

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Reinspection**

**02 March 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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## Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Reinspection

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Buckinghamshire Adult Learning is the main provider of part-time learning opportunities for adults in the county on behalf of the local education authority (LEA). Adult learning is part of the community services portfolio of the authority. The service offers an advertised programme of taught courses, workshops and residential courses, from entry level to level 4, together with a range of non-advertised programmes which were developed to meet community and partner needs. It has provision in all 14 areas of learning, although most of the work is in information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes. Buckinghamshire Adult Learning programmes take place in 140 locations across the county in dedicated adult learning centres, schools and community venues, such as village halls and employers' premises. The service also offers residential programmes at Missenden Abbey, which recruits learners locally and from outside the county. Programmes are available in the day, evening and weekends for most of the year. During 2003-04, two new learning centres were opened in economically and socially disadvantaged wards. The reinspection only covered the sport provision.

2. An executive management team under the direction of the acting head of service, has managed the adult learning provision since the previous inspection. Restructuring has resulted in six programme teams that plan and manage the curriculum across the county. The whole service employs approximately 700 part-time tutors.

3. Buckinghamshire has low levels of unemployment, with labour shortages primarily at level 3 and above. It is a largely affluent county but has residents in urban and rural areas who experience significant localised deprivation and social disadvantage. There are significant minority ethnic communities, including Wycombe with a non-white minority ethnic population of 12.1 per cent. The rural parts of the county have significant problems with communications and transport. Approximately 76,000 adults do not have a national qualification at level 2. According to the 2001 census, the total population of Buckinghamshire is just over 479,000, of whom 78 per cent are aged over 16 and 7.9 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Between 1991 and 2001 the population increased by 13.6 per cent, compared with a national average of 5 per cent, and a further 10 per cent growth is expected by 2011.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. At the previous inspection in 2004-05, Buckinghamshire Adult Learning offered 141 sports and leisure courses, to 2,715 learners, in 54 venues across the county. Currently 2,142 learners are on 130 courses delivered by 59 tutors in village and church halls, schools, adult learning centres, community and leisure centres, and a golf club. Activity

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and interests courses include golf, bridge, tai chi, archery, yoga, exercise and fitness, swimming, badminton and Pilates. Programmes do not lead to national qualifications. Courses are organised on a termly basis, usually over 10 weeks. A new fourth term programme has recently been piloted and will run with a range of 103 courses in June and August. Sessions last between one and two hours and are offered in mornings, afternoons and evenings from Monday to Friday. A small number of golf courses are offered at weekends. Specialist fitness classes for older learners who want to develop and maintain mobility are run in residential care homes. Specialist targeted programmes are offered to Asian women's groups. Dedicated family learning programmes, specifically in sport and healthy living, are regularly available and include short taster courses in many sports and leisure subjects, family tennis and badminton, and baby gym. Most of the 59 part-time tutors in fitness, health and leisure teach more than one course and work between two and 10 hours. At the time of the reinspection, 61 learners were registered with disabilities and the numbers from minority ethnic groups are low and declining. The number of new learners, such as those who have not registered for adult learning courses for three years or more, is 228 for the current year.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	7
Number of learners interviewed	65
Number of staff interviewed	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	16
Number of visits	3

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection in January 2005, Buckinghamshire Adult Learning's provision was good in ICT, health, social care and public services. It was satisfactory in visual and performing arts, English, languages and communications, foundation programmes and family learning. Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management were satisfactory, as were the arrangements for equality of opportunity and for quality assurance. The reinspection looked only at the provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel as this area was the only one substantial enough for reinspection. At the end of the reinspection process the provision 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	762	2
<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Leisure, sport and recreation</b> - Adult and community learning	1910	4
<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Early years</b> - Adult and community learning	187	2
<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	801	3
<b>Crafts</b> - Adult and community learning	623	2
<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> - Adult and community learning	2613	3

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<b>Foundation programmes</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Literacy</b> - Adult and community learning	372	3
<b>Numeracy</b> - Adult and community learning	305	2
<b>ESOL</b> - Adult and community learning	901	3
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b> - Adult and community learning	213	2

<b>Family learning</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Adult and community learning</b> - Adult and community learning	147	3

*Grades awarded at reinspection*

<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	2142	3



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> - Adult and community learning	2142	3

### ***Leisure, sport and recreation***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of skills and fitness
- purposeful management action to bring about improvements
- good range of provision

#### *Weaknesses*

- incomplete monitoring of quality systems
- insufficient planning to promote individual learning

### **Achievement and standards**

6. Learners in sports and fitness classes develop good fitness, skills and healthier lifestyles through the activities that increases as personal confidence develops. In yoga classes, learners use breathing techniques to aid concentration and to relax. They demonstrate high levels of mobility, strength, body awareness and co-ordination. Many learners explained how they used the techniques they had learnt in yoga to alleviate minor health conditions. In badminton classes, learners increase their fitness and develop playing skills. One learner explained that she was able to use the playing skills she had acquired in her work with school children. During golf lessons, learners develop skills that help them maintain a healthy lifestyle. Many golf beginners progress to full membership of local clubs and continue to improve their fitness and skills through regular involvement in the game. In general fitness classes, learners develop basic skills that allow them to manage their health and well-being through further fitness and circuit training. Many older learners recognise and appreciate the health and social benefits gained from attending classes and the improvement and added confidence that participation gives them.

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

7. The range of provision is good. The authority has an extensive policy that includes all elements of the community it serves, with suitable emphasis on meeting the needs of rural and urban populations. There is a wide range of courses, from beginner to

advanced in badminton, golf, yoga, Pilates, keep fit and circuit training. These classes are offered at a range of venues across the county. Course marketing materials are adequate and clearly identify the levels of classes. Some courses are targeted specifically at the over 50s, including 'top2toe' and fitness programmes for the elderly and disabled in residential care homes. Classes are targeted at hard-to-reach groups including men and Asian women. Crèche facilities are available in many locations to encourage new mothers back to fitness. The service has just introduced a series of taster courses in yoga and Pilates at local libraries.

