

INSPECTION REPORT

ELATT

29 September 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

ELATT

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for ELATT	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
Key Findings	3
What learners like about ELATT	6
What learners think ELATT could improve	6

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	10
Equality of opportunity	11
Quality improvement	12
Information and communications technology	14
Preparation for life and work	18

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. East London Advanced Technology Training (ELATT) is a charity and was founded in 1984 to provide training in information technology (IT) skills, particularly for unemployed adults in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney. It now occupies shared premises on two sites, one in Spitalfields, and one in Haggerston. Both are about a mile from the City of London, and in two of the most deprived areas of England. For many years until 2004, ELATT also offered courses for further education teachers.

2. ELATT employs 26 staff and currently offers a range of IT courses, and two courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Most of the learners need additional tuition in literacy, English language or numeracy in order to meet the requirements of their IT course. Most IT courses comprise five, three-hour learning sessions a week, and last between 10 and 20 weeks. Other IT courses and both ESOL courses are six hours a week for about 11 weeks. They take place in school term-time, and there are a range of start dates during the year. At the time of inspection there were 101 learners on IT courses, and 28 on ESOL courses.

3. Learners who complete courses are encouraged to enrol on the next course, which is timetabled to start within four weeks of the end of the previous course. Most courses are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with supplementary funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). A few short introductory courses are funded by the London Development Agency, and are outside the scope of this inspection. ELATT was last inspected in 1999.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Provision for learners in preparation for life and work is good. Most of the learners are on courses in information and communications technology (ICT) which are satisfactory. The leadership and management and the arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. The arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report was critical and identified many of the weaknesses of the provision, some of which were remedied before the inspection. In some instances, inspectors gave higher grades than those in the self-assessment report.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** The provider has made many improvements to its provision over the past 18 months, and now has good staffing arrangements, good operational management, adequate material resources, and a clear strategy for improvement and development.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR ELATT:

- develop a good data management system
- continue to raise achievement rates
- continue to include literacy, numeracy and language training with ICT teaching
- arrange work experience for more learners
- establish effective quality assurance
- improve ICT teaching

GRADES

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

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

Information and communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Developing IT systems</i> Adult and community learning	76	3	
<i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning	25	3	

Preparation for life and work			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	28	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. All areas of learning currently offered by ELATT were reported on and graded. The grade for preparation for life and work only covers ESOL courses. It does not include the literacy, numeracy, ESOL or employability support for ICT learners. These aspects of learning form part of the evidence for the ICT grade. Provision for teacher training was not inspected as it was discontinued in June 2005.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learners interviewed	87
Number of staff interviewed	19
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **Learners achieve very high standards of technical skills**, in particular in computer maintenance, network support and programming. They meet the standards required by most employers and they achieve qualifications which are widely recognised in industry.
9. **ESOL learners improve their levels of speaking, listening and reading comprehension.** Pass rates are good in national qualifications in speaking and listening, and in reading.
10. **In 2004-05, ESOL learners' attendance was poor**, particularly in the summer term, when lessons focused more on writing. Only 15 of the 24 learners passed their writing qualification last year.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information and communications technology	1	1	5	2	9
Preparation for life and work	0	2	0	0	2
Total	1	3	5	2	11

11. **ICT learners are exceptionally motivated to learn.** They work hard, help each other and continue to study outside lessons. They make good progress.
12. **Some of the teaching in ICT is outstanding**, but most is no more than satisfactory. Learners learn best in the practical learning sessions where they quickly grasp the main principles and produce good work.
13. **There is now a good range of courses in ICT**, which all offer the skills and qualifications sought by employers. Managers designed the courses after researching employers' needs. Many learners progress from one course to another.
14. **Teaching is good for learners on ESOL courses.** Learners enjoy their lessons, attend regularly, and make good progress. The tutor is qualified and skilled. The lessons are well planned, taking into account the different language levels of the learners.

15. **In ESOL lessons, computers are used well.** Learners benefit from learning to use a computer, and in particular learning to access the internet. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, and computers in the IT classrooms are well maintained.

