

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Cornwall LEA Reinspection**

**17 November 2005**



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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Cornwall Adult Education Service was set up by Cornwall County Council more than 40 years ago and is part of Cornwall Local Education Authority (LEA). It works as a semi-independent business unit in the council's directorate of education, arts and libraries. A governing body oversees the adult education service and monitors its performance. In April 1993, the general further education college principals and the head of the adult education service agreed to divide adult learning in Cornwall on an area basis. The three further education colleges are responsible for providing adult learning in the towns where they are based and the area immediately around them. The adult education service is responsible for providing adult learning in the rest of the county. The adult education service is divided into six geographical areas, each managed by a principal. The adult education service also provides literacy and numeracy support throughout the county. This is done through a division of the service known as Link into Learning. The adult education service has a relatively small central team of senior managers and support staff. In 2004-05, it employed about 700 part-time tutors.

2. The adult education service is funded through Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council. In 2004-05, about 22,000 learners were following programmes at nearly 500 venues. The adult education service offers provision in 13 areas of learning.

3. Cornwall is a large, rural county with a sparse but steadily increasing population of about 500,000. Just over a quarter of residents are over 60. The population is scattered throughout small towns, villages and smaller settlements and the density is one of the lowest in the country. The economy is characterised by very small businesses and self-employment. Much of the work in the county is part time or seasonal. Levels of poverty and social exclusion are quite high.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### English, languages & communications

4. At the previous inspection, there were 87 courses in modern foreign languages and nine of them led to nationally recognised qualifications. The adult education service now offers fewer non-accredited courses. Currently it offers 58 courses, 40 of which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Most of the non-accredited courses are at levels 4 and 5 and offer good opportunities to progress from accredited courses at levels 1 to 3. The number of learners has fallen since this time last year and there are currently 766 learners on modern foreign language programmes. The number of languages taught has fallen from 10 in 2004-05 to five in 2005-06. The languages currently taught are Cornish, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish. There is one class in Cornish and one in Russian. Both these classes run in the evening. French, Italian and Spanish courses run in the day and evening. Fewer language classes are now offered at outreach venues, and most of the classes are at area centres. At the previous inspection, 40 tutors were teaching

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modern languages. By the reinspection, the number had fallen to 27. Thirteen of the tutors are native speakers of the language taught. Nine of the tutors are new to the service this year. The adult education service has a curriculum area leader for modern foreign languages and has recently appointed four part-time tutor mentors to develop the provision.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learners interviewed	179
Number of staff interviewed	26
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	19

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection in December 2004, provision in English, languages and communications was unsatisfactory. At the reinspection, provision in English, languages and communications was satisfactory.

## GRADES

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

*Grades awarded at previous inspection*

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Using IT</b> - Adult and community learning	2821	2

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Leisure, sport and recreation</b> - Adult and community learning	2920	3

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Arts</b> - Adult and community learning	905	2
<b>Crafts</b> - Adult and community learning	352	3

English, languages & communications		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> - Adult and community learning	1379	4

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ESOL</b> - Adult and community learning	208	4
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b> - Adult and community learning	2735	2
- New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	31	2

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Adult and community learning</b> - Adult and community learning	297	2

*Grades awarded at reinspection*

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> - Adult and community learning	766	3

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> - Adult and community learning	766	3

### **Languages**

#### *Strengths*

- good listening comprehension skills
- good use of foreign language by tutors
- highly effective specialist curriculum support for staff

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient development of learners' independent speaking skills
- insufficient use of initial assessment to plan learning
- insufficiently clear course information

### **Achievement and standards**

6. Learners develop good listening comprehension skills. The service has done much to improve communicative skills since the previous inspection. Learners are now generally able to follow the language spoken at normal speed both by their tutors and by recorded native speakers. They can listen for the gist of what is said and can use the context to guess the meaning of new language. However, many learners speak hesitantly with poor pronunciation, even at higher levels.

7. Many learners develop independent learning skills and use websites, television, radio and CDs outside the lessons. A few learners take general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) and AS and A levels. These learners achieve good grades. Learners can read and write the language well.

### **Quality of education and training**

8. Tutors make good use of the foreign language. Tutors use the foreign language much more than at the previous inspection and most now use it extensively. Instructions, greetings, social remarks, feedback and explanations are given in the foreign language. In some lessons tutors use no English at all. Most learners value the opportunity to hear so much of the language and develop good listening skills.



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9. At the previous inspection, too much teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed by inspectors during the reinspection. Schemes of work and lessons are well planned and cover all four skills. Lessons include a variety of activities. Learners enjoy frequent games, role play and competitions. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory. Tutors use recorded dialogues and video clips effectively, to give learners an opportunity to hear a range of voices. Most tape and CD players now have counters. Tutors are making more use of information learning technology (ILT). Some learners benefit from short sessions using well-chosen websites as part of their lessons. Tutors recommend other websites for learners to visit in between lessons. Learners in one class benefit from well-designed material on an interactive whiteboard. Many classes use an up-to-date course book supplemented by other material.

