

INSPECTION REPORT

Croydon LEA

03 March 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Croydon LEA

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for Croydon LEA	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	3
Key Findings	3
What learners like about Croydon LEA	14
What learners think Croydon LEA could improve	14

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	15
Equality of opportunity	17
Quality improvement	18
Information and communications technology	20
Leisure, travel and tourism	23
Arts, media and publishing	27
Languages, literature and culture	30
Preparation for life and work	34
Family learning	43

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Croydon Council Local Education Authority's (LEA) continuing education and training service (CETS) is the main provider of adult and community learning in Croydon. CETS has operated continuously since 1949, and currently provides courses at six main learning centres during the day and in the evening. Two other learning centres open only during the day, and one opens only in the evenings. CETS also delivers programmes at approximately 40 community and outreach venues within the borough. CETS is located within the community education team of the LEA, and this team provides the strategic leadership for the provision. Local accountability to council members is through the borough's learning and leisure scrutiny panel and council cabinet meetings. Strategic direction for the provision is the responsibility of the head of community education, together with the head of service. The head of service meets monthly with the head of community education and attends LEA departmental management team meetings.

2. CETS responds to and reports on the objectives identified in the council's community strategy, and neighbourhood renewal strategy, which both deal with adult learning in the borough. These reporting links, together with the LEA/CETS three-year development plan which is prepared for the LSC, give the LEA strategic control and direction of the work of CETS. This ensures that CETS' work complements that of other adult learning provision supported by the LEA.

3. CETS draws on income from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the European Social Fund, a minority ethnic achievement grant, and the health 'think tank', the Single Regeneration Budget, the Basic Skills Agency, Sure Start, and targeted government funding, together with tuition and childcare fees.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** CETS's leadership and management are good, as are measures to ensure equality of opportunity, and its arrangements to provide for quality improvement. In sport, leisure and recreation, and literacy and numeracy, the provision is satisfactory. In information and communications technology (ICT) for users, fine arts, other languages, literature and culture, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and independent living and leisure skills, the provision is good. The family learning provision is outstanding.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report involves contributions from all CETS's staff, including part-time staff at all levels. Administrative sections such as finance, caretaking, general administration and management information systems, each produced a contributory self-assessment report. The current report is the fifth produced by CETS. Most of the grades in the self-assessment report matched those given by inspectors.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** CETS's managers have a good grasp of strategic factors, and have recently conducted a wide-ranging review of the provision's standards, staffing structures and delivery models. There is a strong commitment to quality improvement and service development.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CROYDON LEA:

- continue to raise achievement for all target groups
- continue with innovative measures to widen participation
- fully establish individual learning plans throughout CETS
- use data more effectively

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Information and communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ICT for users		
Adult and community learning	294	2

Leisure, travel and tourism		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Sport, leisure and recreation		
Adult and community learning	424	3

Arts, media and publishing		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Fine arts		
Adult and community learning	1,318	2

Languages, literature and culture		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		2
Adult and community learning	1,049	2

Preparation for life and work		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i>		2
Adult and community learning	1,425	2
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3
Adult and community learning	573	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i>		2
Adult and community learning	271	2

Family learning		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		1
Adult and community learning	135	1

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Six areas of learning and leadership and management, including equal opportunities and quality improvement were reported on and graded. The areas of learning included ICT, leisure, travel and tourism, arts, media and publishing, preparation for life and work, languages, literature and culture and family learning. The area of learning provision in health, public services and care, agriculture, horticulture and animal care, engineering and manufacturing technologies, retail and commercial enterprise, social sciences, education and training, and business administration and law, was not included in the inspection because of low number of learners. Inspectors visited Croydon LEA over five consecutive days to carry out the inspection.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **Retention and achievement for ICT courses are very good.** The overall retention for further education programmes for 2004-05 is 93 per cent, and for adult and community learning courses it is 89 per cent. Attendance during the inspection was good, at 77 per cent.

9. Learners in sport, leisure and recreation develop good skills and well-being. Learners improve their stamina, strength, balance, mobility and flexibility, and new learners are quickly able to demonstrate a good understanding of training principles. Most learners make significant improvements in their skills levels. Their fitness levels are maintained or improved, and they develop good co-ordination of movement, and timing. Many learners report significant improvements in their medical conditions. Older learners improve their memory skills.

10. In fine arts, learners acquire good creative and technical skills. Learners in all classes are developing a good level of creative awareness and, in many cases, they are given greater independence, which is supported by a thorough technical grounding in the skills required. Learners are producing small-scale intricate work, as well as large decorative pieces for the home and garden. Some learners are able to apply these skills to their regular jobs.

11. Learners' achievements in fine arts are particularly well celebrated. CETS provides learners with many opportunities to celebrate their various achievements. Learners on fine arts courses are able to exhibit their work within the learning centres, and in external venues. Some learners have been awarded medals for excellence by the awarding bodies. One learner has been selected to exhibit at the Victoria and Albert museum. Learners' achievements are also promoted through a student magazine and in the local newspapers.

12. Achievements are very good on most British Sign Language (BSL) and vocational bilingual courses, and on all general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses. Sixty-nine per cent of learners progressed from introductory level 1 to level 2 in 2004-05. GCSE results in foreign languages were very good, and 97 per cent of learners in all subjects gained a grade C or above. Learners' achievements on BSL programmes were very good in 2004-05, and on level 2 courses, achievements were 30 per cent above the national average.

13. Learners in many classes develop very good language skills. They use and understand the target language with a good degree of confidence. Their verbal skills are of a good standard and they demonstrate a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary appropriate to their level of study. Learners' pronunciation is good and they gain sufficient confidence to risk making mistakes and to try out the language when abroad.

14. ESOL learners develop good confidence and self-esteem and develop their language skills successfully. They become more independent in their everyday lives and progress well from one level of learning to another. They enter vocational courses with CETS, such as retail, ICT, childcare or interpreting courses.

15. Literacy and numeracy learners develop good skills and confidence. Learners demonstrate their skills in the classroom and use them at home and at work. Some learners said that they felt more competent and confident in dealing with numbers, and one reported being able to help her son with his schoolwork.

16. Retention and achievement are good for independent living and leisure skills courses. Retention for accredited courses in 2004-05 was 90 per cent, and 89 per cent for non-accredited courses. There was 96 per cent achievement and 86 per cent success on accredited courses and 100 per cent achievement and 90 per cent success on

non-accredited courses. Achievement on accredited courses also includes any personal development learning goals.

17. The development of learners' independent living and leisure skills is good. Learners participate well and to a very good standard. Practical, personal and social skills development are identified on schemes of work and lesson plans. Many learners show improved confidence and also develop an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and learn to respect and help each other. This is a considerable achievement for many learners.

18. Levels of skills development and the achievement of qualifications are very good on adult and community learning programmes. Learners achieve a wide range of qualifications and personal skills that enable them to progress to further learning. They are enthusiastic about their own and their children's learning.

19. Retention and achievement are very good on family learning courses. Retention for all such courses in 2004-05 was 93 per cent. Many learners have a history of little or no formal involvement in education, but their achievement of qualifications is very good. Family learning offers a wide range of accreditation, including national literacy and numeracy tests, national ESOL reading and writing qualifications and Open College Network (OCN) units.

20. Learners' progression from family learning programmes is outstanding. The programmes offer very effective advice and guidance, and positive encouragement is given to learners to continue with further studies. Most learners progress to further courses, employment, community involvement, teaching assistant positions, or to higher education.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information and communications technology	2	4	3	1	10
Leisure, travel and tourism	2	3	8	2	15
Arts, media and publishing	3	7	5	0	15
Languages, literature and culture	2	7	4	1	14
Preparation for life and work	6	17	21	2	46
Family learning	1	6	1	0	8
Total	16	44	42	6	108

21. The technological resources provided at the learning centres are good and are used effectively to help teaching and learning in ICT for users. Resources and technology are to industry standards. Interactive whiteboards, data projectors, televisions and video recorders are available to tutors, and are used very well. In two very good classes the tutors made very good use of internet support to support the topic.

22. ICT learners receive very good individual support. In one lesson a learner with severe visual impairment had access to a keyboard with large characters and a special software programme. A support worker was available to answer any questions for the learner. In another class an elderly learner with a hearing impairment was helped by a learning support assistant. There is good initial advice and guidance for learners who want

to enrol on accredited courses.

23. Individual learning plans are used by most ICT tutors, but they are incomplete and do not serve effectively as planning tools for learning. Many learners do not understand the purpose of the plans and have not fully completed their own plans. Learning is well planned and meets individual needs well, but the tutors do not use individual learning plans as a means of target-setting and for recording outcomes.

24. Target-setting for individual learners is weak in leisure, travel and tourism. Tutors rarely use the information gathered about learners at the beginning of a course to identify challenging individual targets. It is difficult to measure learners' progress, and tutors do not fully establish the learners' starting point. For example, in some cases, learners have not completed any initial assessment or medical screening. Most tutors observe learners closely at the beginning of a course and can readily identify aspects that each learner needs to work towards, but this is rarely recorded and in only a few cases is used to identify individual targets.

25. Learners on the non-accredited sports, leisure and recreation provision do not have sufficient progression opportunities. Many learners stay on the same course for many years. The classes are provided only during term time. Learners lose some of the skills and health-related benefits during the long holiday breaks. Only a few classes are held in the afternoons and at weekends. Many learners say that classes take place at inconvenient times. Some potential learners have not been able to join the classes. The provision for targeted groups is restricted. CETS offer few taster sessions.

26. In fine arts there is a lot of good teaching. Overall, teaching standards in this area of learning are good, and no inadequate classes were observed. Tutors employ a range of challenging and inventive strategies to actively involve their learners. Group work is used to good effect in photography, to build learners' skills in criticism. Tutors pay good attention to individual learners' needs in many of the classes. The verbal feedback given to individuals during lessons is good.

27. Good resources are used for arts courses. The pottery and ceramics classes are situated in well-equipped, purpose-built workshops. Both pottery classes have access to a kiln, and both have access to a potter's wheel. One class has several electric and manual wheels. The workspace is good, with storage and display areas. The life-drawing studio is adapted to suit the needs of the course, with a curtained area for the model as well as a specially fitted lighting rig which is angled for the podium.

28. Achievement data is not monitored enough on accredited fine arts courses. The management information system cannot produce achievement data accurately for the accredited provision. The system produces annual data which does not give actual achievements where learners are enrolled for, and are completing, programmes of study over two or three years. The curriculum managers are aware of this weakness.

29. Language tutors use the target languages well. In the best lessons, tutors use the target language for classroom instruction as well as for role-play and question and answer sessions. Learners are encouraged to communicate whenever possible in the target language.

30. **A wide range of modern foreign languages is provided.** This is recognised in CETS's self-assessment report. Progression routes are clear and are achieved through partnership working with local further education and sixth-form colleges. Course start times vary and beginners' courses in the various languages start at different times throughout the year. Taster courses and summer holiday workshops are available in some languages, and some tutors offer additional activities such as theatre or cinema visits, trips to local restaurants, and even visits abroad.