16. **Too much ICT teaching is dominated by lengthy presentations of complex information,** with little input by learners. Tutors do not always check the learners' understanding. However, they do create a relaxed and effective learning atmosphere, encourage learners to support each other, and have some very effective computer-based teaching aids. ICT learners whose first language is not English are well supported by a qualified ESOL teacher. Learners are also supported in numeracy when appropriate.

17. **ICT tutors pay too little attention to individual learning needs.** They do not use the results of initial assessment to plan the training. The overall structure of most learning sessions does not ensure that the training matches the abilities of different learners. In some sessions tutors use technical terms which learners do not understand.

18. **Too few learners attend work experience,** although they are encouraged and helped to find a placement. Recent work experience is valued by employers.

19. Managers and staff have redesigned the test they use to select potential learners for the IT courses, **but they are still not identifying aptitude for particular courses.**

Leadership and management

20. **Leadership and management are good.** Managers and trustees have set clear goals for the organisation, and have allocated staff roles and responsibilities appropriately to help achieve these. Staff understand the goals and work well together to achieve the organisational objectives.

21. **Managers have made many improvements in the past year,** including introducing courses which meet employers' needs, restructuring the staffing arrangements, resourcing and equipping a new building, and developing literacy, numeracy and language training for learners on ICT courses. Achievement rates have increased, and are now at least satisfactory on all courses.

22. **Managers have developed very effective partnerships** with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to the benefit of learners. Managers have researched the needs of local employers, and have worked closely with their local LSC to offer the required courses.

23. **Support arrangements are good.** Learners have their travel and childcare costs refunded and are able to take free technical courses, which are usually very expensive. These courses lead to qualifications which are highly regarded in the IT industry. Learner support workers are attached to each course to offer learners guidance on progression opportunities.

24. **Although managers and staff quickly resolve problems as they arise, arrangements to assure the quality of provision are not fully developed.**

25. **Despite significant resource allocation, the management information system is**

cumbersome and does not meet the organisation's needs. Managers find it difficult to establish what proportion of their learners are successful in gaining jobs and/or qualifications.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic and operational management
- good recent improvements to many aspects of the provision
- particularly effective partnerships to promote opportunities for local people
- good and wide-ranging support arrangements

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed quality assurance arrangements
- inadequate management of information

Information and communications technology

Strengths

- good work produced by learners
- exceptionally well-motivated learners
- particularly effective learning through practical work
- good range of courses to enhance employability

Weaknesses

- over-lengthy presentations by teaching staff
- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- poorly designed selection tests
- insufficient work experience

Preparation for life and work

ESOL

Grade 2

Strengths

- good teaching
- good pass rates in qualifications in speaking and listening, and in reading
- good use of IT to aid learning

Weaknesses

- poor attendance rates in 2004-05

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ELATT:

- helpful, friendly staff will help you sort out problems
- you can choose your path and refresh your skills to get back into the workforce
- the good English teaching
- working in groups so you can share experience
- 'I can stay and do my homework after the course'
- it's easy to get to
- relaxed atmosphere
- 'It's a dream come true'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK ELATT COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of work placements
- more ESOL sessions each week

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good strategic and operational management
- good recent improvements to many aspects of the provision
- particularly effective partnerships to promote opportunities for local people
- good and wide-ranging support arrangements

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed quality assurance arrangements
- inadequate management of information

26. Strategic and operational management are good. Clear and effective plans are simply expressed and used well. Staff know precisely how to contribute to the aims and objectives of the organisation. They meet their supervisors at least once a month to review progress against their objectives, which are linked to the business plans. Staff development is well planned to develop capability in every aspect of their duties. There is a well-organised strategy to do this through external courses leading to qualifications and internal training sessions to share good practice. Communication is good. Staff are fully involved in the development of the business and are consulted on the self-assessment. The trustees are also actively involved in strategic development, and meet frequently. In the past, however, some projects were poorly managed. Unexpected financial shortfalls threatened ELATT's viability, and staff relationships were poor. However, these problems have been assertively dealt with, and the organisation has learnt from the experience and has restructured effectively. The senior management team has worked hard over the past 18 months to rebuild staff confidence.

