

INSPECTION REPORT

Southampton LEA

21 October 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
- **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.

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

Southampton LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Southampton Local Education Authority (the local authority) is contracted by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning services to more than 5,000 learners each year from urban communities in Southampton. The local authority's adult and community learning service (the service) is part of Southampton City Council's (the council) community learning section, which is in the children's services and learning directorate. The service's main objective is to encourage the residents of the city to fulfil their potential by participating in, recognising success in, and continuing to enjoy, learning throughout their lives.

2. The adult and community learning provision is made up of a range of accredited and non-accredited courses, most of which are delivered through a number of subcontractors and partnerships. They include Itchen College, Taunton's College and Southampton City College, five community schools, several voluntary sector organisations and other sections within the council including Southampton Water Activities Centre (SWAC) and the library service. The local authority places an increasing emphasis on providing for new learners and those from disadvantaged groups in the local community who are taking their first steps back into learning. It divides its main programme into three categories, which are progression and skills, widening participation and first steps, and leisure learning. The leisure learning courses are no longer LSC-funded and were not included in the inspection. These courses are mostly in sport and leisure, and visual and performing arts.

3. The team responsible for the delivery of adult and community learning comprises five persons. The service is managed by the senior adult and community learning manager, who reports to the principal officer for community learning. The other members of the team are a curriculum and quality manager, a business manager, a projects manager and an administrative officer. The provision is delivered by 104 tutors, most of whom are part time and all of whom work for subcontractors and partner organisations.

4. Southampton is famous as a port and a manufacturing base, but its economy is increasingly based on the service sector, most notably the finance, business, distribution and hospitality industries. It has the region's largest retail centre. The population of the city is approximately 221,000, of which 7.6 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 9.1 per cent of the population nationally. The unemployment rate is 2.1 per cent, compared with a national unemployment rate of 2.3 per cent. The council has identified 11 priority neighbourhoods based on deprivation measures.

5. Courses take place at the main college sites, community schools, primary and secondary schools, the council's own premises and a range of community venues across the city. They range from drop-in sessions and workshops to programmes lasting a full academic year. In 2004-05, 6,072 learners took part in courses provided by the adult and community learning service. Twenty-seven per cent of learners were men, which is in line with the national average, and almost 50 per cent of learners were aged between 25 and 45 years.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**Grade 3**

6. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** The local authority's leadership and management are satisfactory, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. In arts, media and publishing, and family learning, the provision is good. In information and communications technology (ICT), and leisure, travel and tourism, the provision is satisfactory.

7. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** In the past 12 months, the service has improved the arrangements for self-assessment. Activities to prepare for self-assessment are now more inclusive, and some subcontractors have a good knowledge of the service's self-assessment procedures. The most recent interim report for 2004-05 identifies a number of key strengths and key weaknesses in leadership and management that were also identified by inspectors. However, the service's self-assessment of the areas of learning is not sufficiently accurate.

8. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The service is sufficiently critical and has a satisfactory awareness of the areas of provision which require further development. The management of subcontractors and data collection have improved considerably in the past 12 months, and managers are now starting to carry out more in-depth reviews of providers for quality improvement purposes.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR SOUTHAMPTON LEA:

- continue to effect appropriate change within the service
- maintain the good partnership working
- improve curriculum planning with subcontractors
- develop further the arrangements to bring about improvements in teaching and learning
- focus more effectively on the recruitment of under-represented groups of learners
- improve the use of management information to plan and evaluate the provision
- focus more on learners' progression
- develop appropriate assessment and recording practices for non-accredited learning

GRADES

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

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

Information and communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning	200	3 3

Leisure, travel and tourism		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	267	3 3

Arts, media and publishing		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts, media and publishing Adult and community learning	308	2 2

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Family learning Adult and community learning	273	2 2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

9. The inspection reported on and graded four areas of learning. Other areas had insufficient numbers of learners to afford secure judgements on the quality of provision. Inspectors visited the local authority for three days to observe family learning classes before the five days of the final inspection visit.

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	68
Number of learners interviewed	309
Number of staff interviewed	93
Number of subcontractors interviewed	26
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	29
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	34
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

10. **Retention rates on ICT courses are very good.** In 2004-05, the overall retention rate on all courses was 98.5 per cent. Attendance rates are good. In the learning sessions that the inspectors observed, the average attendance rate was 90 per cent, and registers show good rates of attendance in all classes.
11. **Achievement rates on accredited ICT courses are very good.** In 2004-05, the overall achievement rate was 100 per cent, although these programmes made up only 15 per cent of the total provision.
12. Learners on ICT courses develop satisfactory practical skills. Most learners improve their technical knowledge of the subject and use the skills they develop in their everyday lives. They are well motivated and enthusiastic about their improved levels of confidence.
13. **Retention and attendance rates on sport and leisure courses are good.** In 2004-05, the overall retention rate was 90 per cent. The retention rate on courses at SWAC, which make up 63 per cent of the total provision, was 98 per cent. The retention and attendance rates on many water sports courses are 100 per cent.
14. **Achievement rates on accredited sport and leisure courses are very good.** Almost all the accredited programmes take place at SWAC. In 2004-05, the overall achievement rate on accredited courses was 99 per cent.
15. **Learners develop good skills and knowledge on sport and leisure courses.** In many classes, learners demonstrate improvements in their self-confidence and their ability to use background knowledge to develop their skills. Many learners apply their own learning to everyday physical activities.
16. **Learners develop good skills on visual and performing arts courses.** Learners in some dance classes develop good co-ordination and dexterity. They are able to remember and demonstrate a wide range of complex dance sequences. On arts and crafts courses, learners make good progress and use their new specialist skills well. They value their improved self-confidence, self-esteem and concentration.
17. **Achievements on family learning programmes are good.** Learners develop good skills, knowledge and self-confidence to support their children's learning. Most learners successfully increase their levels of literacy, numeracy and language skills. They have a greater understanding of how their children are taught at school and extend the range of activities they can share with them, such as painting and power boating.
18. **Achievement rates on family literacy, numeracy and language courses are good.** In 2004-05, 50 per cent of the learners on long courses submitted their work for accreditation and all of them achieved the qualification. The standard of learners' work is good. Of the 80 per cent of learners who entered for the national literacy and/or numeracy tests at levels 1 and 2, 96 per cent were successful. Many parents and carers progress from introductory sessions to longer courses. Some learners gain the confidence to become more involved in

their children's schools, and local schools report that family learning courses have a positive effect on children's attainment at school.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information and communications technology	1	4	5	1	11
Leisure, travel and tourism	1	7	4	1	13
Arts, media and publishing	2	9	3	1	15
Family learning	3	5	2	0	10
Total	7	25	14	3	49

19. **Support and guidance are good for learners on ICT courses.** Many learners value the good advice they receive from staff in centres to choose between different programmes with similar titles. Good publicity ensures that learners are aware of the programmes available. Tutors have a good awareness of the need to help learners with additional literacy, numeracy and language needs and many tutors attend drop-in learning sessions voluntarily to provide extra support for individual learners.