31. **The CETS bilingual vocational programme offers a wide range of courses for interpreters and translators.** The programmes allow adults to develop their language and vocational skills and then to represent their communities in dealings with the immigration service, the courts, employers, educational institutions and the police. Community translation courses are offered in any of the national and community languages spoken by learners, and interpreting courses for legal matters are currently provided in French, Russian, Polish and Urdu. CETS has a good range of level 1 taster courses, such as understanding community interpreting, which prepare learners for progression to the level 2 courses. Links with the relevant professional services are good and all courses include visits and input from the police, the home office, and legal and judicial services.

32. **Non-verbal teaching materials are not used sufficiently in some languages classes.** Tutors incorporate a variety of activities into their classes, but these often rely too heavily on the written word as a stimulus for language production. Some tutors use textbooks or worksheets for every activity rather than visual or other learning facilities. In these lessons the pace of learning is sometimes pedestrian and not challenging enough.

33. **Standards of teaching and learning are good on many ESOL courses.** Learners are challenged well in most classes and remain focused and involved in their work. In the best lessons, tutors plan a good range of activities to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing, and spelling skills. They make good use of audiovisual aids to stimulate learning. In the best lessons, tutors have good techniques for correcting mistakes and ensure that learners practise their speaking and listening skills fully through drilling exercises and role-play.

34. **Learners on ESOL courses receive good support.** All learners have an initial interview and an assessment. They then receive an induction programme that gives them a very good understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as well as information about health and safety procedures and learning centre facilities. Volunteers work alongside tutors to support the less able learners. Practical help is available for tasks such as writing curriculum vitae and filling in forms. Many learners use the childcare facilities. Well-trained staff provide valuable information, advice and guidance about learning and employment opportunities.

35. Many of the literacy and numeracy classes do not contextualise learning or provide sufficient individual tuition. The quality of the lessons observed varied considerably. Forty-two per cent were graded good or better, 50 per cent were satisfactory and 8 per cent were unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, tutors maintain a brisk, purposeful pace and the lessons are structured to stimulate and challenge the learners at an appropriate level. In the less effective lessons the activities are rushed, the learning points are not fully explored and the tasks are not completed. The pace is often too slow and the activities are less challenging. The content of the lessons is not linked sufficiently to learners' goals,

needs, aspirations or experience. Tutors give instructions and ask questions, but do not allow sufficient time for learners to respond, and the learners are not confident enough to ask for explanations.

36. Comprehensive recruitment and initial assessment processes for independent living and leisure skills courses ensure that learners are enrolled on the most appropriate courses and at the correct level. Existing learners have an assessment with their tutor during April and discuss the courses they are interested in for the next year. Tutors encourage learners to choose courses that represent progression, if this is appropriate. New learners, and those existing learners who wish to change direction, are invited to the three-week taster programmes. A well-designed information pack is sent out to them and the process for allocating places is carefully explained, using appropriate language and graphics.

37. The provision in independent living and leisure skills is very well planned. There is a comprehensive programme of challenging courses with planned progression routes. To ensure that the programme is meeting the needs of the learners, a questionnaire is sent out to all independent learners and referring agents, asking them to identify subject areas for courses. The planning of the programme includes ensuring that all courses offer a planned progression route.

38. Individual learning plans are not completed consistently for independent living and leisure courses. Where learning goals are recorded, some only relate to the specific subject of the course, others include a breakdown of personal goals cross-referenced to the pre-entry level curriculum framework. The better plans include learning goals which are specific and measurable, with regular recording of learners' progress.

39. Teaching and learning on family learning courses is good. Teaching is imaginative and well prepared. Some of the numeracy teaching is outstanding. Tutors are enthusiastic and create a learning environment that helps learners to develop positive attitudes to learning, for themselves and for their children. Learning activities are linked to the needs of parents and their children.

40. There are outstanding partnership arrangements in family learning. Partners include primary and secondary schools, the library service, the museum service, Sure Start, early years, children's and family centres, tenants' associations, housing trusts, the travellers' education service, the local college, charities, and other voluntary organisations. The partnerships help family learning to identify and target disadvantaged learners throughout the borough. Partners speak positively of their good relationships with family learning and of its ability to respond quickly to suggestions and areas of identified need within their communities.

41. Family learning learners are well supported. Tutors give good academic and personal support to learners and are sensitive to their individual needs. Good advice and guidance is available about local and national opportunities. Learners have access to specialist advice and guidance and support workers are available if necessary. Good additional learning support is available for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs. Bilingual language support is particularly effective.

42. Family learning has an exceptional and innovative range of courses and projects in

accessible community locations. A wide range of courses is available in over 14 venues throughout the borough. Locations include primary and secondary schools, Sure Start and children's centres, family centres and early years centres. Many of these learning centres are sited in areas of identified need such as housing estates with poor transport links. Whenever possible, courses are delivered at a time and location suitable to learners.

43. **CETS has a good range of family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) programmes.** There are short introductory and longer courses, and many are designed for a specific community need. CETS has also piloted a number of imaginative courses through a national initiative, which include financial literacy, early start, storytelling for bilingual families and Springboard advice and guidance. Wider family learning also provides an extensive portfolio of courses.

Leadership and management

44. **CETS's strategic planning is very effective** and is well integrated with LEA priorities. CETS's management attend a wide range of local authority committees, partnerships and community forums to develop strategies for co-operative, multi-agency work. Policies and procedures are clear. The head of service provides strong and focused leadership which gives clear direction and successfully promotes CETS's aims, objectives and core values.

45. **Partnership arrangements to develop the provision and to improve training are extensive and very good.** This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. Service level agreements are clear. Communications between partners are very good and avoid duplication of provision and resources. Partnership arrangements contribute to training opportunities for learners and the delivery of staff training. CETS plans to develop the sharing of resources even more. Close working relationships respond successfully to meeting local needs. Partnership arrangements are especially effective in ESOL, and adult and community learning.

46. **CETS is involved very effectively in strategic and delivery groups which are concerned with developing employability skills.** CETS is a founding partner of an adult learning skills and employment partnership, a body which brings together the LEA, the borough council, Jobcentre Plus, Croydon College, the South London LSC, and representatives from Croydon businesses. The group has implemented a three-year skills strategy, with particular emphasis on neighbourhood renewal. CETS is also a major partner in a local enterprise grant initiative which has secured a large grant for promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise in the borough.

47. **Staff are very well supported** and appreciate the level and openness of communications with managers. Internal communications are very effective. Overall, staff are co-operative, flexible, innovative and learner focused. Staff are involved in planning and improving the provision. **Curriculum management is good in fine arts, literacy and numeracy, family learning, and other languages, literature and culture.**

48. **CETS does not use data sufficiently to monitor performance.** The provider's management information system is reasonably well developed overall. The system for acquiring data is good, but managers and teaching staff are not always aware of the full extent of the system's capabilities.

49. **The provider does not use clear and challenging targets** to plan and monitor its

progress towards strategic objectives and improving performance. Overall, success rates are good, but CETS's targets are not challenging enough and in many cases are easily achievable. The use of targets for learners varies between programmes. The head of service recognises these key weaknesses and is confident that the imminent management restructuring will resolve the situation.

50. Achievement levels are very good among targeted groups. Most learners in all the areas of learning develop good skills and confidence levels, increasing their self-esteem. Seventy-five per cent of the learners on citizenship programmes achieve their objective of passing nationality tests.

51. CETS manages a comprehensive range of support for learners very well. Its strategy for literacy, numeracy and language skills support for all learners is effective. CETS provides this support in various ways, including established literacy and language courses in teaching, and individual learning sessions.

52. CETS makes very good use of learners' feedback to improve the learners' experiences. The analysis and use of feedback is a major force for change to the programmes. As well as conducting broad satisfaction surveys, CETS obtains learners' feedback from targeted groups such as ESOL learners, learners with disabilities and family learning learners.

53. The self-assessment process is particularly inclusive and thorough. The self-assessment report provides a very detailed review of the whole provision, with particular emphasis on the learners' position and their requirements. The current report is the fifth one produced by CETS. It involved all staff, including part-time staff at all levels. Each area of learning produced detailed reports about their performances.

54. CETS does not monitor some aspects of quality improvement sufficiently. This is particularly evident in individual learning plans for learners in independent living and leisure skills and in ICT for users. Other weaknesses include poor recording of learners' progress in some areas such as sport, leisure and recreation, other languages, literature and culture, and independent living and leisure skills. Some learners who begin their courses after the main enrolment weeks do not receive an effective induction. Not all of the tutors make comments on the observation of teaching feedback forms given to them, and some of the action points arising from observations are not recorded effectively.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good partnership arrangements
- good development of employment skills
- very effective strategic planning
- very effective involvement of targeted groups
- very good management of support
- particularly inclusive and thorough self-assessment
- very good use of learners' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to improve performance
- insufficient use of clear and challenging targets
- insufficient monitoring of some aspects of quality improvement

Information and communications technology***ICT for users****Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement on all courses
- good use of technology in teaching and learning
- very good support for all learners
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- incomplete individual learning plans

Leisure, travel and tourism***Sport, leisure and recreation****Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills and well-being
- good curriculum support for staff

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for individual learners
- insufficient progression opportunities in non-accredited provision

Arts, media and publishing***Fine arts****Strengths*

- good acquisition of creative and technical skills
- particularly good celebration of learners' achievements
- much good teaching
- good resources for specialist courses
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of achievement data on accredited courses

Languages, literature and culture

Other languages, literature and culture

Strengths

- very good achievements on GCSE and some BSL and vocational courses
- very good development of language skills by learners in many classes
- good use of target language by tutors
- good range of languages courses
- good bilingual vocational provision to meet community needs
- good curriculum support for staff

Weaknesses

- insufficiently broad range of teaching materials in some classes
- inadequate recording of achievements on non-accredited courses

Preparation for life and work

ESOL

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence and language skills
- much good teaching
- good support for learners
- good partnerships to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of skills and confidence
- good initiatives to improve and develop literacy and numeracy provision

Weaknesses

- insufficiently individualised and contextualised learning
- inadequate measures to ensure sufficient qualified and experienced staff

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good retention and achievement
- good development of learners' skills
- comprehensive recruitment and initial assessment
- very good planning of provision
- good liaison and partnership working

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient tutors with experience of learner group

Family learning

Adult and community learning

Strengths

- very good range of skills development
- very good achievement of qualifications
- good standards of teaching and learning
- outstanding partnership arrangements
- good support for learners
- exceptional and innovative range of courses and projects in accessible community locations
- very good management and teamworking in family learning

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CROYDON LEA:

- 'the helpful tutors who give us confidence'
- the convenient location of centres
- learning with people from so many different cultures
- excellent support
- the displays of other learners' work - 'it feels that we are learning during our coffee breaks'
- 'the feeling of youthfulness the classes bring'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CROYDON LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the liaison with neighbouring boroughs to avoid cancelling classes
- the cold and cramped rooms in some learning centres
- more hours of tuition are needed

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good partnership arrangements
- good development of employment skills
- very effective strategic planning
- very effective involvement of targeted groups
- very good management of support
- particularly inclusive and thorough self-assessment
- very good use of learners' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to improve performance
- insufficient use of clear and challenging targets
- insufficient monitoring of some aspects of quality improvement

55. CETS's partnership arrangements to develop its provision and improve training are extensive and very good. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. Service level agreements are clear. Communications between partners are very good and avoid duplication of provision and resources. Partnership arrangements contribute to training opportunities for learners and the delivery of staff training. The provider plans to develop the sharing of resources even more. Close working relationships respond successfully to meeting local needs. Partnership arrangements are especially effective in ESOL and family learning. Partners and their staff appreciate the level of service and support they receive from CETS. Partnerships support key priority groups throughout the borough in a range of venues.