27. Partnerships promote opportunities for local people particularly effectively. ELATT is good at developing alliances to promote sustainable growth. Strategic plans have been developed to exploit local initiatives such as the Thames Gateway and the Olympic Bid. ELATT has matched bids carefully to exploit learners' multilingual skills in diversifying into tourism and hospitality. It is negotiating with sector skills agencies to generate chances for learners to take up potential employment opportunities. Managers have encouraged employers, including international merchant banks, to take part in one-day employability events with learners. At these events, employers give presentations about employment opportunities at their companies. They run imaginative and effective job application and interview training exercises. Learners gain a very clear understanding of the skills and personal attributes demanded by local employers.

28. Effective partnerships with voluntary sector organisations include a new initiative to provide learners with a fairer chance of selection for employment. A broker organisation enters learners' details on a database which generates their profile for employers who are recruiting. Those who are selected for interview are chosen from this profile, so applicants are assessed on their skills. ELATT is developing additional skills training to help learners stand out when they are selected for interview.

29. ELATT vigorously promotes opportunities for local people to participate in learning and overcome barriers to working. ELATT has developed close partnerships with all other users of its premises in Bethnal Green, and has secured resources from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for a support worker to provide information, advice and guidance to all users of the site, irrespective of which organisation they are linked with. ELATT actively recruits prospective learners from the local community, by providing relevant information in markets, schools, community groups, and at local events such as those run by local Kurdish women's groups on International Women's day.

30. The main site is a newly refurbished building which is open and welcoming. A pleasant drop-in facility is available for all learners, and classrooms are resourced with suitable equipment. Its location is convenient for local people and there are good transport links between sites. Teaching staff are skilled and qualified in their specialist area of learning, and those who do not already have a teaching qualification are working towards one. Some vocational tutors are enhancing their teaching skills by taking courses in teaching English as an additional language.

31. Information management is inadequate. Extracting information is cumbersome and difficult. The custom-built database is not user friendly or fit for purpose. Although use of data has improved over the past year, report compilation takes enormous effort. Subject staff have no direct access to analyse trends or generate custom reports. The reports often contain confusing, misleading or duplicate information. Managers of different specialisms, and even of ELATT altogether, were uncertain of even the approximate number of learners they worked with during the course of a year. Errors in reports were not always noticed. Data for the funding body is not easily compiled. ELATT subcontracts this function to a third party, which does not always extract it correctly. Newer reports are beginning to be used better and enable individual staff to set targets. The provider has recognised the weaknesses in its data management system, and has purchased a commonly used proprietary system.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

32. ELATT has clear policies and procedures to promote equality of opportunity. These policies are well applied. The staff and learners reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the local population. The two premises are both partially accessible to wheelchair users.

33. Managers have put extensive and well-considered arrangements in place to help learners from the poorest parts of London to achieve and progress. Managers and staff are well aware that for many learners employment offers a route out of poverty. Staff have researched employers' precise needs regarding ICT and communication skills, and personal attributes and attitudes. After the research was carried out, ELATT sought and gained public funding to run the type of technical courses which lead to recognised and respected qualifications throughout the IT industry. ELATT is one of the very few organisations in London which offer adults such training without charge.

34. ELATT has secured the necessary funding and support from a wide range of agencies to give learners every possible opportunity. For example, managers have secured ESF funding to ensure learners are refunded for travel or childcare costs. Managers have developed close links with a local community legal centre to offer learners advice on debt and other welfare problems, as well as with local employers, and with their local LSC.

ELATT

Support workers are linked to each course. They assist at tutorials, and help learners develop their personal and general employability skills, as well as being a point of contact when the need arises. Learners appreciate the ready access to good advice. A specialist ESOL tutor works alongside the IT tutors, and helps to teach IT to learners who speak English as an additional language. Another tutor helps learners with their numeracy skills. Most learners now complete their courses, and value the support they get from staff.