20. **Teaching and learning are good on accredited water-based courses in sport and leisure.** Tutors are well qualified and very experienced. They motivate learners well through a good variety of teaching and learning strategies and make particularly good use of learners' personal experiences. Learning sessions are planned well and tutors give learners very good guidance on safety and the prevention of accidents. However, on those courses which do not lead to a qualification, the standards of teaching and learning are much more inconsistent.

21. **The teaching and learning resources are good on accredited water-based courses in sport and leisure.** On sport and leisure courses which do not lead to a qualification, they are satisfactory. Learners have access to an appropriate range of equipment such as mats and blocks for yoga. The accommodation at most venues is generally satisfactory. However, some classrooms are too small to accommodate all the learners.

22. **Teaching and learning are good on most visual and performing arts courses.** Classes in arts and crafts are planned well. In the best dance classes, tutors use dynamic teaching strategies to engage learners. Tutors create and maintain an energetic atmosphere and engender trust and mutual co-operation between learners. Learners' participation is good, with a wide range of age groups taking part in courses.

23. **Good initiatives are used in visual and performing arts to attract new learners at most centres.** One- and two-day workshops take place at community centres, which are situated close to local communities and schools. Learners value the location of courses near to main transport routes. Good use of creche facilities allows many parents to attend the workshops.

24. **Standards of teaching and learning are good on family learning programmes.** Classes are planned and managed well. Tutors use resources and activities creatively to stimulate and support adult learning in joint sessions with children. Tutors and schoolteachers work together well to develop learners' language and numeracy skills. They

provide interesting learning environments through imaginative use of games, role play, story telling and food. Parents and children have fun learning together and make resources such as scrapbooks to use at home. Parents who are new to learning improve their self-confidence through the development of new skills.

25. Partnership working in family learning is very productive. For example, innovative and successful projects with the libraries section of the council have led to parents and children throughout the city reading together and voting for their favourite book, and to a baby-signing course to enhance and extend learners' communication skills with babies and toddlers. The local authority supports schools, which act as centres of excellence in family learning.

26. Support for learners to enable them to participate in family learning is good. Reluctant or anxious learners are supported well to feel safe and to join in activities. Creche facilities and registered childminders are provided to help learners with young children to participate. The service gives sensitive support to individual learners. Information, advice and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Learners are given appropriate information about progression routes.

27. The standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory on ICT courses. Most tutors ensure that learners fully understand what they have learnt before proceeding with new material. Lessons are generally well balanced with a good mix of background knowledge and practical demonstration by the tutor.

28. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory for all areas of the provision. Access for learners with restricted mobility is good at most venues. Most centres provide a clean and welcoming environment with spacious social areas, and provision for refreshments late into the evening. Classrooms are appropriately furnished and equipped.

29. The overall attention to learners' health and safety on sport and leisure programmes which do not lead to a qualification, is satisfactory. Learners are asked to complete pre-exercise medical and readiness for exercise forms, which are used by tutors to assess individual learner's fitness. Most tutors have a good awareness of learners' needs and are able to adapt or provide alternative exercises.

30. The systems used to measure and record learners' achievements on ICT courses that do not lead to a qualification are incomplete. The service has developed new paperwork which can be adapted by subcontractors to meet their individual needs. However, many tutors do not use the paperwork at all, or use it inappropriately. Few tutors record the skills or knowledge gained by learners.

31. Learners are insufficiently involved in identifying and recording their progress on sport and leisure courses that do not lead to a qualification. Some initial assessments of learners' prior abilities are too superficial and are not used sufficiently by tutors to plan individual learning. Learners' reasons for attending courses are not always recorded in the paperwork. They receive insufficient detailed feedback about their progress, and the information that tutors do record is often not shared with learners.

32. The involvement of under-represented groups of learners in sport and leisure courses is poor. The service has a clear strategy to increase the number of learners from

disadvantaged communities across the city. However, over 75 per cent of learners on water-based courses at SWAC are men, most of whom do not fit the profile of the service's strategy. On programmes which do not lead to a qualification, more than two-thirds of the learners are women. Too few non-accredited courses are targeted at men.

33. Insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance learning and extend learners' skills in family learning. Laptop computers are available but are not used sufficiently, and access to computers in schools is restricted. Tutors use digital cameras frequently to take photographs in learning sessions, but they are not used by learners.

34. Insufficient planning and recording of progress take place for individual learners in family learning. Learners' progress on short courses is not recorded adequately. Insufficient initial assessment is carried out on short family literacy and numeracy courses. Previous knowledge and experience are not taken into account sufficiently when planning learning. Some learners who have previously attended family learning courses with their children are insufficiently challenged when they enrol on new programmes. Progress reviews with learners on longer courses are not always carried out, or are not recorded in sufficient detail.

Leadership and management

35. There is responsive and supportive management to effect change within the service. The local authority has carried out a detailed review of its adult and community learning service and put in place a coherent and responsive new management structure in which it has invested a considerable amount of resources. Managers provide good support for staff and encourage them to bring about effective changes to the service. Senior managers have a good understanding of lifelong learning and some have considerable experience of managing post-19 education. They are well respected for the roles they play throughout the city. Council funding accounts for a substantial part of the total adult and community learning budget which supports the main programme and a wide range of new learning projects.

36. The service has a wide range of good internal and external partnerships. It has played an important role in the development of a citywide website, which promotes adult learning courses for all providers. The service has a number of good internal partnerships with other sections of the council to bring about learning opportunities for adults. Staff have worked well with managers at SWAC to develop good water-based provision. Partnership working with most of the community schools to manage the main adult and community learning programme is good. Managers in the service have forged productive partnerships with the training and employment initiatives section of the council to deliver a wide range of good community projects for learners from under-represented groups. External partnership working is good.

37. Subcontractors' management of the curriculum is good in many areas of the adult and community learning provision. Operational management is particularly good in visual and performing arts, family learning and water-based provision at SWAC. Staff in subcontractors have a strong commitment to community-based learning to meet the needs of disadvantaged adults across the city. Staff at many of the subcontractors are supported well by the service and they value the help and advice they receive to develop their provision. However, some deficiencies exist in the co-ordination of ICT programmes.

38. **The service has developed a number of good projects to widen participation for under-represented groups of learners across the city.** These projects clearly support the strategic priorities of the service and its social inclusion agenda. The training and employment initiatives section of the council is responsible for most of these successful projects, which take place in partnership with a wide range of external organisations. Projects take place in venues close to the communities for whom they are intended, such as community centres and church halls. Some learners have progressed from these projects to non-accredited and accredited courses, and into employment.

39. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. The service does not have a strategy for additional support, but clearly recognises the importance of supporting learners with poor literacy, numeracy and language skills. Tutors have a good awareness of what to do if they identify learners in their classes who have additional learning needs, and where they can obtain appropriate support.

