

INSPECTION REPORT

Portsmouth City Council

25 November 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
- **learn**direct provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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

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*

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Portsmouth City Council

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Portsmouth City Council (the city council) has a contract with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council to provide adult and family learning provision. It has additional European Social Fund (ESF) regeneration projects. The provision is mostly targeted in disadvantaged areas in line with the city council's priorities of widening participation. A full restructuring of the city council has taken place since March 2004. The adult and family learning service is part of the directorate of children, families and learning. The administrative offices are situated in the city council's offices in the centre of Portsmouth. Family learning activities and courses, some of which are directly provided, take place in schools but also in community and voluntary agency premises. A newly formed team of four staff are involved in managing the provision and are based in the city council offices.

2. The city council currently subcontracts its adult and some family learning provision to 10 providers. In addition, two regeneration projects include support for a team of family learning outreach workers, and a project that includes programmes to help learners progress into employment or further learning. Most provision is non-accredited. The provision mainly takes place in the daytime.

3. Portsmouth has an unemployment rate of 2.1 per cent. It is a designated dispersal area for refugee and asylum seekers. Approximately 19 per cent of the population is aged 60 and over. Of all learners on courses in 2004-05, 78 per cent were women, 27 per cent were aged 60 and over, 15 per cent had a declared additional learning need, and 9 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality improvement are good. The provision in family learning is good. The city council has stopped contracting with a number of providers whose performance was not satisfactory. Information and communications technology (ICT) and arts media and publishing are satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Staff and subcontractors are involved in the process. Overall, most strengths and weaknesses found at the inspection were identified in the self-assessment report.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** The self-assessment is sufficiently evaluative for the provider to identify its weaknesses and produce clear development plans for both its direct and subcontracted provision. Considerable improvements have been made to family learning provision. The provider has reduced the number of subcontractors. It has taken steps to improve the quality monitoring of personal development and well-being courses offered in partnership with contracted providers. These actions are helping to raise standards of teaching and learning.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL:

- further extend quality improvements in classroom practice
- improve marketing information
- increase and broaden the range of provision and accreditation in all areas of learning
- improve formal recording of assessment and progress
- further improve accommodation and facilities

GRADES

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

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

Information and communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>ICT for users</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	57	3	

Arts, media and publishing			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Crafts</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	202	3	

Family learning			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		2	
Adult and community learning	166	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Family learning provision was reported on and graded over six days of inspection. Adult learning provision in art, media and publishing and ICT was reported on and graded over five and four days, respectively. There was not enough evidence on leisure, travel and tourism, and languages, literature and culture courses, for these areas to be reported on and graded. Five other areas of learning were not inspected due to small learner

numbers. Leadership and management, including contributory grades for equality of opportunity and quality improvement, were inspected over five days.

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learners interviewed	162
Number of staff interviewed	77
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	14
Number of visits	33

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **In art and crafts, learners acquire good techniques and skills.** They work well to develop new skills and in most classes they gain confidence in their abilities. In the best lessons learners make significant progress.

9. **In ICT, learners develop computer and wider social skills.** Many learners who have not previously used a computer, learn how to switch on a computer, start the required software application and use it appropriately. In some classes, parenting skills are also developed. The standard of learners' work is appropriate.

10. In family learning, attainment and learning are satisfactory for short courses. Trials of a pilot project to assess and record 'soft' outcomes of learning such as gains in self-confidence are currently in progress. Some learners progress into further education, training and employment. Achievement on accredited courses is satisfactory.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information and communications technology	0	3	1	1	5
Arts, media and publishing	0	3	1	0	4
Family learning	1	8	1	0	10
Total	1	14	3	1	19

11. **In ICT there is good teaching of technical and creative skills.** In a digital photography class, learners are trained in the technical uses of the camera, such as zooming and previewing their pictures, alongside some compositional techniques for creating good pictures, such as framing and the use of leading lines.

12. **In art and crafts, tutors have well-planned learning sessions for mixed-ability learners.** Much of the activity in classes is individual project work and tutors work closely with learners who have a wide range of abilities. Tutors use a range of appropriate and effective techniques including intervention, general information and advice. There are

well-planned demonstrations in most classes.

13. Teaching is good in family learning. Ninety per cent of sessions observed were judged to be good or better. Tutors plan sessions thoroughly. Sessions are well managed. Learning sessions fully involve learners in a range of practical activities and discussions. Children respond well to learning alongside their parents and grandparents.