35. Teaching staff and managers are keen to ensure that as soon as they start with ELATT learners realise the importance placed on equality of opportunity and mutual respect. Managers are also aware that many learners face considerable barriers to progress. These may include lack of confidence or ambition, as well as long-term unemployment, debt, family dependants, or poverty. During the induction, tutors introduce discussions on racial and gender stereotypes. They stimulate discussion by showing learners pictures of famous men and women of different ethnic origins who have overcome significant difficulties on their path to achievement.

36. Learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and treat each other and the staff and the property respectfully. There is a relaxed but effective learning atmosphere. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is reinforced at regular tutorials. A comprehensive handbook is given to all learners. Some of the publicity materials are available in six languages, which are widely spoken locally. Posters and notices on the walls of the premises include counter-stereotypical images, for example images of women as computer engineers. Many of the posters encourage learners to strive to improve. ELATT expresses learners' rights in terms of their commitment to learners, and responsibilities as codes of conduct. Small posters about these, although colourfully and prominently displayed throughout ELATT's premises, are often too wordy, and use unnecessarily complex language.

37. Learners are aware of their right to complain, and the complaints process is clear. Any concerns are dealt with swiftly. Most of the complaints in the past year were in connection with a teacher training course which was discontinued in June 2005.

38. Managers have not analysed achievement rates by ethnicity or gender. Some of the teaching staff are not fully trained as teachers, and although none reinforce stereotyping, some miss opportunities to challenge gender and other stereotypes during their normal teaching.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

39. Good recent actions have improved many aspects of the provision. The curriculum has been revised to focus more clearly on appropriate vocational skills and qualifications that can enhance employability. It has been streamlined to reduce duplication. Retention and achievement rates on courses have increased and are continuing to rise. The board of directors has recently discontinued a poorly performing teacher training programme, following many complaints from learners.

40. Managers and directors have taken action to overcome serious financial difficulties. In the past, individual projects were managed by staff who had little understanding of the funding regimes, and 18 months ago, ELATT had a large financial deficit. The new staff structure has improved accountability. A full-time finance manager was appointed to help managers monitor expenditure closely. Staff clearly understand their responsibilities which

are clearly linked to the organisation's performance goals, and business plan. Detailed monthly reports are now used by all staff to monitor and review programmes and plan action. All projects are now running as planned.

41. A well-designed and accurate lesson observation process was introduced in April 2005. Tutors' morale increased by introducing the system in a sensitive and supportive way. Staff see the system as fair and helpful. Two managers observe their colleagues. The grades they have given correlate broadly with grades given to learning sessions by inspectors. Managers help tutors set action plans for improvements, following the observations. Some action includes further teacher training. The observation system has not yet ensured consistently good teaching.

42. Managers have fully overhauled and revitalised the arrangements for supporting learners. They have created support worker posts, which are known as learning and work advisers. Each one is attached to a subject team and are an integral part of the course planning team. They get to know their learners well, participate in reviews, and help them overcome difficulties which may inhibit their progress. They advise learners on progression opportunities at specific times. Managers have also simplified the arrangements for learners to claim their travel costs and childcare payments.

43. Staff regularly share good practice in staff meetings. For example, much work has been done to identify opportunities to include skills for life into technical courses, following earlier work in courses for IT users. Many subject specialist tutors are developing their knowledge and understanding of how to support learners' diverse needs.

44. The self-assessment process is inclusive and critical. Learners used to be given questionnaires to complete at the end of their courses. Recently, managers allocated a particular week when all learners would give feedback on courses. Response rates were much higher, and most learners took part in discussions, and gave their opinions. Managers analysed the information carefully and used it for the self-assessment. They also drafted and prominently posted a 12-point plan to deal with learners' concerns. A series of focused staff meetings identified strengths and weaknesses and developed concise plans to deal with them. The self-assessment report is now a detailed and useful document. Plans developed from it have already improved performance.

