

INSPECTION REPORT

Bury LEA

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

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

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Bury LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Bury Adult and Community Learning Service, (BACLS, or the service) is a division within the children and young people directorate of Bury Metropolitan Council (the council). It aims to offer a choice of learning opportunities to all members of the community. BACLS receives most of its funding through Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and also is contracted by the LSC to oversee the management and the distribution of Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities funds for Bury.

2. The service offers a mix of non-accredited and accredited courses directly to the community. In 2004-05, the service offered almost 700 courses in all areas of learning except construction. The total number of enrolments for 2004-05 was 6,835, an increase of 5 per cent on the previous year.

3. The service operates through a management team consisting of the adult learning manager and five assistant managers, who take responsibility for widening participation, inclusion, skills for life, student services and centre management. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Additionally, BACLS has one staff member responsible for management information. All the provision is offered through this management team and 175 full-time and part-time training staff. The adult learning manager reports to the divisional head. BACLS operates from five main centres and around 40 other venues.

4. According to the 2001 census, 6.1 per cent of the population of Bury came from a minority ethnic group, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent. The Pakistani community formed 3 per cent of the whole population of Bury, compared with a national average of 1.4 per cent.

5. Unemployment rates in Bury are relatively low compared with national and regional figures. In December 2005, the unemployment rate in Bury was 1.8 per cent, compared with the national figure of 2.4 per cent and the figure for Greater Manchester of 2.5 per cent.

6. Bury is relatively affluent district, but with pockets of deprivation. At ward level, Redvales is within the 10 per cent most deprived wards in the country. Additionally, according to the 2001 census, the Redvales, East, Besses and Moorside wards have a multiple deprivation score which put them within the worst 20 per cent of wards nationally.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

7. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** All aspects of leadership and management are good. The service's provision is outstanding in arts, media and publishing, and good in agriculture, horticulture and animal care, information and communications technology (ICT), and preparation for life and work. Provision is satisfactory in retail and commercial enterprise as well as in leisure, travel and tourism, in

languages, literature and culture and on family learning courses.

8. The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process. The service's self-assessment process is comprehensive and includes the views of the senior council representatives, its major stakeholders, partners, tutors and some of its learners. The report is too descriptive, but it provides good and detailed information about the working of the service and the complexities of its provision. Self-assessment makes extensive use of the service's performance data over the past few years and national performance data provided through the LSC to judge aspects of the provision. The self-assessment report's findings match a significant number of the findings of the inspection team. However, the self-assessment report underestimates the service's strength in agriculture, horticulture and animal care, and in arts, media and publishing, and overestimates its strength in family learning.

9. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements. The service has a strong track record of improving the performance of its provision since 2001, through sustained increases in its recruitment, retention and achievement rates. It has an effective culture of systematically considering good practice and adopting it for the benefits of the learners. The service's quality initiatives have been significant in improving many aspects of the provision. Well-considered and thought through action plans are set out with clearly allocated responsibility, which are effectively reviewed. However, the pace of implementation of some actions is slow.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR BURY LEA:

- continue to improve retention and achievement rates
- continue to improve teaching and learning
- share good practice between all areas of learning
- develop effective arrangements to monitor learners' achievements on non-accredited provision

GRADES

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

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

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Floristry and flower arranging</i>		2	
Adult and community learning	194	2	

Information and communications technology 2		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning	713	2 2

Retail and commercial enterprise 3		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> Adult and community learning	205	3 3

Leisure, travel and tourism 3		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	189	3 3

Arts, media and publishing 1		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Fine arts</i> Adult and community learning	1,178	1 1

Languages, literature and culture 3		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning	438	3 3

Preparation for life and work 2		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	476	2
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	334	2
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	73	2

Family learning 3		
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	42	3 3

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

10. Twelve inspectors spent 59 days inspecting and grading the eight areas of learning with the most learners, out of the 15 areas offered by the service. There were too few learners in health, public services and care, in science and mathematics, in engineering and manufacturing technologies, in history, philosophy and theology, in social sciences, education and training and in business administration and law, for these areas to be separately inspected and graded. The inspection team also reported on all aspects of the leadership and management.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

11. **Retention rates for floristry and flower arranging learners are currently good at 90 per cent**, having consistently been improving since 2002. **Achievement rates on accredited floristry and flower arranging courses are high**, having also have been improving for the past three years. Achievement rates now stand at 85 per cent overall and at 100 per cent on level 2 flower arranging courses.