14. A good range of courses is offered in ICT. While many courses are based around basic-level training in standard office software applications, they are often given from a perspective of learners' everyday lives. Most of the courses are short tasters, which link to longer courses run by partner organisations. Most courses take place in community venues which are convenient for learners.

15. In family learning, individual support and guidance to learners is good. Tutors are aware of the barriers that adults face when returning to learning. Interpreters are available. The four family learning outreach workers speak a range of languages to help support learners.

16. In arts and crafts there is inadequate formal recording of learners' prior achievement and progress. Initial assessment on most courses is inadequate. There is not enough monitoring of progress. Ongoing assessment is informal in most cases. There is a monitoring form, but this is not used effectively. Information learning technology (ILT) is not used in the classroom to record progress.

17. Assessment and monitoring of progress is satisfactory overall. National initial basic skills assessment tests are used to assess learners at the start of family literacy, language and numeracy intensive courses. Individual learning plans are used in longer courses. Most courses are short and assessment is informal. **There is insufficient formal recording** on the learning for personal development and well-being courses. A pilot project to assess and record 'soft' outcomes of learning, such as gains in self-confidence, is currently in progress.

18. The standard of accommodation and facilities is satisfactory overall. Some rooms are not accessible for those with restricted mobility. Many rooms are too small for the number of learners. Two venues are dedicated art rooms. ICT facilities are satisfactory. In family learning creche facilities are provided free of charge.

19. In ICT, marketing information is ineffective. There is no current brochure to clearly show the full range of the provision, as has been produced in the past. The website does not provide easily accessible, or adequate, information. However, there are well-established plans to develop the website. Pre-course information does not always adequately describe the provision.

Leadership and management

20. Leadership of the adult and family learning team is good. Managers have developed a clear direction and strategy for the provision which is understood well by staff. This strategy is well planned to meet the needs of the city and focuses on clear strategic priorities. Adult and family learning is supported by senior executives and councillors who fully understand the aims of the provision. The team has been well led through recent major changes within the city council's structure and staffing.

21. Partnership working is very effective. Links are good at both strategic and operational level. Adult and family learning plans are closely linked to the strategic objectives of the council, the local strategic partnership, the Regional Development Agency and the National Skills Strategy. Working relationships with many organisations, such as schools and voluntary sector bodies, are very good. Staff network with many different organisations to improve the provision. They also work with agencies and organisations outside the city to develop good practice.

22. In family learning effective partnerships widen participation. The family learning team works well with a number of partners and subcontractors such as schools, community groups, the city health and fitness promotion team, Sure Start and Learning Links. Headteachers fully understand the benefits of running family learning sessions, such as the increased confidence of parents to attend parent evenings, school events and to help in classrooms. The behaviour and attainment of some children whose parents attend sessions has improved.

23. Good curriculum management ensures good teamworking in family learning. Communications are effective through regular meetings, e-mails and phone calls. Staff develop new courses and materials. Resources are available for all to use. The family learning handbook is a very effective resource and toolkit for partners and providers.

24. Action to widen participation is very effective. Strategies for promoting equality of opportunity give clear direction for staff and subcontractors. The needs of disadvantaged learners are identified. First steps learning programmes are responsive and well planned. Subcontracted providers work with the city council to attract new learners to taster courses in local voluntary and community centres, schools and colleges. Partnerships formed to widen participation are effective. A range of bids for project funding has been successful.

25. Good recent strategies have been implemented to improve the quality of provision. Subcontractors are offered appropriate training and development to improve teaching and to develop their own quality improvement systems. The management information system has been significantly improved and is now well managed and used very effectively to provide good information and analysis. The self-assessment and action-planning process is effective. The city council has ceased contracting with a number of providers whose performance was unsatisfactory.