56. CETS has been involved in economic development initiatives within the borough for approximately 10 years. Currently, the provider is very effectively involved in strategic and delivery groups which are concerned with developing employability skills. CETS is a founding partner of an adult learning skills and employment partnership, a body which brings together the LEA, the borough council, Jobcentre Plus, Croydon College, the South London LSC and representatives from Croydon businesses. The group has implemented a three-year skills strategy, with particular emphasis on neighbourhood renewal. CETS has also been a major partner in an enterprise grant initiative which has secured a large grant for promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise in the borough.

57. CETS has worked successfully with partners, including Jobcentre Plus and the borough council, to develop employability skills for the construction and retail sectors, as part of the Croydon gateway development. In collaboration with Jobcentre Plus, CETS has established job fairs and training to meet the need for approximately 1,000 workers for the central retail project.

58. CETS's strategic planning is very effective and is well integrated with LEA priorities. The provider's management attend a wide range of local authority committees, partnerships and community forums to develop strategies for co-operative multi-agency work. Policies and procedures are clear. The head of service provides strong and focused leadership that gives clear direction and successfully promotes CETS's aims, objectives and core values.

59. Staff are very well supported and appreciate the level and openness of communications with managers. Internal communications are very effective. Overall, staff are co-operative, flexible, innovative and learner focused. Staff are involved in planning and improving the provision. Curriculum management is good in fine arts, literacy and numeracy, family learning, and other languages, literature and culture. CETS gives a high priority to learners' health and safety and this is well managed.

60. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. In most departments they are adequately qualified in their specialist areas, and 81 per cent of the teaching staff are teacher trained and qualified. Staff bring a lot of relevant experience to the programmes, but, in some literacy and numeracy programmes, some staff are not sufficiently qualified or experienced. Staff development and the reviews of their performance are satisfactory.

61. Staff training is focused on meeting the needs of the provider, but there is no clear procedure to monitor how staff development improves the learners' experiences. Sharing of best practice is a regular feature through formal and informal meetings and training, and the management of physical and teaching resources is satisfactory, but information learning technology is not used sufficiently in some areas. CETS's accommodation strategy is designed to ensure full access for all learners. Financial arrangements are effective and funds are used to good effect. Returns to the local LSC are timely and audit reports are positive.

62. CETS does not use data sufficiently to monitor performance. The provider's management information system is reasonably well developed overall, and the system for acquiring data is good, but managers and teaching staff are not always aware of the full extent of the system's capabilities. The provider does not monitor adequately the recently introduced grading of teaching and learning observations, and there are no detailed attendance records available for analysis. Learners' progress and overall learner progression are not analysed in sufficient detail.

63. CETS does not make sufficient use of clear and challenging targets to plan and monitor its progress towards achieving its strategic aims and improving performance. Overall, success rates are good, but CETS's targets are not challenging enough and in many cases are easily achievable. Learners' feedback is not centrally monitored for effectiveness, and no targets are set for improvement. Action-planning in many aspects of the provider's work is generally not clear. For example, action plans following staff reviews, the minutes of meetings, and the development plan set performance measures that are not clear or specific. In many cases, management and staff are unable to interpret or confirm success concisely. The setting of targets for learners varies between programmes. The head of service recognises these key weaknesses and is confident that the imminent management restructuring will help to resolve these problems.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 2**

64. CETS has a well-established culture that promotes and supports equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is one of the provider's five key priorities. CETS has created a learning environment in which there is respect for learners and staff from a diverse range of backgrounds. CETS is very effective at involving learners from various targeted groups, and aims to attract adults from minority ethnic groups, unemployed people, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as adult men from deprived wards. Participation by each of these groups has increased and the provider has helped them to achieve their personal objectives, gain qualifications and use their knowledge and skills to benefit their local communities.

65. Achievement levels are very good for the targeted groups. Most learners in all areas of learning develop good skills and confidence levels. Seventy-five per cent of the learners on citizenship programmes achieve their objective of passing nationality tests. A total of 1,351 learners have achieved the nationality tests in Croydon in four months. Learners on ESOL programmes maintained a good achievement level of approximately 89 per cent during 2004-05. Bilingual learners are making very good progress on particularly effective vocational programmes which extend the capacity of their communities for self-advocacy and support.

66. CETS has been very effective at building the skills and knowledge base of the residents of deprived wards such as New Addington. Examples include courses which helped 90 learners to acquire good skills levels in carpentry, painting and decorating, and interior design. Several of the learners have progressed to set up their own businesses and have enrolled on courses at a local college. Other successful examples include development of information technology (IT) skills among community groups and the Crystal Palace regeneration initiative. Employers such as the Home Office have been able to improve the skills levels of their staff in literacy and numeracy. CETS has a large number of volunteers, many of whom have achieved level 4 qualifications in teaching and now have jobs with CETS or in neighbouring boroughs. Learners from all the targeted priority areas gain wide-ranging benefits from learning. They use their new skills and knowledge to help their communities.

67. CETS manages its comprehensive range of support for learners very well. Its strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support is good. CETS provides this support in various ways, including established literacy and language courses in teaching, and individual learning sessions. Additional staff provide extra literacy and numeracy support for the learners in the classroom. Some of the support is provided by well-trained volunteers.

68. CETS provides an excellent community and individual information, advice and guidance service from a high-street learning shop. Learners and borough residents can drop in to use this free and impartial service. Some very well-qualified staff provide a flexible information and guidance service from two main learning centres which are used mainly by minority ethnic and other under-represented groups. The use of these services is very high. In the past year alone, CETS provided 9,222 sessions of information, advice and guidance to the adult population of Croydon. The provider also offers a free service to help adults compare their overseas qualifications with UK equivalents.

69. Learners can use specialist equipment in the learning centres. Minority ethnic learners

have access to an excellent service called 'help point' which supports learners very effectively in dealing with their immigration, welfare and other queries. Some classes have learning support assistants and signers who support those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A well-established transport service is also available. Many learning centres have very good on-site childcare and crèche facilities. CETS has made good use of funding to help learners with examination fees, books and other learning aids.

70. CETS celebrates learners' achievements very well. The classrooms and learning centres have good displays of learners' achievements. One large classroom has a 'wall of a thousand successes' that refers to the achievements of 998 learners on a 'start your business' course. Tutors generally have good knowledge of the provider's equality and diversity policies and diversity is well promoted in lessons.

71. Access to buildings is broadly satisfactory. One of CETS's current buildings is not suitable for adaptation to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the provider is moving to a new, purpose-built facility nearby.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

72. CETS makes very good use of learners' feedback to improve the learning experience. The analysis and use of feedback is a major force for change throughout the provision. As well as conducting satisfaction surveys, CETS obtains feedback from targeted groups such as learners in IT and ESOL, learners with disabilities, and family learning learners. The provider asks learners many focused questions about issues such as the quality of teaching and learning, their preferred learning styles, the range of activities, accreditation, and learning resources. CETS gains learners' feedback when they begin their courses, in the middle and towards the end of the courses. Any changes made as a result of feedback are instituted promptly. Managers keep good records of the meetings where feedback is discussed and inform the learners of the results of surveys and the actions taken. CETS also makes very good use of informal feedback from employers and partners to improve the provision.

73. The self-assessment process is particularly inclusive and thorough. The self-assessment report provides a very detailed review of the whole provision, with particular emphasis on the learners' position and requirements. The current report is the fifth one produced by CETS. It involved all staff including part-time staff at all levels. Each area of learning produced detailed reports about their performances. The report reviewed the accredited and non-accredited provisions separately. It established challenging internal standards for retention, achievement and success rates and class observations. It also included the level of class closures and teacher qualifications. CETS clearly identified the improvements it had made from the previous year, its strengths, and proposed developments. Critical course reviews were fed into the self-assessment process. CETS conducts an external moderation of the self-assessment, which is a regular feature of the review. The feedback from the external moderator is used constructively to make changes. The development plan is satisfactory, and it is designed to resolve the identified weaknesses and maintain the strengths.

74. Observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. CETS observes not only classroom teaching but also a range of activities that involve direct contact with the learners. This includes support, information, advice and guidance sessions and some interviews. Many observers give detailed feedback to the staff including suggestions for

improvement. In the current academic year, CETS has begun to grade its lessons, although the observations have been taking place for several years. The observers are fully trained in the process, and managers generally give good support to tutors who require it. However, the observations are not thorough enough. Some of the grades are over-generous. Not all tutors are given clear guidance about how to improve their teaching from satisfactory, to good or excellent. The quality of recording and some of the observations are inadequate. The provider has recognised this weakness and has established plans to make further improvements.

75. Course evaluation is satisfactory. CETS's staff evaluate all the courses in detail. They give due recognition to strengths as well as weaknesses. Staff propose and make improvements for subsequent courses. Where appropriate, they take into account employers' and partners' views when evaluating the courses.

76. Good practice is shared satisfactorily. This includes good practice within and outside of the provision. Observers of teaching and learning frequently point out to staff the good practice that is occurring in other areas of learning. Some of the classes are taught in teams and tutors discuss how they can improve the lessons. Most tutors evaluate their lessons satisfactorily, but not all of them record measures to improve the practice.

77. Internal verification is satisfactory. External verifiers' action points have been implemented in a timely fashion where appropriate.

78. CETS does not monitor some aspects of quality improvement sufficiently. This is particularly evident in individual learning plans for learners in independent living and leisure skills and in ICT for users. Other weaknesses include poor recording of learners' progress in some areas such as sport, leisure and recreation, other languages, literature and culture, and independent living and leisure skills. Some learners who begin their courses after the main enrolment weeks do not receive an effective induction. Not all of the tutors make comments about the observation of teaching feedback forms given to them, and some of the action points arising from observations are not recorded effectively.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information and communications technology

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i>		2
Adult and community learning	294	2

79. During 2004-05, 816 learners enrolled on 126 courses which were provided at six learning centres during the daytime, evenings and at weekends. Since September 2005, 576 learners have enrolled on 70 courses. Of these learners, 216 are new to the programmes. Twelve per cent of them have declared a disability, 34 per cent are men, 66 per cent are women, and 38 per cent of the learners are from a minority ethnic group. At the time of the inspection, 294 learners were enrolled, on 27 courses, of whom 50 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, 36 per cent are men and 64 per cent are women. Accredited provision includes an examination-based qualification in IT, and a basic computer literacy course at level 1 and 2. Progression routes are from entry level to level 2 for most programmes. Learners are aware of the courses available at a local college at level 3. The 'think tank' is an ICT programme which is offered for 15 hours each week on a termly basis and takes beginners to level 2 within that period. This course is designed to help unemployed adults who live in the north of the borough to update their skills. A new level 1 certificate in IT was introduced in September 2005. The only non-accredited course being offered at the moment is digital image manipulation.