12. **Learners produce practical work of a high standard in floristry and flower arranging lessons.** Class practical work is consistently at a higher standard than the level required for the course.

13. In hospitality and catering, **retention and achievement rates on level 2 cake decoration courses are good.** In 2004-05, the retention and achievement rates were 93 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively. **However, the retention rates have declined on most level 1 accredited courses.**

14. **The development of sport, leisure and recreation learners' general wellbeing is good.** Learners in yoga and tai chi lessons improve their management of stress, gain better relaxation techniques and are more aware of correct posture.

15. **Development of learners' knowledge in bird watching courses is very good.** Learners demonstrate a very good knowledge of distinctive features of different birds and respond well to some challenging questions in the lessons.

16. **Achievement and retention rates are good on art and crafts courses.** The retention rate is high at 90 per cent across all courses. The recording of achieved learning outcomes is monitored effectively against previously negotiated learning goals.

17. **Learners' work is of a particularly high standard in art and crafts lessons.** The quality of work of many learners is particularly high, and the work of some is excellent.

18. **In languages, literature and culture, learners on accredited courses achieve good**

results in most languages. Most learners are confident in their use of the language. They demonstrate a good understanding of vocabulary and language structures.

19. In preparation for life and work, retention and achievement rates are high on accredited literacy, numeracy and language courses. Many learners stay with the service for several years, progressing to higher levels or into other curriculum areas.

20. In family learning, rates of retention are high. Learners satisfactorily develop confidence and skills and are more able to support their children.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	0	4	2	0	6
Information and communications technology	1	8	4	0	13
Retail and commercial enterprise	0	1	4	1	6
Leisure, travel and tourism	2	2	3	0	7
Arts, media and publishing	5	15	2	0	22
Languages, literature and culture	0	4	6	0	10
Preparation for life and work	1	5	6	0	12
Family learning	0	2	3	0	5
Total	9	41	30	1	81

21. Tutors on floristry and flower arranging courses are very particular to ensure that learners always use the correct techniques. Tutors use a wide variety of methods appropriate to the learners' needs, and encourage design, creativity, colour, texture and seasonal awareness. Tutors' demonstrations set a high standard and learners are encouraged to aim for a similar standard.

22. A broad range of courses is available in ICT. Courses offered range from very short taster sessions to advanced level qualifications in information technology (IT) skills, with clear progression routes.

23. The assessment, monitoring and recording of ICT learners' progress is good. Initial assessment identifies learners' previous experience and skills in ICT to ensure that they enrol on appropriate courses. As courses progress, learners receive summary assessments to identify the skills that they have achieved and the further practice they need to carry out.

24. The teaching and learning of practical skills is good in tai chi and bird watching. Schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive and the handouts are very numerous, clear and informative.

25. Teaching and learning in art and crafts is very good. A significant number of observed lessons were excellent. Tutors are well qualified and appropriately experienced, and use their skills well to share their wider knowledge with learners.

26. Art and crafts classes include many inspiring demonstrations which involve learners in discussion and the development of analytical skills. These learners gain an increased perception of the wider cultural aspects of art and crafts. Peer group learning is used highly effectively to develop learners' critical skills.

27. **A good range of courses is offered in art and crafts.** Classes are provided during the day and on weekday evenings. Short taster sessions in the summer give learners the opportunity to try new skills.

28. **In preparation for life and work courses, the teaching of independent learning skills is good.** Tutors challenge learners to put learning in context and use their life experiences to solve problems. They facilitate peer and group learning and teach specific study skills.