26. In arts and crafts, there is insufficient quality monitoring of observation of teaching. A system of teaching observation is now in place. Ten of the tutors in art and design have been recently observed. Some of the tutors do not remember the feedback given. Some of the observations have been carried out by non-subject specialists.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good leadership
- very effective partnership working
- very effective action to widen participation
- good recent strategies to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient impact of quality improvement arrangements in learning for personal development and well-being courses

Information and communications technology

ICT for users

Grade 3

Strengths

- good technical and creative teaching
- good range of provision to meet the needs of target groups

Weaknesses

- ineffective marketing information

Arts, media and publishing

Crafts

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of techniques and skills
- well-planned learning for mixed-ability groups

Weaknesses

- inadequate formal recording of learners' prior achievement and progress
- insufficient monitoring of some teaching

Family learning

Adult and community learning

Grade 2

Strengths

- very good teaching
- good individual support and guidance
- effective partnerships to widen participation
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- no key weaknesses identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL:

- the quality of teaching - 'it's interesting and constructive'
- the good and welcoming environments
- the convenience of the class times and being close to home
- the enjoyment of learning
- family learning - 'the dedicated time to be with my child without the distraction of home'
- the friendship with other learners

WHAT LEARNERS THINK PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL COULD IMPROVE:

- the new fee structure
- the arrangement of rooms, avoiding moving furniture around before class
- the information about courses
- the number of forms to fill in

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good leadership
- very effective partnership working
- very effective action to widen participation
- good recent strategies to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient impact of quality improvement arrangements in learning for personal development and well-being courses

27. Leadership of the adult and family learning team is good. Managers have developed a clear direction and strategy for the provision which is understood well by staff. It is closely matched to the strategic and local plans of the city council and partner organisations and relates well to the context in which the city council works. This strategy is planned well to meet the needs of the city and focuses on clear strategic priorities. Adult and family learning is supported by senior executives and councillors who fully understand the aims of the provision. The team has been lead well through recent major changes within the city council's structure and staffing. The capacity of the core contracting team has reduced. However, the team is well motivated and has continued to work well to improve the provision significantly.

28. Partnership working is very effective. There are good links at both strategic and operational level. Plans for the provision are closely linked to the strategic objectives of the council, the local strategic partnership, the Regional Development Agency and the National Skills Strategy. Working relationships with many organisations, such as schools and voluntary sector bodies, are very good. Staff network with many different organisations to improve the provision and promote specific courses across the city. They also work with agencies and organisations outside the city to develop good practice. However, there is currently no coherent marketing of the provision across the city. This has been identified by the provider and a strategy is currently being developed and to rectify this.

29. Communication among staff is good. Regular meetings take place and are well recorded with detailed actions and responsibilities. Staff attend regular and frequent meetings with colleagues in the council and with external organisations. Communication with providers is also good. However, information is not always shared effectively with tutors working for subcontracted providers.

30. Staff development is effective. There is a well-established system of appraisal which is carried out annually with a half-yearly review. Staff have good opportunities for development and attend a good range of training. Continuing professional development is encouraged, planned and evaluated appropriately. It meets both individual and organisational needs. Effective training in equality of opportunity and child protection legislation takes place regularly. However, training in health and safety is insufficient, as

identified in the self-assessment report.

31. Arrangements for the provision of literacy, language and numeracy are satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is integrated well in courses. Some learners have a formal initial assessment of their needs, but most attend short courses and assessments are carried out by tutors. These learners do not know they've been assessed. Learners with language needs are guided to partner colleges and other organisations for appropriate support. Some learners have insufficient language skills to fully take part in more activities and a team of outreach workers helps them through interpretation in a range of languages.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

32. Action to widen participation is very effective. Strategies for the promoting of equality of opportunity give clear direction to staff and subcontractors. The needs of disadvantaged learners are identified. First steps learning programmes are well planned. Subcontracted providers work with the city council to attract new learners to taster courses in local voluntary and community centres, schools and colleges. Courses in family learning, arts and crafts and ICT are well described to attract new learners. Where appropriate, literacy and numeracy teaching is integrated well with the learning programmes. Effective learning support is provided on discrete courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

33. Providers are given challenging targets that are monitored in termly monitoring meetings. Some areas of the city have a large number of people with level 1 skills or below. Good targets are set to increase enrolments from under-represented groups including men, older adults and people from minority ethnic groups. The number of learners from under-represented groups has increased across all areas of learning. However, the number of men in learning at subcontracted providers is low at 22 per cent.

34. Partnerships formed to widen participation are effective. A range of bids for project funding has been successful. One project has provided funds to help learners gain skills for returning to work and increase opportunities for progression. Another project has increased the use of ILT in the curriculum. For example, activities and progress are recorded effectively in video records produced by learners on art in the community courses. These courses were established with regeneration funding. Learners with mental health needs are involved in printmaking sessions and receive good practical and pastoral support. In schools, bilingual support is offered in multi-cultural workshops. Bilingual crèches are also provided.