ICT for users

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement on all courses
- good use of technology in teaching and learning
- very good support for all learners
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- incomplete individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

80. Retention and achievement are very good. Overall retention for further education programmes for 2004-05 was 93 per cent and for adult and community learning courses it was 89 per cent. Attendance during the inspection was good, at 77 per cent. Tutors follow up unexplained absences by e-mail, letter or telephone. Achievement on accredited courses in 2004-05 was 89 per cent, against CETS's target of 75 per cent. Since September 2005, achievement has been at 92 per cent for further education provision, and 100 per cent for the ICT for users course. Achievement for the basic computer literacy course in 2004-05 was 88 per cent, and is currently 94 per cent. Ninety-five per cent success has been achieved for the 2004-05 intake in the examination-based qualification in IT. The

figure for this course is currently 100 per cent. Particularly good achievement exists for the 'think tank' funded courses at Thornton Heath, and is currently running at 98 per cent. A good standard of work is produced in most lessons and learners develop good, practical ICT skills and gain in self-confidence. Learners are well motivated.

The quality of provision

81. Standards of teaching and learning were found to be good or better in most classes, although there was some inadequate teaching. In the better classes, learners are fully involved and demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject. They are developing good ICT skills. In one outstanding class, learners were creating a range of cards and calendars using a desktop publishing package. Although they were given advice and guidance on use of the software they were left to explore all possibilities, locating images through clip art, e-mail attachments, and the internet. The better lessons are well structured and tutors make use of a variety of teaching methods and resources. Learners are observed regularly by tutors, who identify any difficulties immediately. Learners are made aware of the objectives at the beginning of the lesson, together with details of the tasks that need completing. Question and answer techniques are used well to involve the learners and to identify whether they have grasped the concepts. Health and safety is emphasised at the beginning of all lessons, and activities are varied to allow for breaks from the screen. There are good displays of learners' work in the classrooms and in the corridors.

82. The technological resources provided at the learning centres are good and are used effectively to help in teaching and learning. Resources and technology are to industry standards. Interactive whiteboards, data projectors, televisions and video machines are available to tutors, and are used very well to support learning. In two excellent classes the tutors made very good use of internet support in class. Learners have access to web logs which allow them to access websites to update their skills in areas such as mouse control, health and safety and keyboarding. Tutors also have access to web logs to share information. A virtual learning environment is used by CETS, and is currently being developed for use in the classroom. This allows tutors to share learning resources.

83. Learners receive very good individual support. In one lesson a learner with a severe visual impairment was using a keyboard with large characters, and a software programme which enhanced the size of the screen. A support worker was available to answer any questions. In another class a learner with hearing difficulties had help from a learning support assistant. Good initial advice and guidance is available for learners who want to enrol on accredited courses. They receive appropriate levels of support and tutors ensure that learners have the necessary information about the availability of childcare facilities, the learning support fund, and the additional help available to support their learning. Learners can use the learning centres to access support and ICT equipment. Staff are on hand to provide help at all times. Learners who want to join accredited programmes are interviewed to assess their suitability. Learners who do not have sufficient language skills for the courses in this area are referred to the ICT programmes run by the ESOL department.

84. Tutors are well qualified for the subjects that they teach. Ninety-one per cent of them have a certificate in education. All tutors have ICT qualifications and keep their skills up to date through their personal development programme.

85. Assessments are thorough and marking is in accordance with the criteria of the

awarding bodies. Good advice is given to learners about how to put their portfolios together and the types of evidence that are required. Feedback to learners about marked work is positive and constructive, with good advice about improving the display and accuracy of their work.

86. In the less satisfactory lessons, poor punctuality by the learners is not well managed. In these lessons, learners are not fully involved from the beginning, and for the rest of the lesson they are not challenged sufficiently and only manage a few tasks. Learners are also unaware of what they are expected to achieve.

87. Individual learning plans are used by most tutors, but they are incomplete and do not serve effectively as planning tools for learning. Many learners do not understand the purpose of the plans and they have not completed their own plans in full. Though learning is well planned and meets individual needs well, the tutors do not use individual learning plans as a means of target-setting and for recording outcomes.

Leadership and management

88. Programme and team meetings are held frequently, during which the courses and learners' progress are discussed. Minutes are taken and these are distributed at the end of the meetings. Course reviews show a self-critical and constructive approach. Actions plans are drawn up from the course reviews. Communications between tutors and from managers are good.

89. Equality of opportunity and diversity arrangements are good. All tutors attend training sessions which deal with these issues. In many lesson plans, tutors identify ways in which they can include the subjects of equal opportunities and diversity. CETS has had considerable success in targeting learners in deprived areas, many of whom are successful on the ICT programmes.

90. All new tutors are observed in their first term of teaching. Fifty-five per cent of tutors were observed last year, and a decision has been taken to carry out observations on an annual basis, rather than once every two years. There was evidence in some lessons that tutors have implemented action points resulting from observations.

91. The self-assessment process is thorough, with all tutors feeding in the results of their course evaluations. Within the area of learning there are good course reviews and analyses of learner satisfaction surveys. The internal verification meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. The self-assessment report makes use of accurate, reliable data. Full- and part-time staff are involved in the process and provide information from completed course evaluations and learner satisfaction surveys. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report partly matched the findings of the inspection.

Leisure, travel and tourism**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		3
Adult and community learning	424	3

92. More than 95 per cent of the provision in this area of learning is non-accredited. Courses include yoga, qi gong, tai chi, Pilates, keep fit, circuit training and core conditioning. Accredited courses include Pilates instructor, shore-based yachting and fitness instructor awards. In 2004-05, 1,549 learners enrolled on 191 courses. Since the beginning of September 2005, 732 learners have made 800 enrolments. Eighty-eight per cent of learners are women and 17 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-six per cent of the learners have declared a disability, and 18 per cent of the learners have enrolled for the first time. Twenty-seven per cent of learners receive course fee remissions. Fifteen per cent of learners are over the age of 65. Courses are offered in seven learning venues which include schools, churches and learning centres. At the time of inspection, 49 courses were operating. Most courses are provided in 10-weekly blocks over the academic year, during the daytime, the twilight period, and in the evening. A small amount of provision is also available at weekends. Twenty-two part-time staff teach between one and six hours each week. A deputy head of faculty and a curriculum manager manage the curriculum.

Sport, leisure and recreation*Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills and well-being
- good curriculum support for staff

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for individual learners
- insufficient progression opportunities in non-accredited provision

Achievement and standards

93. Learners develop good skills and well-being. Learners improve their stamina, strength, balance, mobility and flexibility. New learners are quickly able to demonstrate a good understanding of training principles. Most learners make significant improvements in their skills levels. They achieve a good range of dexterity in their techniques and demonstrations. Learners' fitness levels are maintained or improved and they develop good co-ordination of movement and timing. They improve their posture and develop good body awareness. Standards of work for most learners are good in terms of sequences, posture and movement. Many learners report significant improvements to their medical conditions. Older learners can remember lengthy and complex sequences. Learners who are referred by their doctors for exercise, report improved health and an increase in their confidence. Courses allow learners to become more independent and adopt a more active lifestyle. Learners also enjoy the social benefits of classes. Many of

them regularly meet as groups to attend local events.

94. Achievements on accredited courses are satisfactory overall. Seventy per cent of learners in 2004-05 achieved qualifications. All learners were successful on the day, and coastal shore-based skippers course. Several learners have gained jobs by achieving fitness instructor qualifications. Retention is satisfactory. In 2004-05, retention was 88 per cent and 91 per cent of learners on non-accredited and accredited short courses, respectively.

95. Overall attendance is satisfactory. During the inspection week, attendance was 77 per cent. Learners notice a marked improvement in their fitness by attending courses. Learners are satisfied with their courses, and they are making satisfactory progress in achieving their goals.

The quality of provision

96. Guidance and support arrangements for learners are satisfactory. Pre-course information is also satisfactory. Learners are involved in identifying their own additional support needs at the beginning of the course. They receive personal support from tutors in their classes. Arrangements for assessing individual needs during enrolment and in the first few lessons are satisfactory. In a few cases, learners have received specialist support through the learning support department. The arrangements to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs on non-accredited courses are satisfactory. Some of the learners on accredited courses are not receiving such support.

97. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons there are good levels of instruction and demonstration. Some key teaching points are used to improve exercise techniques. Learners are encouraged to practise at home. Tutors correct and explain details appropriately. Learners enjoy the social environment. Some of the tutors do not prepare their lessons adequately, and planning is poor. Tutors do not use a wide enough range of activities and teaching methods. They do not correct learners' posture and movements effectively.

98. Overall, resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is adequate and located close to learners' homes. The provider has recently made many improvements to learning venues. These include new flooring, double-glazing, redecoration and better access to buildings. Some of the accommodation is inadequate. For example, the rooms used for two of the classes observed during inspection were too small for the number of learners present. The range of activities in the class was restricted. Learning materials and equipment are generally satisfactory. Exercise mats are provided for yoga, Pilates and fitness classes, and are fit for purpose. Tutors use their own CD players, which are tested for safety by the LEA. Some classes do not have sufficient resources such as foam blocks to help learners to perform exercises comfortably and to improve their posture.

99. Target-setting for individual learners is weak. Tutors rarely use the information gathered about learners at the beginning of a course to identify challenging individual targets. It is difficult to measure learners' progress. Tutors do not fully establish the learners' starting points. For example, in some cases, learners have not completed any initial assessment or medical screening. Even when learners complete questionnaires, some tutors do not record any of the additional information about medical conditions that learners have identified. Most tutors observe learners closely at the beginning of each course and can readily identify aspects that each learner needs to improve, but this

information is rarely recorded, and in only a few cases is it used to identify individual targets. There is not enough monitoring and assessment of progress in some classes. Written or verbal feedback is rarely used to inform learners of the progress that they have made. Currently, staff are involved in piloting new processes to identify learners' starting points and to monitor their progress, but some staff do not fully understand how to use the process. CETS does not currently gather data about non-accredited learners' progress.

100. Learners in non-accredited provision do not have sufficient progression opportunities. Many learners stay on the same course for many years. The classes operate during term time only. The learners lose some of the skills and health-related benefits that they have gained during the long holiday breaks. Only a few classes are held in the afternoons and at weekends. Many learners say that classes take place at inconvenient times. Some potential learners have not been able to join classes. The provision for targeted groups is restricted. Few taster sessions are offered, but some have taken place during the summer months. The geographical distribution of the provision is satisfactory. The self-assessment report identifies weaknesses in the curriculum, but satisfactory plans exist to resolve most of these.