29. **Support for individuals on family learning is good.** The service provides childcare support so that learners can access courses. Good partnerships and communication between school staff and the service provide effective support for learners.

30. **ICT classes have insufficient ICT and information learning technology (ILT) resources.** Teaching and learning methods are restricted. Insufficient use is made of ILT in lessons.

31. **The process for monitoring and recording the progress of learners on non-accredited floristry and flower arranging courses is incomplete.** Targets set for learners are not clear enough. Insufficient use is made of photographic evidence to measure learners' progress or recognise their attainment.

32. **In many cookery lessons the planning of structured teaching is inadequate.** Planning for individual learning is insufficient and consolidation of previous learning outcomes is inadequate.

33. **Health assessment of learners in the yoga lessons is inadequate.** Health questionnaires are not always adequately completed. Some tutors pay insufficient attention to this aspect of health and safety.

34. **The arrangements for monitoring and recording the progress of tai chi, bird watching and yoga learners are insufficient.** Learners in most lessons are encouraged to assess their own achievements. The achievement criteria are not sufficiently clear and objective, however, and the learners are not always able to make realistic or informed assessments of their progress.

35. **Learners' progress is not sufficiently monitored on non-accredited language courses.** Practices for monitoring progress vary from tutor to tutor. Tutors do not sufficiently record the separate skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Many learners do not work towards measurable or challenging targets and they are unaware of the full extent of their progress.

36. **In many language courses, insufficient attention is paid to learners' individual learning needs.** Tutors do not routinely use their lesson plans specifically to identify ways of meeting the individual needs of the learners in their classes.

37. **Tutors in many preparation for life and work classes make insufficient use of ILT.** Interactive whiteboards and computers available in classrooms are not yet adequately exploited.

38. **Recruitment of learners on family learning courses is low.** In 2004-05, the service did not fully use its funding allocation.

Leadership and management

39. **BACLS has been very successful in raising retention and achievement rates while sustaining steady growth in its provision.** A clear strategy to target improvement on under-performing courses has been very effective.

40. **BACLS has good partnership and networking arrangements.** Its effective links enable good practice to be shared. BACLS and its partners work together well to develop local provision that supports key priority groups.

41. **In languages and culture and in art and crafts, the service has implemented effective quality improvement strategies which have significantly improved the provision.** Successful initiatives include improved initial assessment processes, feedback, progress reporting and planning of teaching sessions.

42. **In preparation for life and work, the service has taken a very successful approach to encouraging new learners to join learning through formal and informal community partnerships.** Outreach workers use their contacts well in setting up courses for groups with poor skills and who are not traditionally involved in learning.

43. **English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) tutors are supported well to develop their teaching skills.** Reports on the observation of teaching and learning are very insightful and suitably judgmental.

44. **BACLS has a strong ethos of effectively engaging learners not traditionally involved in learning and of removing barriers to opportunities.** This has considerably influenced many aspects of the service's provision and its development.

45. **The recruitment of minority ethnic learners on family learning courses is good.** The service has consistently focused on the learners in priority wards and has developed very effective approaches to attract this group of learners.

46. **BACLS monitors equal opportunities data very well and uses this information effectively.** All courses have clear and challenging widening participation targets, which in most cases exceed the profile of the borough and which in many cases the service has achieved.

47. **Initiatives to improve provision and standardise practices across the service are good.** The service's initiatives have significantly improved the quality of tutors' work in the many areas of learning.

48. Learners with moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities are supported well and are making significant progress, some towards productive independent living. The provision for new arrivals and asylum seekers is benefiting the learners and the community by enabling them to rebuild their lives and contribute to the economy of the borough.

49. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Staff, learners and stakeholders are consulted and their views contribute to the judgements in the self-assessment report.

50. The service's monitoring and updating of key policies and procedures is insufficiently rigorous. Risk assessment has not identified some significant health and safety hazards.