40. **The service's role in the planning of subcontractors' curriculum is insufficiently established.** The management of the contracting process carried out with some subcontractors is ineffective and does not adequately target those learners who are the key strategic priority of the service. Some subcontractors decide the make up of their adult and community learning provision without sufficient reference to the service. The enrolment procedures for some courses do not ensure that the learners on those programmes accurately fit the category into which the service has placed them. Discussions with some subcontractors do not adequately identify how the provision will help achieve targets set by the service to recruit under-represented groups, such as men. Curriculum planning is not always based on specialist knowledge or experience.

41. **Insufficient use is made of management information to plan and evaluate the provision.** The reliability and availability of data have improved over the last year. Many subcontractors value the data they receive from the service about their learners and their local communities. However, the service does not ensure that some subcontractors submit accurate data for evaluation and planning. The analysis of subcontractors' performance against targets does not always show whether the targets have been met for important priority groups, such as men and learners from minority ethnic groups.

42. **The assessment and recording practices for courses that do not lead to a qualification are incomplete.** The service has taken effective steps to provide subcontractors with appropriate paperwork for recording and monitoring learners' progress and achievements on non-accredited courses. However, some of the ways in which achievements are defined are inappropriate. The recording of learners' progress is not detailed enough on many courses. Some managers in the subcontracted provision do not welcome, or understand, the purpose of the service's attempts to celebrate learners' achievements on non-accredited courses.

43. **The service's arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently well implemented.** A team of observers recruited from each subcontractor has been trained to observe and report on teaching and learning. The judgements of the observation team about the standards of teaching and learning are not sufficiently accurate. The profile of grades given by the service is much higher than that given by inspectors. Reports on teaching and learning standards are insufficiently detailed and do not focus

enough on learning and learners' attainments. Observations are not always carried out by subject specialists. Tutors who have been observed do not always have clear action plans to develop their teaching skills.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- responsive and supportive management to effect change within the service
- good internal and external partnerships
- good curriculum management by many subcontractors
- good development of community projects to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established role in the planning of subcontractors' curriculum
- insufficient use of management information to plan and evaluate the provision
- incomplete assessment and recording practices for non-accredited learning
- inadequate arrangements to improve teaching and learning

Information and communications technology

ICT for users

Grade 3

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good support and guidance for learners

Weaknesses

- incomplete implementation of systems to measure and record learners' achievements on non-accredited courses
- ineffective planning of some aspects of the curriculum

Leisure, travel and tourism

Sport, leisure and recreation

Grade 3

Strengths

- good retention and attendance rates
- very good achievements on accredited courses
- good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- good teaching and learning on accredited courses
- particularly good management of the water sport provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient involvement of learners in identifying and recording progress
- poor involvement of under-represented groups
- insufficient co-ordination and planning of non-accredited provision
- insufficient use of teaching and learning observations to improve the quality of non-accredited provision

Arts, media and publishing

Grade 2

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good teaching and learning
- good initiatives at most centres to attract new learners
- good operational management

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning
- inappropriate use of classroom observations to improve the quality of teaching and learning

Family learning

Grade 2

Strengths

- good achievements
- good teaching and learning
- very productive partnerships
- good support to enable learners to participate
- good leadership and management

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning and extend learners' skills
- insufficient planning and recording of progress for individual learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SOUTHAMPTON LEA:

- the childcare support
- supportive, knowledgeable and friendly tutors
- 'learning has changed my life'
- 'good to have a certificate' - the recognition of learners' achievements
- the convenience of learning locations

WHAT LEARNERS THINK SOUTHAMPTON LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the frequency of classes - they should take place during school holiday periods
- the opportunities to progress to other courses in their local area
- the information about the prices of courses
- the changing facilities for sport and leisure classes

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- responsive and supportive management to effect change within the service
- good internal and external partnerships
- good curriculum management by many subcontractors
- good development of community projects to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established role in the planning of subcontractors' curriculum
- insufficient use of management information to plan and evaluate the provision
- incomplete assessment and recording practices for non-accredited learning
- inadequate arrangements to improve teaching and learning

44. There is responsive and supportive management to effect change within the service. The local authority has carried out a detailed review of its adult and community learning service and put in place a coherent and responsive new management structure in which it has invested a considerable amount of resources. Managers provide good support for staff and encourage them to bring about effective changes to the service. A number of staff who were new to the service and to adult and community learning have developed into good managers who play an important role in the planning and delivery of the provision. Teamwork is good and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Senior managers have a good understanding of lifelong learning and some have considerable experience of managing post-19 education. The service has a good reputation for transparency in its dealings with other providers, and for being an effective and impartial decision-making organisation. Senior managers within the service are well respected for the roles they play throughout the city. Staff share the service's mission and priorities widely and have forged strong partnerships to develop learning programmes. Council funding accounts for a substantial part of the total adult and community learning budget to support the main programme and a wide range of new learning projects. The service is starting to develop a more co-ordinated approach to course planning to reflect its strategic priorities.

45. The service has a wide range of good internal and external partnerships. A detailed partnership and communications strategy has been written, which reflects the service's commitment to partnership working. The service has played an important role in the city's learning partnership and the development of a citywide website, which promotes adult learning courses for all providers. The service has a number of good internal partnerships with other sections of the council to bring about learning opportunities for adults. The service's family learning manager works closely with the museum and libraries sections to develop successful family learning courses and projects. Staff work well with managers at SWAC to develop good water-based provision. Partnership working with most of the community schools to manage the main adult and community learning programme is good.

SOUTHAMPTON LEA

Managers in the service have forged good partnerships with the training and employment initiatives section of the council to deliver a wide range of good community projects for learners from under-represented groups. Staff from the council's sports development team have trained adult and community learning tutors in how to carry out risk assessments on sport and leisure courses. External partnership working is good. The service has worked closely with other local education authorities to develop a regional e-learning strategy and to train a team of advanced practitioners to carry out observations of teaching and learning. Managers represent the service effectively on a number of influential external bodies throughout the city.

46. Subcontractors' management of the curriculum is good in many areas of the adult and community learning provision. Operational management is particularly good in visual and performing arts, family learning and water-based provision at SWAC. In the better centres, communications are good. Staff manage their budgets well and use a wide range of funding to run introductory courses and to support small class numbers. Staff in these centres are well motivated and enthusiastic. Many subcontractors have a strong commitment to community-based learning and widening participation to meet the needs of disadvantaged adults across the city. Managers have a good knowledge of their own local communities. Some subcontracted providers have good operational structures in place to supervise their curriculum areas, although some deficiencies exist in the co-ordination of ICT programmes. Staff at many of the subcontractors are supported well by the service and value the help and advice they receive to develop their provision.

47. Staff development and training are satisfactory. Staff who work for the service have an annual appraisal of their performance, supported by frequent informal and formal meetings with their line managers. Opportunities for staff development are good and the local authority runs a wide range of training courses to develop managers' skills. The service has organised a number of useful staff development events for subcontractors' tutors and managers, such as training in monitoring and recording progress and achievements in non-accredited learning, and the use of ICT in the classroom. Subcontractors value the support they receive from the service to train their staff. Some tutors have been funded by the service to study for teaching qualifications. However, attendance at some training events is poor and the service does not have an overall record to show which tutors have attended staff development, or what qualifications they hold.

48. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. The service does not have a strategy for additional support, but clearly recognises the importance of supporting learners with poor literacy, numeracy and language skills. Tutors have a good awareness of what to do if they identify learners in their classes who have additional learning needs, and where they can obtain appropriate support. The service does not run any discrete literacy and numeracy courses, but works closely with Southampton City College to deliver a wide range of good family literacy, numeracy and language courses.

49. The service's role in the planning of subcontractors' curriculum is insufficiently established. The management of the contracting process carried out with some subcontractors is ineffective and does not adequately target those learners who are the key strategic priority of the service. Some subcontractors decide the make up of their adult and community learning provision without sufficient reference to the service. Some subcontractors print their adult learning prospectus for the following year before they meet

with the service to agree what courses will be funded by the local authority. The enrolment procedures for some courses do not ensure that the learners on those programmes accurately fit the category into which the service has placed them. Some subcontractors have a poor understanding of the categories the service uses to define its provision and to allocate funding. Their definitions of widening participation and first steps provision and progression and skills courses are inappropriate and are not based on the needs of the learners. The descriptions of the categories used by the service do not always accurately reflect the level and purpose of the provision. Discussions with some subcontractors do not adequately identify how the provision will help achieve targets set by the service to recruit under-represented groups, such as men. Curriculum planning is not always based on specialist knowledge or experience and the curriculum improvement strategy is insufficiently detailed.

50. Insufficient use is made of management information to plan and evaluate the provision. The service identifies that it needs to use management information more effectively to target its provision. The reliability and availability of data has improved over the past year. Many subcontractors value the data they receive from the service about their learners and their local communities. The service has assisted some subcontractors to input and analyse their data. However, the data is still not sufficiently reliable or accurate. In 2004-05, almost 10 per cent of the learners did not identify whether they were new to learning. The service does not ensure that some subcontractors submit accurate data for evaluation and planning, particularly for new learners, and prior attainment and progression rates. Important targets, such as those for new learners and progression rates, are unclear. Insufficient monitoring is carried out of learners' progression from widening participation and first steps, and progression and skills courses. The analysis of subcontractors' performance against targets does not always show whether the targets have been met for important priority groups, such as men and learners from minority ethnic groups.

51. The assessment and recording practices for non-accredited learning are incomplete. This weakness is identified by the service in its interim self-assessment report. The service has taken effective steps to provide subcontractors with appropriate paperwork for recording and monitoring learners' progress and achievements on non-accredited courses. Subcontractors value the help they receive from the service to implement this new paperwork and some managers have a clear understanding of how they define an achievement. However, some of the measures used are inappropriate. In some cases, an achievement is defined as a learner who completes their course, or who achieves 50 per cent of the learning outcomes set for them. Decisions about achievements are often made by the tutor and do not involve learners sufficiently in evaluating whether they have achieved learning outcomes. The recording of learners' progress is not detailed enough on many courses. Some staff have not received sufficient training in how to use the service's paperwork and some managers in the subcontracted provision do not welcome, or understand, the purpose of the service's attempts to celebrate learners' achievements on non-accredited courses.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

52. The service has developed a number of good projects to widen participation for under-represented groups of learners across the city. These projects clearly support the strategic priorities of the service and its social inclusion agenda. The training and employment initiatives section of the council is responsible for most of these successful projects, which take place in partnership with a wide range of external organisations. In

most cases, the council is the lead partner in the project and carries out all the project management. Examples include 'People Not Numbers' to engage ex-offenders in learning, 'Access To Education' for women from minority ethnic groups and the 'BRITES' project to develop the language skills of refugees. Many of these programmes have exceeded the targets set for them. Management information is used well to analyse and monitor the needs of local communities and to plan appropriate projects. The sharing of information between council staff, partners and outreach workers is good. Projects take place in venues close to the communities for whom they are intended, such as community centres and church halls. Some learners have progressed from these projects to non-accredited and accredited courses, and into employment.

53. Support for learners' additional needs is appropriate. The service has a number of effective partnerships with voluntary and statutory organisations to identify and help learners who require additional support. Information, advice and guidance are integrated with community projects to ensure that learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are given appropriate support. Managers and staff are responsive when complaints are raised by learners. Learners are supported well with financial assistance for course fees and travel and childcare facilities. Learners who need assistance in class are able to nominate their own carer who is then funded by the service. However, the service does not carry out any monitoring of the effectiveness of this support to ascertain whether it improves learners' retention and achievement rates.

54. The service has a satisfactory policy for equality of opportunity, which is distributed to all subcontractors that work with the service. Subcontractors' own equality of opportunities policies are reviewed by the service. However, the service does not always monitor sufficiently how equality of opportunity is implemented in the classroom, or reinforced at all centres. Risk assessments are carried out and all centres complete an appropriate health and safety questionnaire. Access to most locations is satisfactory, and subcontractors have a wide range of adaptive technologies available to enable learners with particular needs to access information technology training.

55. Subcontractors' enrolment procedures do not always ensure that accurate data is recorded about learners to support the service's recent improvements in the monitoring of equality of opportunity. Enrolment data on new learners and their prior attainment is particularly poor. Some subcontractors' enrolment forms are insufficiently detailed, and learners are not always made aware of the additional support arrangements available. A wide range of course promotional material is produced by each of the subcontractors and most learners have a good awareness of the programme offered. Leaflets for learners with English as an additional language are produced in a range of languages.

56. Learners' achievements are valued by the service and their work is exhibited at a number of learning centres across the city. The service has developed an internal certificate to record learners' achievements on non-accredited courses and these have been issued to subcontractors this year.

57. Subcontractors' staff are informed of training events on equality of opportunity, such as widening participation and disability discrimination, through e-mail and the service's staff newsletter. However, these events are not always planned or published sufficiently in advance to allow all staff to attend. The effectiveness of this training is not monitored by the service through its classroom observations of teaching and learning.

Quality improvement**Contributory grade 3**

58. The service's new management team has reviewed its quality improvement arrangements during the past year and has implemented a range of appropriate activities to assess the quality of subcontractors' provision. It has updated and refined its self-assessment process, altered the way in which learners' feedback is gathered, introduced review meetings with subcontractors each term, developed an observation team to assess teaching and learning, and provided a programme of staff training to meet identified needs. However, most of these activities have only been implemented recently and have not had enough effect on the quality of the provision. For example, the newly designed system to gather learners' feedback at various stages of their programme is well thought out. However, it was only introduced at the start of 2005-06, and it has not yet generated sufficient data to help the service assess the quality of its provision.

59. Most subcontracted providers manage their provision well and some have their own quality improvement arrangements. They gather learners' feedback, which is analysed and used to make improvements for individuals or groups of learners. For example, at SWAC, learners requested more opportunities to practise their skills and a new sailing club was set up. However, the service does not gather enough of this information to identify trends in the overall quality of provision. It does not make sufficient use of the data generated by subcontractors' own quality assurance arrangements to help make future decisions about which providers to contract with. The service does not provide sufficient opportunities for subcontractors to share good practice.