35. To help improve the provision, consultation is extended to include hard-to-reach groups. A questionnaire developed by one subcontractor has been translated and distributed effectively through community links. Provider outreach workers are able to communicate in a wide range of languages and support other providers in attracting new learners. Publicity materials are available in six languages and telephone calls are made by interpreters. Learners are trained in community research to build the capacity of subcontractors to consult their communities.

36. Arrangements for equality of opportunity reflect the corporate values and priorities of the city council. The city council's policies for equality and diversity are clear and updated annually. The process includes all staff. Regular impact needs requirement assessments identify improvements needed. Staff development in equality of opportunity is regular and

covers aspects such as the disability and discrimination act, child protection, age, race and sex discrimination. The provision meets the requirements of current legislation. However, equality of opportunity is not a standard item during meetings. Equality of opportunity policy is not made sufficiently clear to all learners. The policies and guidelines that are simplified and effective for learners on family learning courses are not used with other learners who have literacy support needs.

37. All subcontractors' arrangements are audited, and thorough monitoring of action plans is carried out. A guide to understanding minority ethnic cultures has won a national award and a similar guide for disabilities is due to be published. The collection of equal opportunities data is satisfactory. The city council analyses its data thoroughly and effectively for target-setting and representation in enrolment, and to identify trends for self-assessment. However, it gives insufficient attention to analysing performance in the learning of different groups on programmes.

38. Most facilities at learning centres are either accessible for people with disabilities and restricted mobility, or arrangements are made to provide courses on the ground floor. The city council has helped schools with funding to improve accessibility. Adaptations are made for learners with sensory disabilities. Most courses have childcare support available.

39. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the wider issues of equality of opportunity and diversity. In the better learning sessions, multicultural awareness is promoted effectively. For example, in one ICT lesson, learners made greetings cards appropriate to the festivals of their different cultures. In family learning well-planned multicultural workshops and language awareness days are held. Activities include dual language storytelling, Chinese calligraphy and hand painting. In one school, staff and learners dressed in saris, and made food, music and art in school with their children to celebrate their religion. However, diversity is less well promoted in the learning for personal development and well-being provision.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

40. PCC has recently implemented good strategies to improve the provision, both through capacity building and contract management. It has adopted a partnership approach to develop the capacity of the subcontractors in its provider network. Subcontractors are offered appropriate training and development to improve teaching. They develop their own systems of quality improvement in line with those of adult and family learning. The management information system has been significantly improved over the last year. It is now suitably sophisticated and well managed and is used very effectively to provide good information and analysis. The provider collects and analyses learner feedback which is used effectively to improve the provision.

41. Subcontractors have been required since 2001 to produce self-assessment reports annually and they receive training to help with this. The provider has developed a system to monitor and develop teaching throughout its provision. More recently, through training its own staff and some provider staff in observing teaching and learning, it is developing a good resource of expertise. Subcontractors are also required to complete detailed proposal forms, when bidding for funding. These include an analysis of local need to justify the proposal and information on how the provision will meet the provider's strategic and operational criteria. The city council has carried out a detailed socio-economic analysis of Portsmouth to help providers carry out an appropriate needs analysis. It leads a range of

consultations for activities to assess the needs of learners and potential learners. The recent appointment of a promotions officer supports the development of this measure.

42. Over the last year the city council has significantly improved its contract management. The proposals from subcontractors are rigorously scrutinised against set criteria. It sets challenging targets against a range of quality indicators, reflecting those set for its own performance. A thorough quality manual has been developed which is given to subcontractors to guide them in contract requirements, and also give them example documents on which they can model their own quality assurance systems. The city council has ceased contracting with a number of providers which were not performing sufficiently well.

43. Contract management meetings are held regularly each term. They are well planned and prepared and scheduled well in advance. These have detailed minutes clearly describing the actions required. Helpful pre-contract meetings are arranged to support the provider and ensure correct information is available. The provider's management information system is used effectively to produce good information and analysis to review all aspects of provision. A wide range of information is collected and used in monitoring, trend analysis, planning and target-setting.