Leadership and management

101. The curriculum support for staff is good. The deputy head of faculty and the curriculum manager are fitness specialists, and they have supported many staff to develop their professional, assessor and teaching qualifications. A high number of staff have gained or are working towards a teaching qualification. Staff have received some financial support to develop their curriculum expertise through external updating courses. The deputy head of faculty and the curriculum manager take classes for the tutors, to enable them to attend external courses. Communications between staff and curriculum managers are good. Frequent contact and sharing of information takes place through e-mails, newsletters, and informal conversations.

102. Curriculum management and co-ordination are satisfactory. There is sufficient expertise to plan and develop the curriculum. CETS has made a strategic decision not to offer sports courses. The LEA is focusing on and developing additional accredited courses. Satisfactory use is made of information for planning and bringing about improvements.

103. CETS's promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff's awareness of equality and diversity is promoted through training days, although staff attendance at these events is low. Staff who do not attend have access to training resources.

104. Partnership arrangements are satisfactory. The provider has collaborated effectively with a few local organisations to provide industry standard qualifications for its staff.

105. Quality improvement arrangements, including internal verification, are satisfactory. The self-assessment process includes all relevant stakeholders. Most of these are involved in the process and are made aware of the outcomes. The self-assessment report, however, is not critical enough and the weaknesses are not identified clearly.

106. The teaching observation scheme is satisfactory. It is carried out by specialist staff and operates on a yearly cycle. Some best practice identified through the observation scheme has been shared appropriately. Areas for development are identified, but only a small percentage of observation outcomes have agreed action plans. In a few cases the

CROYDON LEA

observation process is not improving the quality of teaching and learning sufficiently.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Fine arts</i>		2
Adult and community learning	1,318	2

107. CETS offers a range of fine arts, visual arts and dance courses that include ballet, jazz dance, Latin American and ballroom dancing, ceramics, pottery, calligraphy, clothes making, photography, enamelling and stained glass.

108. At the time of the inspection, there were 107 courses. In 2004-05, there were 3,512 learners on performing arts courses, 81 per cent of whom were women. Twenty per cent of the learners considered themselves to have a learning difficulty and/or disability. At the time of inspection there are 1,397 enrolments, accounting for 1,318 learners. The provision takes place in 10 adult education centres throughout the area. For the period 2005-06 there are 44 part-time tutors, 59 per cent of whom hold initial teacher training qualifications at stage 2. Most of them also hold subject-specific qualifications. Courses consist of day and evening provision, with some Saturday courses and workshops. The courses range from one-day tasters to courses spanning the full academic year.

Fine arts*Strengths*

- good acquisition of creative and technical skills
- particularly good celebration of learners' achievements
- much good teaching
- good resources for specialist courses
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of achievement data on accredited courses

Achievement and standards

109. Learners acquire good creative and technical skills and, in all classes, are developing a good level of creative awareness. In many cases, learners are given greater independence, which is supported by a thorough technical grounding in the skills required. For example, in stained glass classes, learners are producing work to very good standards and to a variety of scale. The same is true of the pottery, ceramics and sculpture classes. Learners are producing small, intricate items, as well as large decorative pieces for the home and garden. Some learners are able to apply these skills in their jobs. Particular examples of this are a graphic designer, a primary school teacher and a garden designer, all of whom can identify the value the courses have had in their professional lives. More mature learners are able to identify how these new skills enable them to maintain their mental and physical dexterity, particularly in some of the art classes. In dance classes, learners are developing basic movement skills to co-ordinate their bodies with the music.

110. Learners' achievements are celebrated particularly well. Learners on arts and crafts courses are able to exhibit their work in the learning centres, and also in external locations. Some learners have been awarded medals for excellence by the awarding bodies, and other learners have received certificates of high commendation. Craft fairs are held where learners are able to display and sell their products to the public. One learner has been selected to exhibit an item at the Victoria and Albert museum as part of the 'Inspired By' exhibition. Learners' achievements are also promoted through the student magazine and in the local press.

111. Achievement and retention are satisfactory. For 2004-05, achievement for the adult and community learning provision was 98 per cent, with retention at 88 per cent. Achievement for the accredited provision appears low at 45 per cent, but many programmes are long-term, taking two or three years to complete.

The quality of provision

112. A great deal of good teaching takes place in this area of learning. Overall, standards of teaching are good, with no inadequate classes observed. Tutors employ a range of challenging and inventive strategies to involve their learners. For example, in one life studies class the tutor sets the learners time-bound sketching tasks which are designed to hone their skills of observation, and their hand-to-eye co-ordination. A similar exercise takes place in the design for craft class. Group work is used to good effect in photography to build on learners' critical skills. In many classes, tutors pay good attention to individual learners' needs. Verbal feedback to individuals in class is good. Mixed-ability classes are managed well in arts, crafts and dance, with most lesson plans detailing differentiated learning. In some classes, tutors negotiate advanced levels of work with individual learners to ensure that they are actively involved. The better arts and craft classes are stimulating. In some of the satisfactory sessions, such as beginners' dance class, the pace of learning was slow and the choice of music uninspiring. Overall, learners' confidence increases and many of them feel able to experiment creatively within the framework of the lessons.

113. Good resources are available for specialist courses. The pottery and ceramics classes are well situated in well-equipped purpose-built workshops. Both pottery classes have access to a kiln, and both have access to at least one potter's wheel. One class has several such wheels, both electric and manual. The workspaces are good, with storage and display areas. The life drawing studio is adapted to suit the needs of the course, with a curtained area for the model, as well as a special lighting rig angled to the podium. The dance classes take place in a spacious hall which has been fitted with mirrors and barres along one wall. Learners have access to a range of creative materials in the craft classes and pay only for their clay. However, one pottery room at a school venue is a little cramped. Tutors are all well qualified, and many hold initial teaching qualifications. Most of them hold subject-specific qualifications. Two tutors of fashion courses have been awarded licentiates by the awarding body.

114. Assessment are satisfactory. Learners complete individual learning plans in all classes, which are used in tutors' planning, but not all tutors and learners recognise the educational value of the plans. Some learners feel that the paperwork is too bureaucratic. In the better classes, tutors have supplemented the individual learning plans with their own recording of learners' progress, which ranges from record sheets to photographic evidence. In one watercolour class a learner recorded the staged process of producing a landscape through

a series of digital pictures.

115. The range of provision is satisfactory. The accredited and non-accredited provision in the visual arts is adequate to meet the needs of the community. There are progression opportunities within the provision, both vertically through levels and laterally through associated courses. Learners in some cases have progressed to degree or diploma courses at institutes of further or higher education. The dance provision is small but well attended.

116. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Pre-course information is available in CETS's prospectus, and online and through course information sheets. Where learners have additional needs, the learning support team contacts tutors in advance and provides relevant information. In some cases, additional support workers have been provided, and learners with dyslexia have been provided with voice recorders.

117. Achievement data is not monitored sufficiently on accredited courses. The management information system cannot produce achievement data accurately for the accredited provision. The system only produces annual data which does not include actual achievement data for learners who are enrolled for, and are completing, programmes of study over a two- or three-year period. The curriculum managers are aware of this weakness. The system is further complicated by the extrapolation of data from accredited courses where some participants are not working for the accredited units.

Leadership and management

118. The curriculum managers have a good understanding of the specialist provision, and are subject specialists. Tutors are involved in planning. Strategic planning is good, and the provision complements that of other local institutions. In some cases, progression opportunities are created between the organisations. Some courses have been removed from the LSC remit and made into clubs at full-cost recovery. The quality of these clubs is monitored by the provider. Regular meetings take place within the curriculum area and the many good opportunities provided for staff development are generally well attended. Morale is good among tutors. Communications are well maintained, and the managers have established a website forum for tutors and themselves to share good practice, news and useful teaching points. This concept is being adapted by tutors to create an online forum for learners and tutors to communicate in a virtual learning environment, but it is too soon to judge its effectiveness.

119. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well, and tutors have a good knowledge of CETS's policies on equality and diversity. Many of the visual arts classes have a good number of learners who would not normally take part in learning. Access is good for learners with restricted mobility. The observation of teaching and learning is generally good, with subject specialists conducting the observations. Feedback following the observations is useful, and support is provided where appropriate. Grading has only recently been introduced, so comparisons with inspection findings are unreliable. The process of self-assessment is satisfactory, and tutors recognise their contribution to the area report. CETS's self-assessment report identified that all the observed learning sessions were satisfactory, but this did not take into account initial observations that may have proven unsatisfactory. The 100 per cent figure was based on final visits after support had been provided. The findings in the self-assessment report are similar to the judgements of the inspection.

Languages, literature and culture**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		2
Adult and community learning	1,049	2

120. At the time of inspection there were 1,049 learners on 100 modern languages, translating and interpreting courses. This represents a decline of 46 per cent from the previous year's provision, and is part of a planned reduction in some areas of provision. Courses take place in seven of the nine main learning venues throughout the borough. Seventy-seven per cent of the courses are accredited and these range from entry level to level 2, including GCSE courses. Higher-level courses are not accredited. In the academic year 2004-05 there were 1,949 learners on 312 courses. Eleven languages are taught, consisting of French, Spanish, German, Italian, Greek, Japanese, Russian, Arabic, Turkish, Polish and Chinese. There is also a programme of bilingual vocational courses. Seven accredited courses are offered in community interpreting at level 2 and level 3, and one-year and 10-week courses are offered at level 2 and level 3 in community translation. Legal interpreting courses are offered at level 2 and level 3.

121. The provision is delivered by two curriculum manager, four fractional staff and 48 sessional staff. Classes are offered during the daytime, the twilight period, and in the evening, with some weekend classes. Accredited programmes operate for two hours each week in 10-week modules, with the exception of GCSE courses which are conducted on an annual basis. Sixty-seven per cent of the learners are women and 22 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

Other languages, literature and culture*Strengths*

- very good achievements on GCSE and some BSL and vocational courses
- very good development of language skills by learners in many classes
- good use of target language by tutors
- good range of languages courses
- good bilingual vocational provision to meet community needs
- good curriculum support for staff

Weaknesses

- insufficiently broad range of teaching materials in some classes
- inadequate recording of achievements on non-accredited courses

Achievement and standards

122. There are very good levels of achievement on most BSL and vocational bilingual courses, and on all GCSE courses. In the interpreting and translating classes in 2004-05, 69 per cent of learners progressed from introductory level 1 to level 2. GCSE results in

modern foreign languages were very good, with 97 per cent of learners gaining grade C or above in all subjects. The achievements of learners on BSL programmes were also very good in 2004-05, and on level 2 courses were 30 per cent above the national average.