8. The service has piloted and now runs courses in July and August. One hundred and three programmes, ranging from one-day first steps in yoga and Pilates to 10-week programmes in many other activities, provide learners with an all-year-round programme. Marketing materials are satisfactory, with additional fliers used to advertise programmes to under-represented groups. Information is sent directly to previous learners, and online and telephone enrolment is available and used widely and resourced by appropriately trained staff. Pre-course information is sent out to all learners and includes the pre-exercise health questionnaire.

9. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Twenty seven per cent of classes observed during inspection were graded as good or better, 60 per cent were satisfactory and 13 per cent were unsatisfactory. In the better sessions, classes are well planned, learners are challenged, and tutors give good support to learners. There is some effective differentiation and performance analysis. In the weaker classes there is insufficient planning to meet individual needs and poor technique is not corrected. In these classes there is insufficient challenge for more able learners. Generally, initial assessments are not used adequately to identify differentiated learning for all participants. Not enough information is used about individual skills or needs to plan activities. Learner devised goals, especially in improver and advanced classes are not used sufficiently in many sessions to manage individual expectations. For example, tutors do not routinely plan lessons to deal with the specific learning goals identified by individuals. The authority has devised formal paperwork for the recording of learning goals and health questionnaires. However, tutors do not routinely use the documents or they use them in addition to their own, and many of the learners view the form filling as an unnecessary chore. There is an over-reliance on informal methods to inform learners of their progress and this not recorded in enough detail to enable learners to identify what they have learnt. Retention and achievement data is collated by managers and is used well to set targets with the involvement of tutors.

10. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately vocationally qualified. Many have recently completed first aid qualifications with the authority. Most learners supply their own resources but in some centres the service provides mats, blocks, belts and sponges for new learners. Accommodation is mostly satisfactory with appropriate risk assessments completed at all venues.

## Leadership and management

11. Senior managers have been particularly assertive in implementing appropriate measures and actions to improve the provision in sport and leisure. Following the previous inspection, a strategy was developed to ensure sport was thoroughly built into the broader service plan. An action plan produced after the previous inspection has been followed and used to good effect to improve the provision. However, some of the improvements are still to be introduced. Healthy lifestyles and active learning are now established through the active lifestyles strategy. The curriculum provision has been rationalised, with improved targeting of courses and improved management of facilities. A new programme of training for tutors includes briefings on how to operate within the quality systems. However, some tutors have not attended despite an incentive training payment being given to all who attend. Feedback from tutors and learners through course reviews is used effectively to develop the self-assessment report. A new accommodation strategy has been established to look at the effective use of current facilities. An accommodation group meets each month and deals well with contract issues raised through an effective complaints process. Sanctions are effectively used against providers that do not attend to broken or poor facilities. A new venue checklist has been devised, but it does not detail specific sport facilities including changing rooms, showers or the suitability of flooring for exercise. The management of contracts to provide facilities is much improved. Grants relating to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 have been effectively used in conjunction with schools and the LEA to provide additional lighting and facilities in some schools. However, some school facilities are dirty, poorly lit and inappropriately heated. One car park visited during the inspection is inadequately lit and has insufficient signs.

12. The systems and methodology used for the observation of teaching and learning has been appropriately modified and reinforced. Observation criteria is clear and utilises the outcomes and criteria from the national framework for teaching and coaching. Observers have been suitably trained and have attended moderation meetings to establish standards. Feedback is well recorded and is generally effective and judgemental, but it is often not given to tutors for up to two weeks after the observation. Grades are not given to staff, only the areas on which they need to improve. The planning of observations is informal and unsystematic and many tutors only receive one observation in an academic year. Only 16 out of 50 tutors have been observed. Communication with tutors is satisfactory. Regular newsletters are used well to keep tutors informed, and additional information is given through the internet. Tutor co-ordinators visit staff to observe them or monitor them each term. However, they do not adequately or systematically monitor the records kept by tutors. In sport there is one full-time programme team leader and three part-time tutor co-ordinators and they have significant caseloads of up to 30 tutors to manage. The use of targets is inadequate and many features of monitoring are informal. In many cases, tutor co-ordinators do not ensure that all required record-keeping is kept up to date. For example, record sheets are unsigned, risk assessments are not adequately completed by tutors and there is little evidence of the monitoring of tutors' own systems. Tutors who did not attend the initial briefings have been inadequately trained and do not understand the need to complete

risk assessments, individual progress reports and health screening. Some use their own paperwork and others do not meet the service's requirements.

13. Staff have appropriate qualifications. All staff have appropriate occupational and vocational or national governing body qualifications in their teaching specialism. Many have completed first aid training. Those who are interested are encouraged to attend adult education training courses. However, some of the tutors' qualifications are not current and have not been updated in line with national governing body requirements.

14. The understanding and management of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Eight courses were provided in 2005 to inform and reinforce equality and diversity and over 150 frontline staff and tutors attended. Training included helping people with learning difficulties, mental health awareness, learning styles and promoting diversity. Staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues in sport. Good attempts have been made to ensure courses are available to minority ethnic groups across the county. Little emphasis is placed on identifying literacy and numeracy needs during activity programmes, but if staff do identify a need, learners are encouraged to seek further assistance. Staff training has included managing literacy and numeracy needs for learners, and frontline staff at enrolment have received appropriate training to identify additional needs. Staff who have literacy and numeracy needs are encouraged to attend courses supplied by the authority to develop their skills.