44. The self-assessment and action-planning process is effective. The most recent self-assessment report is the fourth produced by the provider and the process has improved year on year. Initially written by a consultant, the report is now developed by trained provider staff with input from subcontractors later in the process. However, the process was not extended to external partners or learners and subcontractors and their tutors have no direct involvement in its development. The development plan is used appropriately as a management tool by staff. The subcontractors' self-assessment reports are not of a consistent standard. The best reports successfully identify strengths and weaknesses in their provision. Some do not evaluate their provision adequately, but this has improved significantly from 2004-05. The city council's self-assessment report was generally accurate and identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found during inspection. However, inspectors identified additional weaknesses.

45. New quality improvement arrangements have not been in place for sufficient time to impact fully on learning for personal development and well-being courses. For example, observations of teaching have not been carried out for all tutors. Not all providers have staff trained to observe teaching. Some weaknesses found by inspectors, such as insufficient use of ILT in teaching, were not identified by the provider. Some subcontractors' own self-assessment reports identify the newness of quality improvement and recognise the need to better implement the systems. This was identified in the city council's self-assessment report.

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	57	3 3

46. During 2004-05, 189 learners enrolled on 45 ICT courses. In 2005-06, 92 learners have enrolled on 12 courses to date. At the time of the inspection, 57 learners were enrolled on six courses. The courses are all non-accredited and at basic levels. Subjects cover a range from the traditional office-based software courses, to digital photography and web-design. Some courses also cover skills for life. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Most courses last up to 12 hours over a total of six weeks. Courses are run mainly during the day and are held in further education colleges, schools, community centres and at learning centres run by partner organisations. Of the 189 learners enrolled during 2004-05, 32 per cent were men, 37 per cent were aged over 60, and 9 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. The provision is currently delivered by four subcontractors, taught by 15 part-time tutors.

ICT for users

Grade 3

Strengths

- good technical and creative teaching
- good range of provision to meet the needs of target groups

Weaknesses

- ineffective marketing information

Achievement and standards

47. Learners develop computer and wider social skills. Many learners who have not previously used a computer, soon learn how to switch on a computer, start the required software application and use it appropriately. Learners develop their self-confidence and in some classes, parenting skills are also improved.

48. Retention rates are high on the small number of short courses currently provided. No courses are accredited and the formal assessment of learning is only just being developed under a new recording and assessing achievement initiative. The standard of learners' work is appropriate to the courses and learners' needs. Attendance is good at 94 per cent.

The quality of provision

49. Tutors provide good technical and creative teaching. In a digital photography class, learners are trained in the technical uses of the camera, such as zooming and previewing their pictures, alongside compositional techniques to create good pictures, such as framing and the use of leading lines. In a basic taster course for young parents, learners visit

websites useful for their children's homework, while learning how to use the internet.

50. A good range of courses meets the needs of target groups. Thirty-two separate courses are planned for 2005-06, covering a good range of subject areas. While many are based around basic-level training in standard office software applications, they are often given from a perspective of learners' everyday lives. For example, word processing is introduced through a short course on curriculum vitae creation. Using the internet is linked to shopping or booking holidays. Most courses are short tasters that link to longer courses run by partner organisations. These are often held at the same venues as the taster courses. Most courses take place in community venues convenient for learners.

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In most classes, sessions are well prepared with clearly identified learning outcomes. Learners record their initial skill levels against the proposed outcomes for the course. Tutors re-assess these at the end of the course. They also give good individual guidance to learners. However, some tutors quickly take control of the learner's computer when explaining tasks. In the better sessions, tutors use question and answer well to involve learners fully. In the poorer sessions, tutors do not take account of the range of different learning styles.

52. Resources are satisfactory. The standard of accommodation and facilities varies, but recent investment has allowed increased access to the internet for learners. Development has resulted in a sufficiently fast connection to enable learners to connect to the internet simultaneously and access a wide range of learning materials.

53. Learners receive satisfactory guidance. In one beginners' class, learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are assessed by a trained skills for life tutor at the start of their course. Learners are visited by a trained information, advice and guidance practitioner at the end of the course to receive progression information. ICT tutors also keep learners up to date on progression opportunities.

54. Marketing information is ineffective. There is no current brochure that clearly shows the full range of the provision, as has been produced in the past. The website is not easy to navigate to get information on courses. However, there are well-established plans to develop the website. The pre-course information given to learners does not always adequately describe the course.