60. The service has been successful in gaining subcontractors' agreement to participate in its programme of teaching and learning observations. However, these arrangements are not sufficiently well implemented. A team of observers recruited from each subcontractor has been trained to observe and report on teaching and learning. They work in partnership with other local adult and community providers to develop their expertise. The judgements of the observation team about the standards of teaching and learning are not sufficiently accurate. The profile of grades given by the service is much higher than that given by inspectors. Reports on teaching and learning standards are insufficiently detailed and do not focus enough on learning and learners' attainments. Observations are not always carried out by subject specialists. The grades given by the observation team do not accurately reflect the written feedback in the observation reports. The observation team carries out moderation of the grades, but this does not ensure that the overall profile of the quality of teaching and learning is accurate. Tutors who have been observed do not always have clear action plans to develop their teaching skills.

61. The service's self-assessment process is satisfactory. The process has recently been redesigned to encourage greater involvement from subcontractors and tutors. Many managers at the subcontracted providers have a good awareness of the new arrangements. However, some subcontractors are not sufficiently aware of their responsibilities. Their own self-assessment reports are not detailed enough. The interim self-assessment report for 2004-05 identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. Inspectors' judgements on leadership and management matched many of those made by the service. However, the service's judgements in many of the areas of learning are insufficiently critical. Some of the strengths are no more than normal practice and some significant weaknesses are not identified by the service.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information and communications technology

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning	200	3 3

62. In 2004-05, 614 learners were involved in 79 ICT programmes. At the time of the inspection, 200 learners were studying on 18 courses. Courses take place at a range of different venues across the city, including community schools, community centres, libraries, and Itchen, Taunton's and Southampton City colleges. A variety of ICT programmes is available ranging from introductory, non-accredited general interest courses, such as computers for beginners and digital photography, to longer accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. Eighty-five per cent of the provision in this area of learning is non-accredited. Some courses are for specific groups, such as computing for the over 50s. The length of courses ranges from two hours for introductory learning sessions to 15 weeks for accredited programmes. In 2004-05, 45 per cent of learners were men, 29 per cent were aged over 65 and 7 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. The courses are taught by part-time tutors who are managed by curriculum managers and co-ordinators in the subcontracted providers.

ICT for users

Grade 3

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good support and guidance for learners

Weaknesses

- incomplete implementation of systems to measure and record learners' achievements on non-accredited courses
- ineffective planning of some aspects of the curriculum

Achievement and standards

63. Retention rates are very good. In 2004-05, the overall retention rate on all courses was 98.5 per cent. Attendance rates are good. In the learning sessions that the inspectors observed, the average attendance rate was 90 per cent, and registers show good rates of attendance in all classes. Tutors have a good awareness of the reasons for learners' absences.

64. Achievement rates on accredited courses are very good. In 2004-05, the overall achievement rate was 100 per cent, but these programmes made up only 15 per cent of the total provision.

65. Learners on ICT courses develop satisfactory practical skills. Most learners improve

their technical knowledge of the subject and use the skills they develop in their everyday lives. Learners are well motivated and enthusiastic about their improved levels of confidence. Older learners, in particular, value the way in which they can use their new skills and improved self-confidence to communicate with their families.

The quality of provision

66. Support and guidance for learners are good. Initial advice and guidance are good for learners who want to enrol on ICT courses. Many learners value the good advice they receive from staff in centres, which allows them to choose between different programmes with similar titles. Good publicity ensures that learners are aware of the programmes available. Regular course leaflets are delivered to learners' homes and programmes are promoted well in community venues. Many learners choose their courses through personal recommendation from their friends and families. Tutors have a good awareness of the need to help learners with additional literacy, numeracy and language needs. Some tutors use good additional learning materials which are developed with advice from essential skills tutors to support learners successfully. Many tutors attend drop-in learning sessions voluntarily to provide extra support for individual learners.

67. The standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Forty-five per cent of the learning sessions observed by inspectors were satisfactory. All tutors use schemes of work and lesson plans, and some classes are planned and structured well. Most tutors ensure that learners fully understand what they have learnt before proceeding with new material. Lessons are generally well balanced with a good mix of background knowledge and practical demonstration by the tutor. For example, in one learning session, the tutor negotiated the scheme of work and learning session plan to meet a wide range of learners' needs in the group, such as how to contact distant relatives and the administration of a voluntary organisation. Learners are given sufficient time to use the background knowledge to practise their skills. Learning resources in some classes are very good. In the better learning sessions, learners use good learning materials to practise their ICT skills on projects at home or at work. However, in the poorer sessions, tutors do not always provide sufficiently challenging work for learners who are more capable. Insufficient attention is given to learning outcomes in some classes.

68. Teaching accommodation for ICT courses is satisfactory overall. Access for learners with restricted mobility is good at most venues. Well-lit car parking areas are available adjacent to most buildings. Most centres provide a clean and welcoming environment with spacious social areas and provision for refreshments late into the evening. Classrooms are appropriately furnished and equipped.

69. The service provides a satisfactory range of courses. At the time of the inspection, 17 courses were running at 10 venues. Courses take place at different times during the daytime and evening, so that learners can plan their learning to fit in with their everyday needs. Subcontractors are receptive to suggestions from learners about new courses.

70. The systems used to measure and record learners' achievements on non-accredited courses are incomplete. The service has developed new paperwork, which can be adapted by subcontractors to meet their individual needs. However, many tutors do not use the paperwork at all, or use it inappropriately. Few tutors record the skills or knowledge gained by learners. Many of the assessment records show the teaching carried out, rather than learners' achievements. The service does not monitor the implementation of the new

paperwork sufficiently.

Leadership and management

71. Managers at subcontractors provide good support for staff. They have frequent contact with most tutors. Tutors and managers support each other to develop new learning materials and resolve operational issues. The management of resources is satisfactory. Risk assessments are carried out appropriately for all courses. All centres have specialist computing facilities with easily accessible assistive technology, such as adaptive keyboards, mice and assistive software. Laptop computers are used to provide ICT courses in community venues, such as church centres. Technical support for classes is generally good. Computing networks and classroom equipment are reliable. However, the rules used in some centres to protect the systems from misuse are inappropriate for adult learners.

72. Classroom observations are carried out by the service's observation team. The grade profile of subcontractors' provision in 2004-05 is significantly more generous than that given by inspectors. Observations are not always carried out by subject specialists. The identification of improvements following classroom observations is poor. Many observations do not identify the good teaching practices of some staff.

73. The planning of some aspects of the curriculum is ineffective. Managers have insufficient access to reliable data to evaluate and plan the curriculum. Enrolments are poor on some courses and too many programmes are cancelled. Subcontractors do not communicate sufficiently to plan the viability of some programmes where the recruitment for individual courses in close proximity is poor. No clear citywide strategic plan exists to guide the overall management and development of ICT courses. Progression routes are insufficiently developed. Some staff in the subcontracted providers are insufficiently aware of the role of the service in managing the ICT provision. Tutors' attendance at staff development events run by the service is poor and there is insufficient sharing of good practice.