51. The strategy for family learning is not sufficiently developed. Insufficient strategic planning takes place for the development of family learning, and the area does not have enough links to other aspects of the service. Partners are not sufficiently involved in strategic planning, target-setting for recruitment, achievement, retention or progression rates.

52. In family learning, progression data is not sufficiently collated and used to plan the provision. Programme managers do not have enough information to analyse and monitor progress, set targets or plan to improve learners' progression.

53. The service's implementation of systems to measure achievement on non-accredited courses is slow in some areas. Some tutors do not apply initial assessment thoroughly and therefore have difficulty accurately measuring the learners' progress and achievement.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good leadership and direction to increase recruitment, achievement and retention rates.
- good partnership and networking arrangements
- very effective initiatives to widen participation
- good use of data to monitor equality of opportunity
- good initiatives to improve provision and standardise practice in many areas of learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and updating of key policies and documents
- some slow implementation of systems to measure achievement on non-accredited courses

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Floristry and flower arranging

Grade 2

Strengths

- good retention rates
- high achievement rates on accredited courses
- high standards of learners' work
- good demonstration of practical skills by tutors

Weaknesses

- insufficient arrangements for monitoring learners' achievement in non-accredited provision

Information and communications technology

ICT for users

Grade 2

Strengths

- good retention rates
- very effective individualised teaching
- very well-planned additional learning support
- good assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- broad range of courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient ICT and ILT resources

Retail and commercial enterprise

Hospitality and catering

Grade 3

Strengths

- very good retention and good achievement rates on level 2 cake decoration courses
- good retention rates on non-accredited courses

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on level 1 accredited courses
- inadequate structured teaching in cookery lessons

Leisure, travel and tourism

Sport, leisure and recreation

Grade 3

Strengths

- good enhancement of learners' wellbeing
- very good development of knowledge in bird watching
- good teaching and learning of practical skills in tai chi and bird watching

Weaknesses

- inadequate health assessment in yoga
- insufficiently effective monitoring of learners' achievement and progress

Arts, media and publishing

Fine arts

Grade 1

Strengths

- good achievement and retention rates
- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very good teaching and learning
- good range of courses
- very effective quality improvement strategy

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Languages, literature and culture

Other languages, literature and culture

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievement rates in accredited courses
- good initiatives to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress on non-accredited courses
- insufficient attention to learners' individual learning needs

Preparation for life and work

Strengths

- high achievement and retention rates on accredited provision
- good teaching of independent learning skills
- very successful recruitment of new learners
- very good tutor development in ESOL

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ILT by tutors

Family learning

Adult and community learning

Grade 3

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good recruitment of minority ethnic learners
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- low recruitment rates
- insufficient collation and use of data on progression
- insufficiently developed family learning strategy

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT BURY LEA:

- the ESOL provision - 'can now ask directions to my home, when I get lost'
- the support - 'everyone cares how well I do'
- building confidence - 'I couldn't talk to you a few months ago - they helped me to see things differently'
- the venues of courses - 'courses near to where I live'
- the availability of crèche facilities - 'I can learn, while my son is playing in safety'
- the support for learners with disabilities - 'the hope to live independently'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK BURY LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the venues - 'more local advertising and information about courses'
- the range of courses - 'more non-accredited short courses'

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good leadership and direction to increase recruitment, achievement and retention rates.
- good partnership and networking arrangements
- very effective initiatives to widen participation
- good use of data to monitor equality of opportunity
- good initiatives to improve provision and standardise practice in many areas of learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and updating of key policies and documents
- some slow implementation of systems to measure achievement on non-accredited courses