Leadership and management

55. There is a clear strategy for the ICT curriculum and this is communicated well to staff and subcontractors. The contracting process ensures that the curriculum offer matches closely the requirements of the strategy. However, the curriculum can be changed during a contracting period if necessary. While resource provision is the responsibility of the subcontractors, provider staff conduct a full audit of the resources offered by each subcontractor at each venue to ensure that they are sufficient for the course and compliant with legislative requirements.

56. The strategy for the provision is to offer short taster courses to encourage those new to learning to progress to longer, often accredited courses offered by partner subcontractors. However, there is little evidence of any analysis to show what proportion of the learners taking the taster courses have progressed in this way.

57. The provider works effectively to develop the use of ILT. It makes good use of national projects to acquire money to help fund this development. One project has enabled many of the subcontractors to become connected to the internet. Much work has been put into staff development, but so far there is little evidence of the effects of that training.

Paper-based learning materials for literacy classes are not produced well. E-learning modules for literacy, numeracy and ICT are not adequate to encourage effective learning. The use of digital photography in a yoga class is very good.

58. In some learning sessions, there is good promotion of cultural diversity. In one class, there was identification of national flags and good discussion on cultural differences.

During a greetings card production class, learners shared information on the range of greetings cards in other cultures and some of the design themes used.

59. The observation of teaching and learning is very recent and it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Verbal feedback is provided. Reports are comprehensive and the grades relate well to the judgements they contain. Reports conclude with areas for development.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Crafts Adult and community learning	202	3 3

60. At the time of inspection there were nine art courses and 10 craft courses. All of the courses are non-accredited. At the time of inspection there were 202 learners. In 2004-05 there were 1,149 learners. Eighty per cent of the current learners are women. Courses include print making, arts and crafts, painting and drawing, glass painting, watercolour painting and creative computing. Courses take place over a large geographical area and are provided by five subcontractors. Courses consist of day and evening provision, and last from one to 10 weeks. The area is managed by a curriculum manager. There are 11 part-time tutors.

Crafts**Grade 3***Strengths*

- good development of techniques and skills
- well-planned learning for mixed-ability groups

Weaknesses

- inadequate formal recording of learners' prior achievement and progress
- insufficient monitoring of some teaching

Achievement and standards

61. Development of learners' techniques and skills is good. Learners work very effectively to develop new skills and, in most classes, gain confidence in their abilities. Some learners use their new skills on other courses, such as interior design, and to enhance their own homes. Some learners take on challenging commissions, such as designing new kitchens for relatives. Learners are particularly well motivated. In the best learning sessions learners make significant progress. For example, in a sewing class, learners experimented with unusual fabrics, and had to learn new techniques in order to produce work of a good standard. Most of these learners could not use a sewing machine when they started their course and are now able to successfully use a variety of machinery.

62. Learners with mental health needs learn printmaking techniques. Some of these learners produce good work and gain confidence in their new skills. However, in the poorer sessions, learners do not make adequate use of observing other competent users who carry out print making.

63. All learning sessions observed by inspectors started promptly. Attendance is satisfactory at 78 per cent.

The quality of provision

64. Learning is well planned for mixed-ability groups. Much of the activity in classes is individual project work and tutors work closely with learners who have a wide range of abilities. Tutors employ a range of appropriate and effective techniques including intervention, and general information and advice, to help learners develop their own creative ideas. Tutors use well-planned demonstrations in most classes to help inspire learners, particularly in creative computers, sewing and interior design. Tutors provide constructive, positive feedback. In some learning sessions, more able learners are not provided with sufficiently challenging activities.

65. There is not enough use of ILT in art and craft classes. Most tutors have attended ILT training and many of the professional practitioners use ICT in their working life. However, this has not been transferred to their learning sessions. For example, in one class a digital camera used to photograph learners work for an exhibition did not provide sufficiently clear or detailed pictures of learners' work.

66. The curriculum content is satisfactory. There is some evidence of progression from beginner to higher-level courses and in some cases from non-accredited to accredited provision. However, this is not consistent across the area of learning. Not all courses adequately explore cultural diversity.

67. Learners are provided with satisfactory advice and guidance. Tutors promote health and safety standards within the classroom. Arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language skills are satisfactory. For example, one tutor provides individual support for a learner who is dyslexic. Information on new courses in some learning centres is poor.

68. Accommodation for arts and crafts is satisfactory for learners' practical work. Two venues have dedicated art rooms, with stimulating displays and large spaces for learners to work on a variety of projects. Most other art classes are equipped with sinks. The sewing class has a fitting room, mirrors and up-to-date equipment. However, most rooms are not of adequate size for the number of learners. All venues visited have adequate access for learners with restricted mobility.