74. The interim self-assessment report for 2004-05 identifies some of the weaknesses in ICT programmes, but many of the strengths relate to the service's own observations of teaching and learning, which are graded too high. Subcontractors' staff are sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. The grade given by inspectors for the area of learning was lower than the grade given by the service.

Leisure, travel and tourism**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		3
Adult and community learning	267	3

75. From September 2005 to the time of the inspection, there have been 696 enrolments on sport and leisure courses. At the time of the inspection, 267 learners were enrolled on 22 programmes. In 2004-05, there were 1,998 enrolments by 1,369 learners. Most of the provision is subcontracted to Itchen, Taunton's and Southampton City colleges, Oaklands, Redbridge and Cantell community schools and SWAC. Twenty-three courses are described by the service as non-LSC-funded leisure learning and were not included in the inspection. Sailing, power boating and kayaking make up 63 per cent of the courses in this area of learning, of which 90 per cent are accredited. All other programmes are non-accredited, and include yoga, tai chi, Pilates, badminton and keep fit. Most water-based courses run for between one and five days during the summer and autumn. Other sport and leisure courses are open to adults of all abilities and most take place for between 10 and 12 weeks, during the evening. Seventy per cent of the total learners are women, but men make up 75 per cent of the learners on water-based courses. Five per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Most of the tutors at SWAC are part-time, seasonal staff. Twelve tutors teach the other sport and leisure courses, and they work for between one and six hours a week. Some tutors work at more than one centre.

Sport, leisure and recreation**Grade 3***Strengths*

- good retention and attendance rates
- very good achievements on accredited courses
- good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- good teaching and learning on accredited courses
- particularly good management of the water sport provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient involvement of learners in identifying and recording progress
- poor involvement of under-represented groups
- insufficient co-ordination and planning of non-accredited provision
- insufficient use of teaching and learning observations to improve the quality of non-accredited provision

Achievement and standards

76. Retention and attendance rates are good. In 2004-05, the overall retention rate was 90 per cent. The retention rate on courses at SWAC, which make up 63 per cent of the total provision, was 98 per cent. The retention and attendance rates on many water sports courses are 100 per cent. However, the fees for most of these courses are paid in full by

learners. In the learning sessions that the inspectors observed, the average attendance rate was 87 per cent.

77. Achievement rates on accredited courses are very good. Almost all the accredited programmes take place at SWAC. In 2004-05, the overall achievement rate on accredited courses was 99 per cent.

78. Learners develop good skills and knowledge on sport and leisure courses. In many classes, learners demonstrate improvements in their self-confidence and their ability to use background knowledge to develop their skills. For example, in a coastal navigation course, learners learn about safe anchorage and the meaning of different channel lights, as well as what to do if their boat runs aground in a range of tidal conditions. In yoga and tai chi classes, learners improve their posture, strength, co-ordination and balance. Many learners apply their learning to everyday physical activities.

The quality of provision

79. Teaching and learning are good on accredited courses. The accredited water sports learning sessions observed by inspectors were all graded as good or better. Reports by a range of external awarding bodies testify to the good teaching and learning in water-based activities. Tutors are well qualified and very experienced. They motivate learners well through a variety of teaching and learning strategies and make particularly good use of learners' personal experiences. Learning sessions are planned well and tutors give learners very good guidance on safety and the prevention of accidents. However, on non-accredited courses, the standards of teaching and learning are much more inconsistent. In the better learning sessions, tutors make good use of demonstrations to motivate learners. They emphasise important learning points well and provide effective individual support to help learners improve their techniques and movements. The weaker learning sessions are planned poorly. Learning aims and objectives are not identified clearly or communicated well to learners. Some learning sessions are insufficiently structured. For example, in a tai chi learning session observed by inspectors, learners spent two-thirds of the time warming up and then had a break before starting the activity.

80. The teaching and learning resources are good on accredited water-based courses. On non-accredited sport and leisure courses, they are satisfactory. Learners have access to an appropriate range of equipment such as mats and blocks for yoga. The accommodation at most venues is generally satisfactory. However, some classrooms are too small to accommodate all the learners and some tai chi and yoga learning sessions take place in rooms without wall mirrors, which limits learners' ability to observe their own performance.

81. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners find out about courses from a range of information, including course leaflets, open days, introductory sessions, newspaper advertisements, fliers and newsletters. Promotional material contains appropriate details about the cost of courses, fee remission, the level of the course and any pre-course requirements. However, the quantity and quality of information available to learners varies between centres. Not all learners receive information about progression routes. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are not always identified by tutors and opportunities to develop these skills were not taken in some learning sessions observed by inspectors. Specialist equipment is available to support learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, but not all staff are sufficiently aware of its existence, or how to use it.

82. The overall attention to learners' health and safety on non-accredited programmes is satisfactory. Learners are asked to complete pre-exercise medical and readiness for exercise forms, which are used by tutors to assess fitness levels. Most tutors have a good awareness of learners' needs and are able to adapt or provide alternative exercises. However, insufficient monitoring is carried out of the completion of risk assessments. Some venues used for sport and leisure do not meet the requirements of the Disabilities and Discrimination Act 1995, and are difficult to access for learners with restricted mobility.

83. Learners are insufficiently involved in identifying and recording their progress on non-accredited courses. The service's standard assessment paperwork is circulated to all tutors in the subcontracted providers, but many staff have not received any training in how to use it. Some initial assessments of learners' prior abilities are too superficial and are not used sufficiently by tutors to plan individual learning. Learners' reasons for attending courses are not always recorded in the paperwork. They receive insufficient detailed feedback about their progress, and the information that tutors do record is often not shared with learners. Tutors identify group learning outcomes, but many learners are not aware of them. Learners' progress is often measured only by the use of tick boxes.

84. The involvement of under-represented groups of learners is poor. The service has a clear strategy to widen participation and to increase the number of learners from disadvantaged communities across the city. Over 75 per cent of learners on water-based courses at SWAC are men, most of whom do not fit the profile of the service's strategy. On non-accredited programmes, more than two-thirds of the learners are women. Too few non-accredited courses are targeted at men. The service's analysis of recruitment by priority postcodes within Southampton is not fully developed. Data on neighbourhood priority areas is not used sufficiently to identify recruitment targets for under-represented groups. The service's data on ethnicity is unreliable and too many learners are not asked to record their ethnic background on enrolment forms. Some subcontractors have a poor understanding of the definition of widening participation.

Leadership and management

85. The management of the water sports provision is particularly good. SWAC is acknowledged as a centre of excellence by a number of awarding bodies and external agencies. New tutors are inducted well, during which a rigorous check of their qualifications takes place. They are mentored by more experienced staff before working alone with their own groups of learners. Tutors are well motivated and enthusiastic, and value the good support they receive from managers at the centre. Attention to health and safety is particularly good. The range of courses is good, and clear progression routes exist for most programmes. Managers are aware of the insufficient involvement of under-represented groups and new specialist equipment has been purchased, including a boat for learners with disabilities and a hoist for learners with restricted mobility. Adaptations have been made to the centre to make it more accessible to learners with visual impairments and for those with restricted mobility. Many new initiatives are planned to widen participation, but it is too early to judge the outcomes of these actions.