54. BACLS has been very successful in raising retention and achievement rates to well above the LSC's national averages for the sector, while sustaining steady growth. Overall success rates have significantly increased from 45 per cent in 2001-02 to 78 per cent in 2004-05. Since 2002, the service has also increased its enrolment rates by around 20 per cent. A clear strategy to target improvement on underperforming courses has been very effective. The service has also reviewed and changed its provision in response to developing priorities. BACLS no longer offers a minority of courses as they do not fit within the service's strategy to widen participation. It has stopped offering other courses because it was not able to provide the learners with sufficiently skilled specialist tutors to offer good-quality provision. In some cases, BACLS has stopped courses after recognising that other local providers have more appropriate provision to better meet the learning needs of specific groups of learners. Well-communicated and clear responsibility and accountability have been key factors in bringing about sustained improvements. Staff roles and responsibilities have been reorganised and redefined. Assistant adult and community learning managers control the budget well and manage provision very effectively to meet the key strategic objectives of widening participation, meeting the needs of the local community while managing within the constraints of changes in funding.

55. BACLS has good partnership and networking arrangements. Within the council, BACLS is well represented and its contribution to the council's mission is recognised well. Managers are represented on a wide range of partnership groups. Communication within the partnerships is mostly productive, and attempts to avoid duplication of provision and resources are generally sound. Effective links have enabled good practice to be shared in many areas of learning. Close working relationships are very effective in responding to and meeting the widening participation agenda of the borough. BACLS is very responsive in meeting the needs of partners, with partners describing the widening participation staff as very responsive to their needs and have a 'can do' attitude. For example, the learning and development needs of homeless learners are met well through effective collaboration and partnership.

56. Strategic target-setting is well developed. Key performance targets are set and measured on all aspects of the service annually. Targets are used to measure course performance and participation rates by different groups. They reflect local, national and the council's priorities. Target-setting for tutors on course performance is less well developed in some programme areas. Courses are evaluated annually, but not all courses report or analyse the performance of their learners sufficiently well.

57. Communication is satisfactory. The service holds a range of regular management meetings. Agendas for meetings are standardised and regular reports are made on items such as equality of opportunity and health and safety. Tutors meet at regular staff meetings and have individual meetings with their manager. The use of feedback is well developed and learners' and stakeholders' views are sought annually through a range of questionnaires. The analysis of questionnaires is very thorough and action plans are developed to improve areas of poor performance. Improvements resulting from actions taken are displayed within learning centres. However, these displays are not accessible to some learners. Learners complain that they are not sufficiently informed of the results.

58. Staff training is regular and part-time tutors are paid to attend main training events throughout the year. A good proportion of tutors have a recognised teaching qualification. Full-time and part-time staff with management responsibility have an annual appraisal to review performance and identify training needs. Part-time tutors' training and development needs are identified through the observation of teaching and learning. Tutors can and do apply for additional training to update their skills.

59. The management information system is satisfactory, as is the use made of it. Reports on retention and achievement rates on accredited programmes are very accurate and are used effectively to guide planning. However, the system does not accommodate a minority of learners whose courses do not comply with standard starting dates and straddle the year-end date of 31 July and the next year starting 1 August. The system reports them as unsuccessful achievements when often these learners are successful. The system is being developed to enable it to report achievement data for non-accredited programmes.

60. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Two staff from learner services manage the process. BACLS is accredited with the matrix standard, a national quality standard for organisations delivering information, advice and guidance on learning and work. All groups are visited at least once a year to advise on support needs and progression opportunities. Tutors can also request support directly for their learners.

61. BACLS has significantly improved the quality of its accommodation in line with its mission to promote and provide high-quality learning. Learning is provided in five main centres and in over 40 community venues across the borough. BACLS has relocated two centres from unsuitable buildings into new buildings which comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. A third centre currently being built is due for completion soon. The standard of physical resources at the main centres is good, creating friendly and comfortable learning environments.

62. Arrangements to support learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are satisfactory. There are clear procedures for the identification of literacy and numeracy needs of the learners during initial assessment or through out their courses. When

additional needs are identified, learners are supported effectively to progress in their studies.