10. At the previous inspection, assessment was insufficiently thorough. To put right this weakness, the adult education service has replaced all internally certified qualifications with externally moderated ones. Assessments for the new qualifications have begun but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness. A new system has been introduced for recording learners' progress. Learners and tutors fill in a progress review form every five weeks. It is too soon to judge how effective this process is in recording learning and setting suitable learning targets for individual learners.

11. The adult education service offers a satisfactory range of courses. The new programme of accredited courses in French, Italian and Spanish is considered suitable by most learners. Learners can still take GCSEs, and AS and A2 level courses. Some flexible courses are offered for learners who cannot attend weekly lessons. However, the range of courses is narrower than at the previous inspection. Fewer languages are available. Some courses at different levels have been combined to make one group with enough learners. Some of the tutors of these groups do not have the skills to support learners at different levels.

12. Tutors provide satisfactory support for learners. Individual support in lessons remains good. Tutors understand and cater for individual needs. Some tutors send learning materials to learners who have missed lessons. A system has been set up for giving tutors information about the support needs of learners with specific health problems or disabilities. Tutors give support to all learners who are known to have additional learning needs. For example, one class was moved to a centre a few miles away to accommodate a learner with restricted mobility. Free transport is being provided to the centre so that all learners can attend.

13. Although teaching is generally satisfactory or better, not enough is done to develop learners' independent speaking skills. Learners are not given enough practice with phrases needed for short dialogues to allow them to speak without referring to written materials. Tutors do not have a large enough range of non-verbal techniques to get learners to speak. Some tutors do not teach phrases commonly needed in the classroom. For example, some learners do not know how to ask for help or to ask how to say something. A few tutors still use English unnecessarily for feedback and

encouragement. Some tutors choose course books and tapes that often use English as prompts for speech. These encourage learners to continue to think in English and inhibit learners' ability to speak the foreign language. At higher levels, pronunciation and grammatical errors frequently go uncorrected even when they interfere with meaning. In a few classes, however, including Cornish, learners develop fluent speaking skills.

14. Initial assessment is not used sufficiently to plan learning. Some tutors devise tasks to establish what learners can already do and what they need to learn. The choice of initial assessment is left to individual tutors. The adult education service does not monitor initial assessment. Initial assessments are often insufficiently detailed. Many initial assessments are not recorded. There is little information on learners' understanding of tenses or gender agreements, for example. Not enough use is made of information about individual skills and needs to plan activities that will develop the language skills of different learners in a group.

15. Information on courses is not sufficiently clear. In some centres, advice and information are given face to face and by telephone. However, this is not available at all centres. Information on courses in local prospectuses is sometimes confusing. Courses are described as beginner or stage one but the difference between these levels is not explained. Occasionally, listing courses by alphabetical order results in intermediate courses being listed before stage one courses. Some learners receive leaflets about their courses before enrolling. However, some of the leaflets do not give learners enough help with choosing the right course.

## **Leadership and management**

16. The management of this area of learning is satisfactory. Tutors are given very effective specialist support with the curriculum. This was identified as a strength at the previous inspection and has been built on since then as a way of improving the provision. The leader for this curriculum area has temporarily been given extra hours to give specialist support to tutors. Four tutor mentors have also been given time to provide individual support and to introduce the new qualifications.

17. At the previous inspection, learning was not adequately monitored. Observations of teaching were not done by curriculum specialists and the feedback given did not include precise advice for developing good language teaching skills. Since then, the curriculum area leader has carried out an intensive programme of teaching observations and teaching has improved greatly. Tutors are given clear and thorough feedback with specific action points. They have been encouraged to extend their range of teaching methods and resources. Particular attention has been paid to observing new tutors to improve the learners' experience as quickly as possible. When teaching was judged unsatisfactory, suitable support and feedback were given and a second observation arranged. The grades given for the second observations show a clear improvement in teaching skills. Tutors find the feedback extremely helpful and appreciate the specialist support. The curriculum area leader is easy to contact in person and by telephone and e-mail for advice and support.

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18. The adult education service is developing ILT effectively. This is being used by some tutors and learners but is not yet complete. There has been much effective staff development, including local, national and European events. The curriculum area leader has taken responsibility for training in teaching modern foreign languages. The centre principals and assistant principals have also provided various training events that have benefited modern foreign language tutors. An effective partnership between area principals and assistant principals and the curriculum area leader has helped with improvement.

19. The action plan produced after the previous inspection has been followed and provision has greatly improved. Some improvements are still to be introduced. However, feedback from tutors and learners is not used effectively in self-assessment. The draft report for modern foreign languages is descriptive and does not identify the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

## 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	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Provider</b>	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
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Learner</b>	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
<b>Teacher / trainer</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	<b>Mentor</b>	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
<b>Learning goals</b>	<b>Main learning goals</b>	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.
	<b>Secondary learning goals</b>	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	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
<b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b>	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.
<b>Subject-based programme</b>	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.
<b>Issue-based programme</b>	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.
<b>Outreach provision</b>	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.
<b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>	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.
<b>Community regeneration</b>	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.

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	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
<b>Community capacity building</b>	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.
<b>Active citizenship</b>	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.