86. There is insufficient co-ordination and planning of non-accredited provision. The service does not have a strategy for the development of the sport and leisure provision across the city. Managers at the subcontracted providers are not sufficiently aware of any overall plan for sports provision within the local authority. Many comment that the

development of courses is based on what has taken place in previous years. Managers at all levels do not use data sufficiently to identify targets for improvement within set timescales, and not enough monitoring takes place to assess whether identified issues have been resolved. Too much of the provision takes place in the evenings, and there are very few daytime or twilight courses. Most of the accredited water-based courses take place only during the summer months.

87. Insufficient use is made of teaching and learning observations to improve the quality of non-accredited provision. The grades given by the service's own observation team are significantly higher than those given by the inspectors. Observations of learning sessions carried out by the service have failed to identify many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors. Action-planning for improvements following classroom observations is insufficiently detailed. It does not always identify timescales for weaknesses in teaching practice to be rectified. Insufficient checking is carried out to assess whether planned improvements are made. The observations are frequently carried out by non-subject specialists who do not have enough technical knowledge and subject expertise. The staff development programme is insufficiently co-ordinated, and tutors attendance at training events is poor.

88. The interim self-assessment report for 2004-05 identifies some of the weaknesses in the provision, but does not take sufficient account of the poor planning of non-accredited courses and the under-representation of groups of learners identified as a priority in the service's strategy. The report identifies the strengths of the water-based provision at SWAC. Some of the strengths and weaknesses are contradictory. The grade given by inspectors for this area of learning was lower than the grade identified by the service.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts, media and publishing Adult and community learning	308	2 2

89. The arts, media and publishing provision is one of the service's largest areas in adult and community learning. In 2004-05, 1,240 learners enrolled on courses in this area of learning. At the time of inspection, 308 learners were enrolled on 22 programmes, all of which are non-accredited. Thirteen courses are described by the service as non-LSC-funded leisure learning and were not included in the inspection. The arts and crafts courses include watercolours, life drawing, portrait drawing, quilting, card making, pottery and jewellery. Music and dance courses include acoustic guitar, Caribbean steel drums, line dancing, ballroom dancing and Latin dancing. Courses are held at Itchen, Taunton's and Southampton City colleges and many of the community schools. They take place during the daytime and evenings, and range from one-day workshops to programmes that run for a full academic year. In 2004-05, 79 per cent of the learners were women and 18 per cent were aged over 65. The courses are taught by 17 part-time tutors in nine venues.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 2***Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills
- good teaching and learning
- good initiatives at most centres to attract new learners
- good operational management

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning
- inappropriate use of classroom observations to improve the quality of teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

90. Learners develop good skills on visual and performing arts courses. Learners in some dance classes develop good co-ordination and dexterity. They are able to remember and demonstrate a wide range of complex dance steps. In arts and crafts courses, learners make good progress and use their new specialist skills well. Along with improving their technical skills, the learning experience enriches the learners' lives personally and professionally. They value their improved self-confidence, self-esteem and concentration. In a patchwork and quilting course observed by inspectors, the learners made excellent use of their machine sewing skills and the selection of imaginative materials to produce outstanding panels based on seascapes and beach activities. Learners on the Caribbean steel drum course demonstrate their skills at that subcontractor's Christmas concert. In line dancing, some learners have been awarded bronze, silver and gold medals for their performances.

91. Retention rates are satisfactory. In 2004-05, the overall retention rate was 94 per cent. There is no valid data on achievements as the service's definition of an achievement as someone who completes their course is inappropriate.

The quality of provision

92. Teaching and learning are good on most visual and performing arts courses. Almost 75 per cent of the learning sessions observed by inspectors were good or better. Learning sessions in arts and crafts are planned well. Tutors use detailed schemes of work and lesson plans to build good sequential skills with learners. In the better learning sessions, tutors make good use of handouts. For example, in a card making class observed by inspectors, learners used the handouts as a useful reference tool for suppliers and specialist techniques. In the best dance classes, tutors use dynamic teaching strategies to engage learners. Tutors create and maintain an energetic atmosphere and engender trust and mutual co-operation between learners. Learners' participation is good with a wide range of age groups taking part in courses. The better arts and crafts classes are characterised by good use of colour. In the weaker learning sessions, tutors use a poor range of teaching strategies. In some arts and crafts classes, tutors do not manage small groups effectively. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, with good specialist classrooms available at some sites. However, some courses take place in classrooms which are inappropriate for the activities held in them. In a life and figure drawing class observed by inspectors, the room was too small. Easels and large drawing boards were not available to support more creative approaches to learning.

93. Good initiatives are used to attract new learners at most centres. One- and two-day workshops take place at community centres, which are situated close to local communities and schools. Learners value the location of courses near to main transport routes. For example, young mothers enrolled on a one-day workshop as it was close to the school which their children attended. This gave them enough confidence to enrol on a longer drawing course. Good use of crèche facilities allows many parents to attend the workshops. An introductory session in textiles led to the formation of a class made up entirely of new learners. Some courses that take place in priority need neighbourhoods are attended mostly by new learners.

94. Assessment is satisfactory, although little formal recording takes place. Assessment is primarily through product evidence and some tutors make good use of appropriate comments and action-planning to monitor learners' progress. The standard assessment paperwork introduced by the service is not used by all tutors. Target-setting is vague in most learning sessions.

95. Support for learners on visual and performing arts courses is satisfactory. Centres produce their own pre-course information, such as fliers, leaflets and information sheets, although there is no overall strategy to promote the programmes. Learners with additional needs are supported through a partnership arrangement with one of the colleges.

Leadership and management

96. Insufficient planning of the curriculum takes place in visual and performing arts. Overall course planning is not carried out by anyone with specialist knowledge or experience. Staff from the service and centre managers meet on a regular basis, but there

is not enough focus on strategic curriculum development at these meetings. The range of courses is narrow. Facilities in some centres are under-used through poor course planning. For example, a purpose-built recording studio was used to provide a course, but when the course ended, no progression route was provided to use this good resource fully. Some centre managers welcome the appointment by the service of a new learning champion for this curriculum area, but it is too early to judge the outcomes of this new role on the quality of the provision. The service's definitions of widening participation, progression and skills and leisure learning courses do not accurately reflect the level and purpose of the courses placed in each category. Learners are unsure of how to enrol on the appropriate level of course. The opportunities for progression to higher-level courses are restricted. Some progression routes lead only to subjects at the same level. Learners interviewed in focus groups have expressed their interest in more localised progression, but this has not been acknowledged sufficiently by the service. Learners' progression to courses at different centres is not monitored. Most learners interviewed during the inspection were unaware of the progression routes that exist.