63. The service's monitoring and updating of key policies and procedures is insufficiently rigorous. Some procedures have not been updated for five years. Where policies state that they will be reviewed annually, this has not happened. Many of these documents relate to staffing and are posted on the council's website. Health and safety monitoring, including risk assessments, are carried out at all centres. A programme of training for risk assessment is provided by qualified staff from the council. However, risk assessment has not identified some significant health and safety hazards. Assessments on using hazardous substances in classrooms and general good practice safety guidelines for staff and learners are not sufficiently monitored and updated. It is unclear if procedures and guidelines are current as some are not document-controlled with appropriate issue dates.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

64. The service has a strong ethos of engaging learners not traditionally involved in learning and of removing barriers to opportunities. This has considerably influenced many aspects of the service's provision and its development. A significant aspect of the provision is that it is increasingly provided in the most deprived wards, and the enrolment of targeted learners on most courses has significantly increased since 2002. BACLS has a number of particularly effective and innovative projects to engage learners not traditionally involved in learning. These projects are very successful in engaging under-represented groups such as individuals with moderate to high levels of learning or physical disabilities and those who are homeless or in vulnerable accommodation, some of whom have substance or alcohol dependency issues, and some who have been dealt with through the justice system. The service uses different local, regional or national funding streams well to complement its resources for supporting these learners. Through additional funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, for the past two years BACLS has been offering provision for around 165 individuals who are homeless or in vulnerable accommodation. Many of these learners have benefited from this programme, with a significant number making the initial tentative steps towards overcoming their barriers to learning. Learners with moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities are supported well and are making significant progress, some towards productive independent living. The provision for new arrivals and asylum seekers is benefiting the learners and the community by enabling them to re-build their lives and contribute to the economy of the borough.

65. BACLS monitors equal opportunities data very well and uses this information effectively. All courses have clear and challenging widening participation targets which have been achieved in many cases and which exceed the profile of the borough in most cases. The service's equality and diversity group carries out close and detailed monitoring of the recruitment, achievement and retention rates of learners based on their gender, disability, and ethnicity in addition to learners who are over 60. The group also monitors the number of learners who receive additional support, hardship financial support or childcare support. The service takes effective actions when issues or trends are identified. For example, BACLS is investigating the offer of provision for disabled job seekers.

66. The service uses the council's comprehensive set of equal opportunities policies and procedures covering race equality, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and child protection. However, these policies are not adapted for BACLS, and the service recognises that its staffing profile does not fully

reflect the community which it serves. The service's staff have received appropriate training in equality of opportunity and diversity, and the tutors have a satisfactory understanding of matters related to equality and diversity.

67. Learners receive a handbook at the start of their course which includes general information about their rights and the provision of additional support which they may need through out their courses. BACLS also provides information sheets for the learners in different languages. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is generally satisfactory. However, while learners from different backgrounds and with diverse physical and learning ability levels treat and work with each other well, their awareness of the procedures relating to complaints, bullying and harassment is not always sufficient. The learners' handbook does not sufficiently refer to the grievance process, and some of the equality of opportunity information which is displayed in different venues does not use vocabulary which all learners can easily understand. The service promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, and the support provided to the learners by staff is good.

68. Access to lessons for learners with restricted mobility or who use wheelchairs is generally satisfactory. The service is aware of access issues in some venues and is in the advanced stages of resolving them. Currently, where accommodation in outreach centres has been identified as inaccessible for learners with restricted mobility, alternative provision is provided at other accessible centres.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

69. Initiatives to improve provision and standardise practices across the service are good. BACLS has implemented and adapted internal verification systems for non-accredited provision. This process has been extended to review the quality of lesson and course planning, and the monitoring of learners' progress and assessment. The process has significantly improved the quality of tutors' work in the many areas of learning. In arts, media, and publishing, course and lesson planning is very good and learners report a high level of satisfaction with their programmes. Observation of teaching and learning during the inspection graded around 61 per cent of teaching as good or better. Tutors meet to standardise their practice and share ideas. In modern foreign languages and preparation for life and work programmes, new tutors have been very effectively supported through a planned mentorship programme that has quickly improved and developed their teaching skills. In most other areas of learning, practices are improving, but more slowly. A quality project initiative is successfully supporting tutors to develop good practice materials. Tutors are encouraged to submit proposals to develop aspects of provision. Proposals are evaluated and selected in terms of their effect on the learner. Tutors are paid to develop this work during the summer break, where they are not normally employed by BACLS. A report is produced by the quality assurance administrative officer on the final product and shared at programme meetings so others can adapt it for their own use.