45. Quality assurance is insufficiently developed. The provider recognises this in its self-assessment report. Many of the systems are very recent and have not yet had time to influence the learners' experience. There are gaps in implementation, and practice is inconsistent. For example, many course files are not complete. Learning plans are sometimes blank, or contain formulaic targets that are not specific or individualised. The language in the documents or notices is often too wordy and too complex. Information on some publicity materials is misleading, in particular regarding the provision of work placements. Although qualified staff assess health and safety risks rigorously, notices in learning centres about health and safety, and liability insurance are not always up to date. There is no formal overall quality assurance policy, but there is a clear quality assurance action plan which describes the actions needed to revise existing systems and deal with omissions. A quality co-ordinator who was appointed in July has started to develop audit mechanisms and has identified many areas where paperwork is missing or incomplete.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information and communications technology

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Developing IT systems Adult and community learning	76	3
ICT for users Adult and community learning	25	3

46. There are currently 101 learners on a range of IT courses, which all run in term-times for 15 hours a week and last between 10 and 20 weeks. Twenty-five learners are on the two courses for users of IT. These are termed office skills courses. The beginners course leads to a level 1 qualification, and the intermediate course is an examination-based level 2 qualification. The other 76 learners are on technical courses. These include courses in computer systems maintenance network support and administration courses, and a programming course which leads to the diploma in software development. The manager who is responsible for the IT user courses also manages the skills for life provision. Another curriculum manager runs the technical provision. There are eight IT teachers and two who are specifically responsible for skills for life delivery. In previous years, ELATT offered different courses, mainly at level 1. Around 60 per cent of learners in the past two years completed and passed their courses. Currently, 90 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and a third are women.

Strengths

- good work produced by learners
- exceptionally well-motivated learners
- particularly effective learning through practical work
- good range of courses to enhance employability

Weaknesses

- over-lengthy presentations by teaching staff
- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- poorly designed selection tests
- insufficient work experience

Achievement and standards

47. Learners make rapid progress and attain a high standard of work. Many of them start with little previous experience, yet within a few months they are able to produce work of a professional standard. For instance, learners recently produced web pages for local employers. Learners gain skills that are valuable in the workplace, such as solving problems in teams. They perform challenging tasks, such as presenting proposals for websites and describing complex networking concepts. Learners in computer maintenance handle equipment confidently and can build and test equipment efficiently.

48. Retention and achievement rates are now at least satisfactory, and good on some courses. For example, last year 90 per cent of learners on courses for users of IT completed their course, and most passed it. However, on some courses from 2002-03 and 2003-04, too many learners left courses early without achieving. Achievement was particularly weak in the IT user courses and the networking courses. The networking course has been radically re-designed. Nearly all learners who started five months ago are still on the course, are developing good skills, and are achieving the required modules of the qualification at a satisfactory pace.

The quality of provision

49. Learners are exceptionally well motivated. Many learners overcome major obstacles in order to study. Despite English being an additional language for many learners, they cope with a complex technical curriculum, often through sheer hard work, as well as with help from a skilled ESOL teacher. They are enthusiastic, attentive and eager to participate during sessions. They support each other and value the encouragement provided by their tutors. Many continue to study at home in the evenings, and prefer to work during part of their lunch and morning breaks. Their motivation to learn is a major asset, and they make rapid progress.

50. The practical aspects of learning sessions are particularly effective. Tutors encourage teamwork during practical sessions, and help create a very positive and supportive learning environment. Learners perform practical tasks in networking, computer maintenance, web design, programming and producing business documents. The learners are encouraged to use the internet during assignments, to get the most up-to-date information on the components of the computers being assembled. In networking courses, learners make good use of an innovative computer-based learning system to simulate real-life problems which they have to solve. Tutors support and encourage learners to use this system to help them learn independently. The system is very visual, and presents few difficulties for ESOL learners, or for those with literacy difficulties. Learners rapidly improve their problem-solving techniques.

51. ELATT offers a particularly good range of IT courses which are taught by knowledgeable staff with good technical expertise. Learners can enter programmes at various levels, including beginners, and can progress from the IT user programmes onto the more technical programmes. Many learners progress from computer maintenance to networking and from lower-level courses to higher-level courses. Learners gain professional qualifications up to level 3 that enhance their employability.