123. In many classes, learners develop language skills very well. Learners use and understand the target language with a good degree of confidence. Their verbal work is of a good standard and they demonstrate a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary appropriate to their level of study. Learners have good pronunciation skills and gain sufficient confidence to risk making mistakes and to try out the language when abroad. Many learners want the language skills for holiday purposes, and they say that they are able to communicate when on visits abroad. In the best classes there is a strong emphasis on correct pronunciation, and some learners of Italian, who had been learning the language for just seven weeks, demonstrated authentic accents. Achievements on the 10-week modular programmes are good, although some learners feel that there is no value in these qualifications. Retention rates are satisfactory and course attendance at the time of inspection was 80 per cent.

The quality of provision

124. The use of the target language by tutors is good. In the best lessons, tutors use the target language for classroom instruction as well as for role-play and question and answer sessions. Learners are encouraged to communicate whenever possible in the relevant language. There is a good level of challenge and stimulation in classes.

125. The range of modern foreign languages provision is good. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Progression routes are clear and are possible through partnerships with local further education and sixth-form colleges. Course start times vary throughout the year. Taster courses and summer holiday workshops are available for some languages, and some tutors offer additional activities such as theatre or cinema visits, trips to local restaurants, and visits abroad. Learners learn languages for a variety of reasons, including holidays, family connections, work commitments abroad and retirement aspirations. They report that the courses are meeting these needs. The cancellation rate on accredited courses is very low, at 3 per cent.

126. The CETS bilingual vocational programme offers a wide range of interpreter and translator courses. These courses allow adults to develop their language and vocational skills, and then represent their communities in dealings with the immigration service, the courts, employers, educational institutions and the police. Community translation courses are offered in any of the national and community languages spoken by learners, and legal interpreting courses are currently offered in French, Russian, Polish and Urdu. There is a good range of level 1 taster courses, such as understanding community interpreting, which prepares learners for progression to the level 2 courses. Links with relevant professional services are good and all courses include visits to, and input from, the police, the Home Office, and legal and judicial services.

127. A level 4 diploma in public service interpreting, which is accredited by the institute of linguists, is being introduced in 2006 to enable learners to represent members of their communities in higher courts. There are also five skills for life courses, which support implementing the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, CETS's bilingual childcare and bilingual teaching assistant courses. Seventy-five per cent of the learners on these courses in 2004-05 were from the most deprived wards in

the borough which were targeted by the provider to widen participation.

128. This curriculum area has good links with the local language line and Croydon interpreting and translation service, to help learners move into employment as interpreters. Curriculum staff also maintain good links with a local regeneration project, the national community interpreting project, local schools and early years providers in order to identify translation and interpreting needs. A list of qualified interpreters is circulated to agencies and interpreting services at the end of each programme.

129. Accommodation is generally satisfactory and accessible. Most rooms are light, warm and carpeted, giving good acoustics for listening activities, and many rooms have displays of posters from other countries. However, in one learning centre the classrooms were bitterly cold. CETS is shortly to discontinue use of this venue.

130. Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified. All of them have teaching qualifications and many are native speakers of the relevant language. Those who are not native speakers are fluent in the language and qualified to degree level.

131. Assessments are satisfactory. Tutors provide verbal feedback and mark homework so that learners know what progress they are making. Initial assessments are carried out and recorded. Beginners are asked why they want to learn the language and whether they have learnt a language before. Tutors keep records of module achievements and ensure that awarding body requirements are met.

132. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. The levels of courses are described in the brochure and a pre-course information sheet is sent out to enquirers and to all learners on enrolment. A self-assessment form is also available to help those who are not sure of their level of entry. Learners with additional needs are invited to disclose them on the enrolment form and this is then followed up with telephone contact before the course begins. There is crèche provision at some learning centres.

133. There is a shortage of teaching materials in some classes. Tutors incorporate a variety of activities into their classes, but these often rely too heavily on text. Some tutors use textbooks or worksheets for every activity, and do not use opportunities to teach using visual and other aids. In these lessons the pace is sometimes pedestrian and not sufficiently challenging. ICT is available, but there was no evidence of its use or any mention of websites in a number of the language classes observed. There are language resource boxes in every learning centre, which contain picture flashcards, and in one lesson observed, these were used to excellent effect to introduce the future tense.

Leadership and management

134. CETS provides effective curriculum support for staff, as identified in the self-assessment report. Tutors find their curriculum manager approachable and helpful. Communications are good between her and the tutors, by telephone, newsletter and e-mail. Tutors are communicating more effectively with each other as they meet in training sessions and at moderation meetings. Staff development opportunities are available in language teaching and in more general areas. One tutor was particularly appreciative of a dyslexia awareness session she had attended.

135. Part-time tutors are observed every two years, and there are now plans to increase

this to an annual event. Tutors find this a supportive developmental process. Observers are experienced linguists who have undergone in-house training. Observations are now being graded, although this is a very recent innovation.

136. Tutors are aware of the self-assessment process and their part in it. They complete course evaluations and encourage learners to fill in questionnaires. One self-assessment meeting encouraged discussions and the identification of strengths and weaknesses.

137. The recording of achievements on non-accredited courses is inadequate. Courses above level 2, and some minority language courses, are not accredited and use individual learning plans. It is very difficult to make decisions about individual learners' achievements on these courses. The data in the individual learning plans is not transferred to the management information system and does not provide CETS with useful statistics.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	1,425	2 2
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	573	3 3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	271	2 2

138. CETS provides ESOL and English language programmes at 15 learning venues throughout the borough, with most of the courses taking place in the Thornton Heath centre. Programmes take place in four CETS adult learning centres and 11 community venues which include a local mosque and a library. Programmes are provided from pre-entry level to level 2, and 75 per cent of the courses are at entry level. Fourteen of the courses are combined with the learning of specific vocational skills courses such as IT, childcare, bilingual teaching and skills for work. There were 281 English as a foreign language learners in 2004-05. A further 209 attended the summer holiday programme. A total of 1,459 learners attended ESOL programmes in 2004-05, a further 111 were on IT ESOL courses, and 268 learners attended ESOL Jobcentre Plus courses. Of the 1,200 ESOL and 225 English language learners currently on programmes, 696 are new to CETS and 70 per cent are women. Forty-three per cent of these learners are aged between 16 and 34. Two per cent have a declared learning and/or physical disability. Learners are from a variety of ethnic groups, whose first languages include European languages, Arabic, Kurdish, Tamil and Urdu. Learners may join programmes at any time during the year and all new learners receive an initial assessment. Most of the learners work for the newly introduced ESOL national qualifications.

139. Delivery of the programmes is supported by two curriculum managers and six ESOL project managers. Eight fractional teachers and 67 part-time tutors are supported by ESOL teaching assistants and volunteers.

140. In 2004-05, there were 997 enrolments and 655 learners for literacy, and 450 enrolments and 286 learners for numeracy. The literacy and numeracy classes accounted for 10 per cent of the total CETS provision. From the beginning of the 2005-06 academic year there have been 480 enrolments for 399 learners in literacy, and 237 enrolments for 223 learners in numeracy. At the time of the inspection, there were 388 enrolments for 363 learners who were attending 54 literacy courses, and 215 enrolments for 210 learners attending 23 numeracy courses. Together, the literacy and numeracy courses account for 11 per cent of CETS's current provision. Most of the classes are graded to focus on the accreditation which the learners may achieve, from entry level 1 to level 2, and there are 11 multi-level workshops for learners who are waiting to join a class. In addition, learners attending literacy and/or numeracy classes may choose to attend an ICT course which combines basic computer skills with literacy or numeracy skills.

141. Learning centres offer additional activities and a mix of learning methods. Ninety per cent of the classes take place during the day. Most classes take place at two main learning

centres. Nine classes are provided at smaller adult learning centres, and seven are provided at a day centre. Classes have been offered recently for large employers such as the Home Office and Southern Trains. Learners at entry level attend two classes for four hours each week, and learners at level 1 and level 2, attend for two or four hours each week. Most courses last for 30 weeks. A Springboard course is provided for 12 hours each week for 15 weeks and combines literacy, numeracy and ICT. Learners may join graded classes when they begin. Short courses, with a focus on job finding or leisure activities, take place in the summer and in December. Thirty-three per cent of learners are men. Sixteen per cent of learners are under 25 years of age and 88 per cent are under 55 years of age. Sixty-seven learners are from minority ethnic groups. There are 24 sessional tutors, two fractional tutors and six co-ordinators. A curriculum manager is supported by the deputy head of faculty.

142. The independent living and leisure skills programme is managed within the learner support faculty. There is a part-time curriculum manager, a part-time accreditation and curriculum co-ordinator, 21 sessional tutors, 16 learner support assistants and 16 volunteers. There are 271 learners and 392 enrolments. Learners have a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The 59 courses include literacy, numeracy, computer workshops, citizenship, current affairs, self-advocacy, cookery, and creative courses such as papermaking, pottery and a music workshop. Eight of the learners are on a work awareness course which leads to a work placement. Fifty-six per cent of learners attend one course, 32 per cent attend two courses, and the rest attend between three and nine courses. Eighty-six per cent of the provision is funded under further education and 14 per cent under adult and community learning. All pre-entry level provision is cross-referenced to the pre-entry curriculum framework milestones. Accreditation on further education courses is at pre-entry level and entry level.

ESOL

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence and language skills
- much good teaching
- good support for learners
- good partnerships to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

143. Learners develop good confidence and self-esteem and successfully develop their language skills. They become more independent in their everyday lives and progress well from one level of learning to another. They progress to CETS's vocational courses such as retailing, ICT, childcare, or interpreting courses. Other learners join courses in the local college or in higher education. Learners develop good language skills, and become better communicators. They develop good teamworking skills across many languages and cultures. Even pre-entry level learners are sufficiently confident to take up the new skills for life qualifications. Achievement on non-accredited programmes is good at 90 per cent. Learners' work is well monitored and thorough records of work are kept by the learners

themselves. Achievements are celebrated well through presentation events and in-house certificates. Achievements on accredited programmes are satisfactory, as is retention for the whole provision. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory at 69 per cent.

The quality of provision

144. Standards of teaching and learning are good on many courses. Learners are well challenged in most classes and remain focused and involved in their work. In the best lessons, tutors plan a good range of activities to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing, and spelling skills. They make good use of audiovisual aids to stimulate learning. In the best lessons, tutors have good correcting techniques and make sure that learners practise their speaking and listening skills fully through drilling exercises and role-play. In these lessons, learners are encouraged to develop accuracy and good pronunciation. Some tutors manage groups well by challenging latecomers and following up absences. However, in the weaker lessons, activities are too tutor-led and learners are not given enough opportunities to practise their speaking skills.

145. Support for learners is good. They all have an initial interview and assessment. The induction programme gives them a very good understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as well as information about health and safety procedures and learning centre facilities. Volunteers work alongside tutors to support the slower learners when needed. Learners value the IT access and the counselling and advice for personal issues. They receive help for practical tasks such as writing curriculum vitae and filling in forms. Many learners benefit from the childcare facilities. Well-trained staff provide valuable information, advice and guidance on learning and employment opportunities. Support tutors visit classes frequently and are available for individual interviews. Some learners have received support in recognition of their overseas qualifications. Staff support learners well in organising outings to museums, libraries, parties and walks.