69. Formal recording of learners' prior achievement and progress is inadequate. Initial assessment in most classes is inadequate. There is not enough monitoring of progress. Target-setting for learners is not adequate. Although there is a form to record learners' prior achievement and progress, it is not used effectively. In some classes the only paperwork kept up to date is the register. Some tutors have implemented their own paperwork to good effect but there is no sharing of this good practice. Most tutors do not understand the importance of individual learning plans. Ongoing assessment is informal in most cases. ILT is not used sufficiently in the classroom to record learners' progress, or to enhance learning.

Leadership and management

70. Communication with subcontractors is satisfactory. Meetings are frequent and managers are informed and updated regularly, both informally and formally. Working relationships are good and subcontractors appreciate the support given. However, information is not always shared with tutors. Staff training and development is satisfactory

and tutors are offered frequent training opportunities. Tutors hold appropriate qualifications for the subjects they teach.

71. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Practical support is given by tutors. However, many tutors and learners know little about the policies and procedures for promoting equality of opportunity. Learners are aware of the grievance policy and how to register a complaint. Plans to develop arts and crafts further as a first step to widen participation are well developed.

72. There is insufficient monitoring of some teaching. A quality system of observation of teaching is now in place. Ten of the tutors in art and design have been recently observed. However, some of the tutors do not remember the feedback given and in several of those observed, the grades do not match the text on the observations sheets. Some of the observations have been carried out by non-subject specialists. Feedback on the insufficient ILT in the classroom is being tackled by the provider and tutor training is increasing.

Family learning**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		2
Adult and community learning	166	2

73. In 2004-05, 1,999 learners enrolled on 231 family learning courses. Courses are delivered in a range of venues across the city mainly in 31 primary schools with a smaller provision in some community venues. The curriculum is managed by a family literacy, language and numeracy manager and a wider family learning manager. Courses offered are from entry level to level 2 and include 'keeping up with the children', family literacy, language and numeracy courses, early years, health awareness, fun and fitness, reading and writing workshops, plus family activity days and craft events.

74. Courses are offered in the daytime and evening and workshops last for a single two-hour session or one full day. Weekend workshops and drop-in sessions are also offered. Longer courses run for one and a half hours to six hours each day, and from six to 10 weeks. Apart from the longer literacy courses, most of the provision is non-accredited. In 2004-05, 18 per cent of the learners were men, 24 per cent were from minority ethnic groups, 3 per cent were over 60 years of age and 49 per cent were new learners.

Adult and community learning***Grade 2******Strengths***

- very good teaching
- good individual support and guidance
- effective partnerships to widen participation
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- no key weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

75. In family learning, attainment and learning are satisfactory for short courses. Trials of a pilot project to assess and record 'soft' outcomes of learning, such as gains in self-confidence, are currently in progress. Learners gain a good range of skills to help their children learn. Some learners progress into further education and training or gain jobs. Achievement on accredited courses is satisfactory.

The quality of provision

76. Teaching is very good. Of the sessions observed, 90 per cent were judged to be good or better. Tutors plan thoroughly and learning sessions are well managed. Tutors work well to ensure new learners progress quickly and work well. They use learners' comments and questions well to reinforce learning. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of adult learners who

lack confidence and may have negative experiences of education. Learning sessions fully involve learners in a range of practical activities and discussions. Children respond well to learning alongside their parents and grandparents. Tutors link learning in the sessions with activities learners and their children can do at home, such as developing listening skills at meal times. Some courses are specifically designed to enable parents to understand children's learning at particular key stages so they can support their children with schoolwork. Tutors use appropriate learning materials and most handouts are well presented. In one session, ICT skills were developed through the use of laptop computers. Team teaching is effective. The family learning outreach workers teach part of some sessions or assist the tutor during the sessions and provide extra support to learners. Where appropriate, photographs are used to record the sessions and special events.

77. Individual support and guidance to learners is good. Tutors are aware of the barriers that adults face when returning to learning. Interpreters are available. For example, a Chinese interpreter supports learners in a health team project to run a course in healthy eating. The four family learning outreach workers speak a range of languages to help support learners. For example, one outreach worker supports Bangladeshi women who are attending a fitness course. Dyslexia support and large print materials are also available. One four-week course was extended to eight weeks as the learners needed the extra sessions to build up sufficient skills to gain benefit from the course.