97. Inappropriate use is made of classroom observations to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The staff appointed to the observation team by the service have insufficient subject-specialist knowledge to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. The reports written following observations are too general and do not identify weaknesses in sufficient detail. Action plans are not always used to plan and monitor tutors' development needs. The procedure for moderating observers' reports and grades is ineffective. The service's lesson observation grade profile is significantly higher than that of the inspection team.

98. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities, and the procedures for making complaints. Access to all centres is good for learners with restricted mobility. At one centre visited by inspectors, the tables in the art and pottery studios were at an appropriate height for wheelchair users.

99. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Inspectors' findings matched most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the service's interim self-assessment report. Some tutors do not understand the self-assessment process. The grade given by inspectors for the curriculum area was higher than that identified by the service.

Family learning**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Family learning Adult and community learning	273	2 2

100. The local authority provides LSC-funded family literacy, language and numeracy programmes and projects and workshops for wider family learning, which are aimed at parents and carers in areas which have high social deprivation and low academic achievement. The local authority subcontracts the planning and delivery of most courses to Southampton City College. Courses also run in partnership with local voluntary organisations, libraries and other community centres. At the time of the inspection, 107 and 166 learners, respectively, were enrolled on family literacy, language and numeracy courses and wider family learning programmes. In 2004-05, 627 learners enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses and 937 learners enrolled on wider family learning programmes. Examples of courses include family literacy and numeracy, keeping up with the children, baby signing, power boating and interior design for children's rooms. The service's learning projects manager is responsible for managing the provision, supported by a family learning co-ordinator at Southampton City College.

Family learning**Grade 2***Strengths*

- good achievements
- good teaching and learning
- very productive partnerships
- good support to enable learners to participate
- good leadership and management

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning and extend learners' skills
- insufficient planning and recording of progress for individual learners

Achievement and standards

101. Achievements are good on family learning programmes. Learners develop good skills, knowledge and self-confidence to support their children's learning. Most learners successfully increase their levels of literacy, numeracy and language skills. For example, they understand how to develop number concepts, how to extend their vocabulary and how to reinforce their reading and writing development. They have a greater understanding of how their children are taught at school and extend the range of activities they can share with them, such as painting and power boating.

102. Achievement rates are good on family literacy, language and numeracy courses. In 2004-05, 50 per cent of the learners on long courses submitted portfolios for accreditation and all of them achieved the qualification. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is

good. Of the 80 per cent of learners who entered for the national literacy and/or numeracy tests at levels 1 and 2, 96 per cent were successful. Many parents and carers progress from introductory sessions to longer courses. Some learners gain the confidence to become more involved in their children's schools, for example as governors, learning support assistants and volunteer readers. Local schools report that family learning courses have a positive effect on children's attainment at school. Relationships between parents or carers and children improve.

The quality of provision

103. Standards of teaching and learning are good on family learning programmes. Eighty per cent of the learning sessions observed by inspectors were good or better. Classes are planned and managed well. Tutors use resources and activities creatively to stimulate and support adult learning in joint sessions with children. Tutors and schoolteachers implement successful strategies together, which develop learners' language and numeracy skills. They provide stimulating learning environments through imaginative use of games, role play, storytelling and food. In a particularly good workshop observed by inspectors, the learners and their children went on a 'bear hunt' behind the playground after listening to a story using words such as 'over', 'through' and 'behind' to demonstrate how children learn through real experiences of abstract words. Parents and children have fun learning together and make resources such as scrapbooks to use at home. Parents who are new to learning improve their self-confidence through the development of new skills, such as learning to read navigation charts in a power boating class.

104. Partnership working in family learning is very productive. For example, innovative projects with the libraries section of the council have led to parents and children throughout the city reading together and voting for their favourite book, and to a baby-signing course to enhance and extend learners' communication skills with babies and toddlers. The local authority supports schools which act as centres of excellence in family learning. One of the schools has set up a bookshop and a library for parents and carers in an area with a large proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups. The school has produced a video to support parents and carers for whom English is an additional language.

105. Support for learners to enable them to participate in family learning is good. Reluctant or anxious learners are supported well to feel safe and to join in activities. In a power boating class observed by inspectors, staff successfully persuaded a very reluctant father to take part in the session. Crèche facilities and registered childminders are provided and help learners with young children to participate. The service supports individual learners sensitively. For example, funding was provided to pay a relative to look after the baby of a parent from a minority ethnic background who was unwilling to leave the child with a childminder. Learners are encouraged to make use of specialist dyslexia assessments and support. Information, advice and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Learners are given appropriate information about progression routes, but some learners are not sufficiently familiar with the range of family learning courses available.

106. Accommodation for family learning courses is generally satisfactory. Most venues provide a bright and welcoming environment. Centres are furnished to meet the needs of adults and are resourced well. However, some courses take place in open plan areas, which are noisy.

107. Insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance learning and extend learners' skills in family

learning. In the learning sessions observed by inspectors, computers and other technology in classrooms were under-used. Laptop computers are available, but are not used sufficiently and access to computers in schools is restricted. Tutors use digital cameras frequently to take photographs in learning sessions, but they are not used by learners. Schemes of work and lesson plans make insufficient reference to the use of ICT to support literacy and numeracy learning objectives.

108. Insufficient planning and recording of progress takes place for individual learners. Learners' progress on short courses is not recorded adequately. Individual learning plans focus too much on the subjects taught rather than on learners' individual learning goals. Group learning plans for workshops identify learning outcomes for the group. However, learning outcomes are selected without sufficient discussion or identification of learners' individual outcomes. On short family literacy and numeracy courses, insufficient initial assessment is carried out and the identification of learners' interests and aims is poor. Previous knowledge and experience are not always taken into account when planning learning. Some learners who have previously attended family learning courses with their children are insufficiently challenged when they enrol on new programmes. Progress reviews with learners on longer courses are not always carried out, or are not recorded in sufficient detail.

Leadership and management

109. Leadership and management of family learning are good. Communications with partners, schools and staff are very good. Meetings take place frequently and are very productive. Identified actions to improve the provision are carried out. Support for the development of the provision is very good. Managers are responsive and encourage new initiatives, for example providing courses in financial literacy and healthy eating. They accompany new tutors to schools when setting up courses to ensure that the schools are clear about what is expected of them with regard to accommodation and joint working. Managers support schools to improve target-setting and recruitment strategies for parents and carers from priority groups. Managers are involved in a wide range of regional and national family learning initiatives.

110. The sharing of good practice takes place at meetings and staff training events. New tutors are encouraged to observe experienced colleagues. However, the sharing of good practice with family learning tutors at other providers in the area is not fully developed.

111. The self-assessment process for family learning is effective. Managers and tutors participate well in the process. Information from course reviews, achievement and retention data, and learners' feedback are used to identify areas for improvement. Inspectors' judgements matched many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the service in the interim self-assessment report. Managers have started to carry out actions to resolve some of the weaknesses, such as the development of new e-learning projects and the appointment of a new tutor to work in three secondary schools to increase the involvement of parents and carers of secondary-age children. The grade given by the inspectors for family learning matched that identified by the service.