146. Staff are suitably qualified and have access to a good range of training opportunities. Accommodation is satisfactory. Learners can access a suitable range of learning materials and the learning centres provide additional opportunities for language development, including IT-based resources. Tutors use a satisfactory range of resources in main and outreach learning centres. However, tutors do not use audiovisual aids sufficiently to ensure that all learners learn at their own pace.

147. The range of programmes is satisfactory overall. There are good progression routes from pre-entry level to level 2. Learners can join vocational classes with ESOL support in areas such as retailing, IT and childcare. However, there is not enough evening provision. Initial and continuous assessments are effective in monitoring learners' starting points and progress.

Leadership and management

148. Communications are effective, and morale is good among staff, who enjoy sharing good practice. The observation of teaching and learning is not thorough enough in the action-planning stage and observers tend to give too high a grade. Action points are derived from observations. The self-assessment report was inclusive, but it was not objective enough in identifying areas for improvement.

149. Good partnerships have been developed to improve the quality and range of the

provision. Well-established partnerships with voluntary organisations, the local mosque, the local and regional refugee centres, the borough libraries and family centres help to widen participation and identify and meet local needs. Effective links with the local college create clear progression routes and have also led to productive partnerships for staff development.

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of skills and confidence
- good initiatives to improve and develop literacy and numeracy provision

Weaknesses

- insufficiently individualised and contextualised learning
- inadequate measures to ensure sufficient qualified and experienced staff

Achievement and standards

150. Learners demonstrate good development of skills and confidence. Some learners feel more competent and confident in dealing with numbers, and one learner reported being able to help her son with his schoolwork. Several learners said that they could now use symbol/sound relationships to read new words and signs, and that they could now use public transport. Learners feel confident enough to help each other, and they also value the independence they have gained with their new skills.

151. Achievement and retention are satisfactory. In 2004-05, retention was 74 per cent, and from September 2005 to the time of inspection it was 91 per cent. The data for achievements in 2004-05 was not reliable as there had been no formal assessment of the learners' skills at the beginning of the courses. However, there is evidence of learners' progression for the period 2004-05. Ninety-eight learners progressed to a higher-level course, 14 to an English or mathematics GCSE course, 12 to another CETS course, 22 to a course with another organisation, and two to a university course. Initial assessments and the expectation of externally validated achievements were introduced in February 2005, and the current data is reliable. Since September 2005, 41 of the 533 learners have sought national accreditation and 91 per cent of them have been successful. During the inspection, attendance was 80 per cent. There is an effective procedure for contacting learners after any unplanned absence, and to encourage punctuality.

The quality of provision

152. The quality of the classes observed varied considerably. Forty-two per cent were graded good or better, 50 per cent were satisfactory and 8 per cent were unsatisfactory. In the better classes, tutors maintain a brisk, purposeful pace and lessons are structured to stimulate and challenge the learners at an appropriate level. A good variety of learning activities meets the needs of individual learners. The topics and context of learning are relevant to learners, and exercises relate to learners' experiences. Tutors use effective questioning techniques that help learners to extend their understanding, and learners feel comfortable asking questions. The skills taught and the context and content of the activities are relevant, useful and interesting to the learners. Materials are adapted to meet individual needs. Practical tasks are used well, and learners' written work is marked

thoroughly and used as a basis to plan further activities.

153. Individual learning plans are generally useful and meaningful, and are based on thorough diagnostic assessment. In many classes, individual learning plans include the learners' interests and aspirations and help in planning relevant individual work. Most individual learning plans have effective targets, but the learning goals in some of the plans are not individual enough. Learners usually record what they have worked on in their records of progress, but many do not evaluate their competences. For the learners who have recorded their need to practise a skill, there is little evidence in lesson plans of activities to consolidate their skills.

154. Resources are satisfactory. Most classrooms are spacious and light and the walls of the dedicated literacy and numeracy rooms carry stimulating materials and attractive displays of learners' work, with books and resource materials on view. The general purpose accommodation is clean but bare, with few displays from any area of learning. One classroom is hot, stuffy and cramped, while another has a distractingly noisy fan heater. Computers are available in most classrooms. Although much of the learning material is from appropriate resources, there is an over-reliance on photocopied worksheets. Practical numeracy equipment, such as scales and measuring tapes, has been provided.

155. The range of provision is satisfactory, although there is not enough capacity to meet assessed needs and requests. Many learners would like to attend for more hours each week. The planning of the provision and the placement of learners in appropriate classes has been more effective since initial assessment was introduced early in 2005. The assessment procedure is efficient and learners are able to attend a suitable class after a short period on the waiting list. Most classes are targeted at learners' assessed needs and the intended certification.

156. The literacy and numeracy provision is largely discrete, except for the Springboard programmes which combine literacy, numeracy and ICT. Some learners attend literacy and numeracy classes. Although learners have access to computers in most classes, four courses include explicit ICT training.

157. Most classes start in September, January or April, but access is sufficiently flexible as learners may join any class within the first half term, and some classes begin at various times throughout the year. Learners may join a multi-level English or mathematics workshop at any time. However, the provider does not meet the needs of learners who require considerable support from the tutor. Tutors may request the assistance of a volunteer, but there are not enough to meet the demand. Specialist support is usually available for learners with disabilities.

158. In many classes, learning does not cater for the individual and is not contextualised enough. In weaker classes, activities are rushed, learning points are not fully explored and tasks are not completed. The pace can be slow and the activities are less challenging. The taught skills and the lesson content are not referenced sufficiently to learners' goals, needs, aspirations or experience. Tutors give instructions and ask questions, but do not allow sufficient time for learners to respond. Learners are not confident enough to ask for explanations even though they do require more help. Learners' written work is poorly marked leaving uncorrected misspelt words, and the tutor's writing is very difficult to read.

Leadership and management

159. Good initiatives exist to improve and develop the literacy and numeracy provision, which have been identified as priorities from September 2005. The comprehensive skills for life strategy devised by CETS has been proposed for adoption by the LEA. The provision is targeted effectively at areas identified by the LEA to have the greatest need. There are many well-established partnerships. CETS has built on its record of the successful provision of literacy and numeracy courses in the workplace, and of working with voluntary and community organisations. The courses are highly valued by the learners and the partner organisations. Partners consider CETS to be responsive and flexible.

160. There are no dedicated spaces, such as a resource preparation area, where tutors can meet routinely and develop and share the strategies that work. Different tutors spend considerable time designing and making similar materials for courses at the same level. The development needs of sessional tutors have not been met within the training time available and for which tutors are not paid. Sessional tutors value greatly their colleagues' informal support, but this is not enough to ensure good-quality teaching throughout the provision.

161. The curriculum manager carries out continuous reviews of the programme. Since January 2005 the introduction of initial and diagnostic assessment, the graded classes, the increased use of IT, and the focus on gaining accreditation have significantly improved the quality of the provision. The numeracy provision is being developed through the appointment of a numeracy co-ordinator from January 2006.

162. A coherent team approach is achieved through effective management support for co-ordinators and project managers, with meetings for individuals and teams each month, all of which are minuted and have action points. Communications are good through newsletters and e-mails, and there is good informal communication. The senior management team is available and approachable.

163. Measures to ensure that there are sufficient qualified and experienced staff are inadequate. CETS does not have enough staff to reach under-represented groups by providing additional classes in the community. For example, CETS has been unable to provide a numeracy class as requested by the local mosque. The provider has employed some long service volunteers as tutors. Historically, staff development for such tutors has been poor, and they have not been able to access specialist training, but now such tutors are encouraged to attend generic stage 3 and level 4 training. However, there are not enough opportunities for staff to share the training they are receiving, or for all staff to share their good practice and resources. Twenty-three of the 32 tutors are fully qualified teachers, but not all of them have received enough training to teach literacy or numeracy.

164. Formal support structures for sessional, part-time tutors include mentoring support from the skills for life co-ordinator at the two main learning centres and termly meetings. This system is not effective enough to ensure that these tutors are aware of new procedures and are able to implement them. For example, part-time tutors received the new course documents by e-mail at home, with insufficient guidance about how to use them. Many sessional tutors work without regular contact with their line manager. Mentoring systems for part-time staff can be largely ineffective. Co-ordinators are not always available to build professional relationships when the part-time staff are on site. The

formal meetings and training sessions are too short and intermittent to develop consistently good teaching strategies.

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good retention and achievement
- good development of learners' skills
- comprehensive recruitment and initial assessment
- very good planning of provision
- good liaison and partnership working

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient tutors with experience of learner group

Achievement and standards

165. Retention and achievement are good. Retention for accredited courses in 2004-05 was 90 per cent and it was 89 per cent for non-accredited courses. Figures of 96 per cent achievement and 86 per cent success were recorded on accredited courses, and 100 per cent achievement and 90 per cent success on non-accredited courses. Achievements on accredited courses include any personal development learning goals. Achievements on non-accredited courses take account of individual learning goals. Many learners progress within the programme or to mainstream courses, and some progress to work placements and jobs. No data is collected to analyse the progression rates.

166. The development of learners' skills is good. Learners participate well and to a very good standard. Practical, personal and social skills development are identified on schemes of work and lesson plans. Many learners show improved confidence and they develop an understanding of acceptable behaviour and respect and help each other. This is a considerable achievement for many learners. Six learners are part of the volunteer team. Nineteen learners are also enrolled on mainstream courses. Learners on the work awareness course are encouraged to take work placements and some learners are now working part time. Learners on practical and creative courses produce a high standard of work, and cards produced on the papermaking course are sold, giving them additional opportunities to develop wider skills. Learners' achievements are celebrated at an annual award ceremony.

The quality of provision

167. The comprehensive recruitment and initial assessment process ensures that learners are enrolled on the most appropriate course and at the correct level. Existing learners have an assessment with their tutor during April and discuss the courses they are interested in for the next year. Tutors encourage learners to choose courses that represent progression, if this is appropriate. New learners, and existing learners who have little experience of the prospective course, are invited to the three-week taster programmes. A well-designed information pack is sent to them and the process for allocating places is carefully explained using appropriate language and graphics. The three-week tasters enable tutors to make an

initial assessment of the learners' interest and suitability. Allocation to courses is decided after careful consideration of all the information.

168. The course is very well planned. A comprehensive programme of challenging courses is provided, with planned progression routes. To ensure that the programme is meeting the needs of the learners, a questionnaire is sent out to all independent learners and referring agents asking them to identify subject areas for courses. Tutors feed back the areas identified from their learners' end-of-year assessments. The planning of the programme includes ensuring that all courses offer a planned progression route that leads to mainstream courses or, in the case of work awareness, to work experience and employment. Some areas have up to three levels within the courses offered. Comprehensive learner support is built into the programme, and a new tutorial system is being piloted for those learners who attend several courses, or who have no external support.

169. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching observations on inspection found that 44 per cent of observations were good or better. The rest were satisfactory with mainly good teaching of the subject matter and support for learners, but few teaching strategies to include literacy and numeracy and additional personal development activities. Some tutors were aware of the importance of this point, but others were more focused on their subject areas. Most of the resources are developed by tutors and use appropriate language, layout and graphics. Many tutors have developed their own practices and resources in evaluating the provision.

170. Individual learning plans are not completed consistently. Learners have termly individual learning plans for each course they are attending. A new database is being piloted which will enable all tutors to view all the learning goals for every learner. This system still requires learning goals to be decided with the learner, and recorded on an individual learning plan which is then used to monitor progress. Where learning goals are recorded, some only relate to the specific subject of the course, others include a breakdown of personal goals cross-referenced to the pre-entry level curriculum framework. The better records detail specific learning goals and are measurable, with the regular recording of progress. One tutor agrees an individual learning goal for each learner for each lesson, and this is given to the learners as a handout. The learning goal is reviewed at the end of the lesson. Where learning goals are poorly recorded or not recorded at all, there is no starting point to identify progress made. In some cases there is little recording of the progress made by learners in personal development, literacy or numeracy.

Leadership and management

171. Effective liaison and partnership working ensures that the provision is relevant to the needs of the learners and also takes account of local and national standards and practices. The department works closely with relevant local organisations including voluntary bodies, charities, mental health teams, social service day centres and group homes in Croydon. A project provided by social services contributes to the work awareness course and helps learners to identify possible work areas. The project sets up work placements, and supports learners in the placements and in any subsequent jobs. CETS has regular meetings with social services to help identify requirements for the provision. Good networking with other providers through the local network has enabled good practice to be shared. CETS shares materials and good practice through involvement with a national pathfinder project.

172. Overall, the leadership and management of this area are satisfactory, even though there is no team leader at present. All staff work with the learners to ensure that they help and respect each other. Adaptations on the premises, adaptive technology and other aids ensure equality of access and opportunity for learners.

173. Quality improvement is satisfactory. Development plans are implemented and reviewed, and quality initiatives are carried out. Projects, such as the development of the new database to share individual learning goals, and introducing tutorials are piloted and evaluated. A resource base is being set up to encourage tutors to share good practice. The observation of teaching and learning has been effective in this area and has identified where teaching is less than satisfactory. Action plans have been implemented and improvements have taken place. Assessments and internal verification are satisfactory. The monitoring of the recording of learners' progress has not been implemented successfully. Feedback is collected from partners and care is taken to find out what learners think about the provision. This information is used as part of the self-assessment process. Inspectors' findings matched most of those in the self-assessment report, but a higher grade was given for this area of learning.

174. Tutors are observed at an early stage in their employment. Ongoing training, support and termly team meetings are available to them. The resourcing of this training and support places severe pressure on the management staff. Eight tutors have progressed from being volunteers and learning support assistants and three tutors have progressed from being learning support assistants. The training and support they have received has helped them in their tutoring roles.

175. Most classes include learners with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities and there is an increasing number of learners with more profound learning difficulties. The tutors are all experienced in their specialist areas and all tutors have a teaching qualification or are working towards one. However, of the 21 sessional tutors, only seven have some training in, or previous experience of, working with this learner group. None of the tutors are qualified in teaching literacy and numeracy, and few had any experience in this area before joining the team. One tutor is working towards the level 4 certificate in teaching adult literacy. CETS has recognised this situation and all volunteers, learning support assistants and tutors are given initial information about the learner group and are encouraged to attend a disability awareness course. Volunteers have two team meetings each term and the learning support assistants have one team meeting during the same period. Training is always a part of these meetings. Learning support assistants are also observed in the classroom.

Family learning**Grade 1**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	135	<i>1</i> 1

176. The LEA's family learning provision consists of FLLN and wider family learning. In 2004-05 there were 123 FLLN courses and workshops ranged from two-hour taster sessions to 72-hour intensive courses. Wider family learning delivers a number of informal learning projects about a wide range of topics, to involve new learners. These projects include 42 'time together' workshops and nine other courses which are provided in co-operation with partners.

177. In 2004-05, there were 1,012 FLLN enrolments and 16 enrolments for the parents as learning supporters course. Wider family learning had 378 enrolments. At the time of inspection, 17 courses were operating, with 135 enrolments. During the year, enrolments rise considerably. The provision is delivered at 14 sites throughout the area including schools, family centres and early years centres. Courses include short introductory tasters about a variety of topics such as storytelling and mental mathematics, to longer FLLN provision that includes early start, family literacy and numeracy, and courses for learners for whom English is an additional language. Accreditation is offered for all the longer courses and this includes national literacy and numeracy tests, skills for life entry levels and a range of OCN units.

Adult and community learning*Strengths*

- very good range of skills development
- very good achievement of qualifications
- good standards of teaching and learning
- outstanding partnership arrangements
- good support for learners
- exceptional and innovative range of courses and projects in accessible community locations
- very good management and teamworking in family learning

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

178. Skills development and the achievement of qualifications are very good on family learning programmes. Learners achieve a wide range of qualifications and personal skills that enable them to progress to further learning. They are enthusiastic about their own and their children's learning. Learners speak positively of the opportunities that family learning

has given them and recognise the effect that returning to learning is having on their daily lives and those of their children. For example, one learner, who is a recent immigrant with no formal education, has achieved OCN qualifications and now acts as a mentor to other learners in the community.

179. Retention and achievement are very good on family learning courses. Retention on all these courses in 2004-05 was 93 per cent. For the learners, many of whom have a history of little or no formal engagement in education, the level of achievement of qualifications is very good. Family learning offers a wide range of accreditation, including national literacy and numeracy tests, ESOL reading and writing, and OCN units. Accreditation is targeted at the skills learners need to support their children's learning and those that will help their own literacy, numeracy and language skills. Many of the OCN units and other accreditation are designed for the specific needs of learners. As part of the skills for families pilot project, CETS has developed resources for accreditation with 30-hour courses in established language/literacy tasks, working towards national tests. Achievement in 2004-05 was 78 per cent. The progress of learners' children is also monitored and achievements are very good. In 2004-05, 97 per cent of FLLN learners' children demonstrated improvements in vocabulary and reading.

180. Progression from family learning programmes is outstanding. CETS provides advice and guidance about these family learning programmes and positive encouragement is given to learners to continue with further study. Most learners progress to further courses, employment, community involvement, teaching assistant positions, or to higher education. Examples include one learner who progressed from a family language course and is now training as a teacher. From other courses, learners have progressed to a range of courses and destinations, including university social science courses, epilepsy advisory training, bilingual teaching assistants' courses, and BSL level 1 courses.

The quality of provision

181. Standards of teaching and learning on family learning courses are good and teaching is imaginative and well prepared. Some of the numeracy teaching is outstanding. Tutors are enthusiastic and create a learning environment which helps learners to develop positive attitudes to learning, both individually and with their children. Learning activities are linked to the needs of parents and their children. For example, in one family literacy session observed, the tutor set an imaginative book hunt for learners and children, to identify ways for learners to support their children's reading at home.

182. There are outstanding partnership arrangements in family learning that contribute to the success of the provision. Partners include primary and secondary schools, the library service, the museum service, Sure Start, early years, children's and family centres, tenants' associations, housing trusts, the travellers' education service, the local college, charities and other voluntary organisations. These working partnerships help family learning staff to identify and target disadvantaged learners throughout the borough. Partners speak positively of their good relationships with family learning staff and of CETS's ability to respond quickly to suggestions and areas of identified need within partners' communities. The success of family learning week, which has won national awards, was helped by these good partnership arrangements. Family learning week provided over 250 activities throughout the borough, attracting over 7,000 participants.

183. CETS provides good support for learners. Tutors give learners good academic and

personal support and are sensitive to the individual needs of learners. Good progression is helped by good advice and guidance about local and national opportunities. Learners have access to specialist advice and guidance and there is good use of support workers. Additional learning support for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs is good. Bilingual language support is particularly effective. One bilingual learner spoke of the increased confidence that the additional support had given her, enabling her to go out with her child and mix with the local community.

184. Family learning has an exceptional and innovative range of courses and projects in accessible community locations. There is a wide range of courses in over 14 venues throughout the borough. Locations include primary and secondary schools, Sure Start and children's centres, family centres and early years centres. Many of these centres are sited in areas of identified need, such as housing estates with poor transport links, or communities with a recent minority ethnic population. Whenever possible, courses are delivered at a time and location suitable for learners. Many learners speak positively about the convenient location of courses and say that this has encouraged them to return to learn.

185. There is a good range of FLLN programmes, from short introductory to longer programmes, many of which are designed for a specific community need. For example there are discrete programmes for bilingual learners and young parents. CETS has also piloted a number of imaginative courses including financial literacy, early start, storytelling for bilingual families and Springboard advice and guidance.

186. Wider family learning also provides an extensive portfolio of courses, not only during family learning week but also throughout the year. Many of these are targeted at hard-to-reach learners such as travellers, lone parents and male learners. Family learning week is particularly successful in raising awareness of family learning, and recruiting learners. In 2004, Croydon's family learning week won two national awards.

187. Family learning has many innovative courses to widen participation among disadvantaged communities and hard-to-reach learners. For example, in partnership with the travellers' education service and the library service, a series of very successful workshops were held for traveller families at libraries and travellers' sites. Croydon has been particularly successful in producing imaginative strategies to attract male learners. At one early years centre there is a dads' steering group that considers strategies such as short courses, to attract fathers and male carers to the centre. At a learning centre on a housing estate, another course successfully enrolled over 10 male learners. At the end of the course, some of the learners established a regular Saturday morning club for male carers and their families.

188. A further innovative strategy to widen participation is the development of parents as learning supporters. Learners are recruited from courses and receive training to act as learning mentors for family learning in their communities. They attract many recruits from minority ethnic communities, and male learners.

Leadership and management

189. Teamwork is very good in family learning. Communications with tutors are very good, and tutors feel well informed and supported. Managers work closely with tutors and are quick to respond to daily operational difficulties and the needs of learners. All staff are

well qualified and have a strong commitment to the promotion of family learning and a good knowledge of the local communities. There are regular staff meetings where curriculum, learner and other issues are discussed. Managers and tutors work co-operatively, share good practice and give good support to new tutors.

190. Quality improvement is good. Quality assurance processes are reviewed regularly by all staff and a good tutor pack is used by all tutors. This contains the necessary quality assurance paperwork, and guidance in using it. All tutors are observed and CETS has a very good mentoring scheme for tutors new to family learning. This scheme also incorporates experienced staff who are teaching a new curriculum area, such as numeracy, for the first time. The family learning manager and his staff are involved in national research programmes, examining the quality of teaching and developing tools for assessing quality. Staff development opportunities are very good and there is a high rate of attendance at in-service and external training. All tutors are encouraged in professional development.

191. Equality of opportunity is very good. Tutors demonstrate a good awareness of equality of opportunity by their inclusive teaching styles and family learning has a strong commitment to widen participation by members of the communities. Cultural diversity is celebrated in the curriculum and in the very effective family learning week. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and provides an accurate and critical overview of the provision.