52. Learners are well supported on their courses. The ESOL teacher works alongside the IT tutors during some learning sessions, to help learners where needed. A part-qualified numeracy tutor assists learners who need help with aspects of the mathematics required in some courses. All learners have a named support worker who, alongside the IT tutor, reviews their progress on at least three occasions during the course. The support workers offer learners advice regarding employment or other progression routes, and helps them prepare their curriculum vitae. All learners are refunded the full cost of their travelling and childcare expenses. Learners feel able to discuss personal or welfare issues with their support worker. Learners who have a disability are provided with appropriate support. Retention rates are now generally good.

ELATT

53. The resources, including the computers, the learning materials, and the accommodation are all at least satisfactory. The computers are all relatively new, and the computer network is appropriate and well maintained. There is adequate space in the training rooms at each workstation, and space for learners to work in groups. All staff have the required technical qualifications and are well regarded by learners.

54. In too many sessions, tutors give over-lengthy, complex presentations, which contain too much information for learners to easily retain. Tutors are not always aware that very few learners have the capacity to take in large quantities of information at once. Tutors do not break this information down sufficiently to allow learners to absorb and remember what they have heard. They do not check learners' understanding at stages during the long slide shows. Too often, learners are largely silent while the tutor goes through the material. Many handouts are also too long, and contain too much information at once. As in the slideshows, the language is often unnecessarily complex and key points are not always clear. Some sessions rely on a narrow range of teaching methods. In the better learning sessions tutors frequently break up the presentation of new material with practical exercises, allowing learners to apply and consolidate their learning. Many of the IT tutors have recently started, or are about to start, training courses to develop their teaching skills.

55. Although the programmes have been reviewed and improved to better meet the employment needs of learners, there is still too little emphasis on meeting individual learning needs. Initial assessment is not used sufficiently in the planning of learning. Individual learning plans are mostly standardised and have insufficient detail. Session plans do not include information on how differentiation will take place and how literacy, numeracy and language needs will be resolved. Although tutors readily provide individual attention during sessions, the overall structure of most sessions does not ensure that teaching and learning matches the different abilities of different learners. In some sessions tutors do not pay sufficient attention to the needs of ESOL learners.

56. The tests which ELATT has developed to select prospective learners for particular courses, do not test aptitude for a particular subject. Some of the questions are poorly worded and misleading, particularly for ESOL learners. Some tests are inconsistently or incorrectly marked.

57. Few of the courses include opportunities for real work and few learners have work placements. ELATT's programmes are vocational and most learners enrol from a desire to gain employment, especially in the IT industry. ELATT has recognised the need to deal with this in its self-assessment report and has established initiatives to help learners look for work placements. Where real work projects are incorporated into courses, such as the programming course, learning is greatly enhanced.

Leadership and management

58. Change and development have been managed well in this area of learning. In particular, managers have carried out detailed research to establish the precise needs of the IT industry, and extensive negotiations to secure public funding to offer courses leading to qualifications which are most valued by industry. Programmes continue to be evaluated and reviewed using feedback from learners, employers and staff. Changes have been made in course content and structure, to better meet learners' and employers' needs. Managers have reviewed and improved the key processes at each stage of learning. They have introduced learning and work advisers and have made good progress in including literacy,

language and numeracy in IT courses, particularly in the courses for IT users. Retention and achievement rates have improved on all courses. Some management information is unclear, however. Some management reports do not clearly show which learners gained qualifications and progressed to jobs or further learning. This type of information is not used to help identify areas for improvement.

59. ELATT is making satisfactory progress in implementing its skills for life strategy in ICT. The skills for life manager also leads the team of teachers of IT users, and is making steady progress in including literacy and numeracy and language in the teaching of ICT, with the support of an ESOL teacher and a numeracy tutor. In learning sessions for ICT users, tutors no longer rely on instructional workbooks. They increasingly use interesting project work to enable learners to gain literacy, numeracy and language skills alongside ICT skills. Managers and tutors have had help from consultants on the national skills for life quality initiative. Technical IT tutors now recognise that their responsibilities include assisting learners to improve their English or mathematics, where appropriate. However, they are not yet having much impact on learners' development of these fundamental skills. IT tutors are keen to develop their teaching skills and several are working towards qualifications in this area. Two tutors have been booked on to English language teacher training courses. All ICT learners can use the learning centre, where they can get help with literacy, numeracy and language.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	28	2 2