78. There are effective partnerships to widen participation. The family learning team works well with a range of partners and subcontractors such as schools, community groups, the city health and fitness promotion team, Sure Start and Learning Links. Headteachers fully understand the benefits of running family learning sessions, such as increased confidence of parents in attending parents' evenings, school events and helping in the classroom. The behaviour and attainment of some children whose parents attend sessions has improved. Partner organisations provide additional resources such as accommodation.

79. All teaching sessions are evaluated. This can take the form of filling in a brief questionnaire or very informally by drawing a picture or writing a brief note on a leaf shaped paper and hanging it on a tree. These evaluations are used to make continuous improvements to courses.

80. A small display of other courses and progression opportunities is provided at every learning session to enable tutors and outreach workers to guide learners to more advanced learning. Several learners who started at entry level have progressed to further courses. For example, one learner progressed to a general certificate of secondary education course and one parent has obtained work as a teaching assistant at a school. Another learner progressed from entry level to a higher education course. Many learners have gained the confidence to volunteer for community work such as becoming a school governor.

81. Assessment and monitoring of progress is satisfactory. National initial basic skills assessment tests are used to assess learners at the start of long courses. Individual learning plans are used in longer courses but these are not always sufficiently detailed. Initial assessment is informal on short courses. For example, in one writing workshop, learners were asked to write their names and a simple sentence so the tutor could informally assess the learners' confidence in writing. Learners in some sessions are asked to rate their confidence levels by using illustrated face stickers, or to tick boxes to identify when skills are achieved. Although most courses are non-accredited, learners are encouraged to keep

a diary of their learning activities and informally record the skills learnt. The formal recording of progress is not fully developed. However, a pilot project to assess and record 'soft' outcomes of learning, such as gains in self-confidence, is currently in progress. A further plan to evaluate two further methods will identify the most appropriate system to be adopted.

82. The range of first step learning opportunities is satisfactory. Courses are offered in response to community needs and requests. Family outreach workers assess community needs and work with provider staff and schools to provide a range of courses such as health and fitness, reading and writing workshops, ICT and music. The family learning week offers a range of events to attract new learners. School-based courses are mainly related to the school curriculum so that parents have a better understanding of what their child is doing at school. A new 10-week family learning advocates course has recently been completed. This allows learners the opportunity to work in their communities or progress to an accredited course. Analysis of attendance takes place. For example, it was identified that more men enrolled on day workshops than courses of two-hour sessions over several weeks. At the time of inspection, several sessions were new or individual sessions such as workshops and drop-in sessions in literacy skills. It was not always clear to all learners how to progress from these courses.

83. The standard of accommodation and facilities is satisfactory overall. Some rooms are not accessible for those with restricted mobility or are too small for the number of learners who attend. Some are dedicated rooms provided by schools. Children from the schools are able to join parents and carers for part of the sessions before returning to their own classes. Crèche facilities are provided free of charge.

Leadership and management

84. Good curriculum management ensures good team working. Communications are effective through regular meetings, e-mail and phone calls. Staff develop new courses and materials. Resources are available for all to use. External funding is sought to support new curriculum initiatives. The family learning handbook is a very effective resource and toolkit for partners and providers and contains all the necessary information about setting up family learning activities.

85. The family learning managers promote the courses effectively through, for example, speaking at headteachers' conferences and governors' meetings. Outreach workers attend community events and parent evenings at schools to promote family learning activities and research what learning opportunities are wanted. Working with the school improvement service, primary schools are targeted and asked for requests for courses relevant to the needs of the school. For example, a primary school wanted a day course on literacy at key stage 3 to assist parents with understanding this aspect of the curriculum. A joint workshop was devised and the school provided the accommodation and a short input from the literacy teacher.

86. Tutors and managers are well qualified. The family learning outreach workers employed to work with communities to attract hard-to-reach learners have the appropriate skills and experience. Although teaching observations take place, there is no schedule for a cycle of the observation of teaching and learning.

87. The equal opportunities policy and learner charter are displayed on the wall at all short

sessions and workshops. On longer courses, learners have these in the learner handbook. Cultural diversity is celebrated. For example, a recent special event was held for the festival of light. Some learning materials are available in up to seven different languages.

88. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process. The provider has made good progress with the priorities identified in the development plan. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report.

