadequate. Some tutors do not consider the needs of each learner sufficiently when planning and carrying out classroom activities. Learners are set unrealistic tasks and lose interest in the lessons. They are unable to see the relationship between the different pieces of information they are given. Resources are not used effectively and insufficient use is made of visual stimuli. In some learning sessions, lesson plans and schemes of work are not detailed enough.

85. Inadequate use is made of ICT and audio resources in ESOL lessons. Learners on many ESOL programmes do not use ICT sufficiently as part of their courses. For many learners on ESOL programmes, their language classes are the only opportunity for them to gain an introduction to computers and the use of ICT. Audio equipment is rarely used to give learners the opportunity to listen to other voices and accents. It is not available for them to use to practise their listening and speaking skills.

Leadership and management

86. The service has carried out good initiatives and strategies to manage improvements in its literacy and ESOL provision. It has established an effective new management structure and has appointed new managers. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Tutors feel less isolated and value the improved support and teamwork. New systems and paperwork have been developed to ensure a more consistent approach to working practices. Communications have improved considerably through good staff development and training, tutors' handbooks and regular newsletters. Managers have used the revised classroom observation scheme to increase the number of observations. The new scheme is thorough, supportive and managed well. Classroom observations are now carried out by subject specialists. Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, in some of the observations of independent living and leisure classes, the grade given by the observer does not match the feedback and there is insufficient focus on learning. Staff use the detailed post-inspection action plan to resolve weaknesses effectively and to monitor progress.

87. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Most venues are accessible for learners with restricted mobility and accommodation has been adapted to comply with disability discrimination legislation. Staff have had some equal opportunities training, but the promotion of cultural diversity is poor in some lessons. Some staff are insufficiently aware of any strategies to promote cultural diversity.

88. The views of learners and tutors are collected through course evaluations and reviews. However, the outcomes are not collated and analysed to provide information on what improvements are required.

89. Insufficient use is made of data in the management of the literacy curriculum. Managers do not routinely analyse data on enrolments, retention rates and achievement rates to identify those courses which are successful and those where improvements are required. Progression rates are not monitored to assess what programmes learners move on to from their literacy courses.

90. The reporting of achievements on non-accredited ESOL courses is very poor. In 2004-05, for the 166 learners who were initially assessed and completed their assessments, the data shows a retention rate of 100 per cent, but an achievement rate of only 1.9 per cent. Many of the achievements sent in from local units were not recorded

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on the central management information system. The achievement rate for long courses was inaccurately recorded as 33 per cent. Managers are not able to rely on the data to analyse accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

91. Actions to improve staff knowledge and expertise are ineffective in independent living and leisure. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection. Most of the tutors do not have a specialist qualification. Some staff have only limited experience of dealing with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teaching and learning are poor in many lessons. However, some staff have attended recent training to improve their awareness of conditions such as epilepsy and autism.