60. This area includes two ESOL courses, one for beginners, which leads to national qualifications at entry levels 1 or 2, and one for intermediate learners which leads to qualifications at entry level 3 or level 1. These courses were established in September 2004. Autumn term courses mainly lead to national qualifications in speaking and listening, spring term courses to reading qualifications, and summer term courses to writing. At the time of inspection, there are 28 learners, 19 of whom are women. Most of the learners are from a minority ethnic group. In 2004-05, there were 50 ESOL learners, including 25 who took only one course, 12 who took two courses, and 13 who took courses in all three terms.

ESOL**Grade 2***Strengths*

- good teaching
- good pass rates in qualifications in speaking and listening, and in reading
- good use of IT to aid learning

Weaknesses

- poor attendance rates in 2004-05

Achievement and standards

61. Most learners complete their course and make good progress in their spoken and written English. Last year, learners took 45 national tests in speaking and listening, and passed all but five. Pass rates were also good for the reading tests, which were also mainly at entry level, and ranged from entry level 1 to level 1. Twenty-six of the 33 learners who took reading tests passed them first time. Three learners who failed the tests the first time, subsequently re-took the tests and passed. Fewer learners were entered for writing, a much-less-used skill than speaking, listening or reading. Only 15 of the 24 learners who took writing tests passed them first time. Five have been re-entered for tests.

62. Attendance rates were poor in 2004-05. In most lessons in the summer term, for instance, over a third of learners were absent. They often did not warn the tutor that they needed to miss lessons, and did not explain their reason for absence when they returned to lessons. Tutors recorded around half of all absences as unauthorised. Only a quarter of the learners had consistently good attendance. This term, managers and tutors took steps to deal with the problem, and impressed upon learners the importance of good attendance. The tutor has taught learners how to leave telephone messages in the event of absence. So far this term, there has been no unauthorised absence, and attendance rates have been good.

The quality of provision

63. Teaching is good. The tutor creates a learning atmosphere in which the multi-ethnic group of learners feel comfortable in practising speaking, without fear of embarrassment. The tutor is conscious of how language is used, of all learners' understanding, and speaks clearly at an appropriate speed. Lessons are planned well, and a variety of teaching techniques, for developing reading, speaking, listening and writing activities are used. Lessons are well paced, switching between individual, paired and whole-class activities. The tutor supplements the standard skills for life materials with additional resources which are used to stimulate learning, rather than as a series of tasks to accomplish. Learners are attentive and well focused throughout their learning sessions. Teaching takes place in quiet, and adequately sized rooms, which have natural light. However, the tables and the computer desks are currently unsatisfactorily arranged and this restricts the tutor's space at the front of the class, and partially restricts the view of the whiteboard for one or two learners.

64. Computers are used well to stimulate learning in English, as well as in IT skills. The computers have good software packages on them, to stimulate learning. Tutors make good use of the computers, and learners make good progress in their computer skills, as well as in their reading comprehension, and their writing. The computers are linked to the internet, and learners visit useful websites. Learners also enjoy using the internet in their break times.

Leadership and management

65. ESOL training is well managed. The skills for life manager, who is also a qualified ESOL teacher, takes part in reviewing courses, and learners' progress and progression. He works alongside the tutor on occasions, and is particularly involved in teaching sessions which involve IT. The manager and tutor liaise closely on how to improve attendance and punctuality. They agreed the importance of helping learners realise why good attendance is important for social integration as well as for learning. They agreed that ELATT's precise distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence would apply to ESOL learners in the same way as to all other learners. The tutor taught learners how to leave messages, and how to request medical or legal appointments, for example, on days when lessons did not take place.

66. Both courses have only two learning sessions a week. Although ELATT does not currently have sufficient resources to offer more lessons a week, they have sensibly offered learners the opportunity of drop-in open learning sessions on a further half day a week. These sessions are available at the Kingsland Road site, but have not been sufficiently promoted to learners. Few learners take up the opportunity to use the material in the learning centre. The beginners course runs on consecutive days, which is not ideal for language learning.