70. The quality improvement process of observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The process was first implemented in 2001 and has undergone a full review in 2004. The service's staff have received external training to develop and apply a more comprehensive and detailed process. From January to June 2005 all tutors were observed. The process has been evaluated and improvements have been made. However, the service has been slow to implement these further improvements.

71. BACLS has established useful and succinct quality assurance policies and procedures

that relate to all aspects of the provision. The service operates within the quality assurance framework which clearly identifies when each process will be reviewed and evaluated. Key procedures that directly affect teaching and learning are identified and explained in the tutors' handbook. Tutors are clear about their responsibilities for quality assurance. BACLS systematically audits tutors' compliance with the quality assurance processes.

72. The self-assessment process is inclusive, strong and effective. Staff, learners and stakeholders are consulted well and their views support the judgements in the self-assessment report. Learners' performance data, the LSC's comparative data of adult and community learning providers and other sources of information such the inspection reports of other providers are effectively used to support judgements and develop an effective development action plan. Programme managers compile the report and effectively review it with tutors for accuracy. The report is moderated by the adult and community learning assistant managers and the adult and community learning manager before being presented to senior council officials for approval. The judgements in the report broadly match those made by inspectors, but the report is too descriptive and insufficiently evaluative.

73. The service's implementation of systems to measure achievement on non-accredited courses is slow in some areas. The service is trying out a number of systems to provide effective initial assessment and to identify correctly the learners' starting points and learning outcomes. Some tutors do not apply initial assessment thoroughly and have difficulty accurately measuring the learners' progress and achievement. In modern foreign languages, art, media and publishing, and preparation for life and work, the process for measuring attainment is far more advanced. BACLS intends to implement a standard system across the service in September 2006. The management information system is being further developed to report attainment on non-accredited courses.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Floristry and flower arranging</i> Adult and community learning	194	2 2

74. The service offers non-accredited courses in flower arranging and practical horticulture, and accredited floristry courses up to level 2. So far, in 2005-06, 174 learners have enrolled on floristry and flower arranging courses and 20 have enrolled on horticultural courses. Most learners are white women, with 2.2 per cent of the intake coming from minority ethnic groups and 6.8 per cent having a physical disability. Only one learner has been identified as requiring additional learning support. Most courses run for 30 weeks throughout the year, although learners are able to enrol at the start of each term. Floristry courses are available at three centres across the borough and horticulture courses run at one centre. There are two widening participation projects in the community in two priority wards. Learners are given advice and guidance before the programmes by student services and advice on progression by the tutors.

Floristry and flower arranging

Grade 2

Strengths

- good retention rates
- high achievement rates on accredited courses
- high standards of learners' work
- good demonstration of practical skills by tutors

Weaknesses

- insufficient arrangements for monitoring learners' achievement in non-accredited provision

Achievement and standards

75. The retention rates have been consistently improving since 2002, and are currently good at 90 per cent. Achievement rates on accredited courses have also been improving for the past three years and are now good at 85 per cent overall, with an achievement rate of 100 per cent on level 2 flower arranging courses.

76. Learners' practical work in class and portfolio evidence are both produced to a high standard. Class practical work is consistently at a higher standard than the level of the course. Portfolios are well presented with very good photographic evidence showing a high standard of flower arrangements. Learners on community widening participation courses in horticulture have developed good horticultural skills. In one case, the local tenants and residents' association requested a gardening course so that they could improve the environment on their estate. This course started recently and the residents are very

enthusiastic about the probable outcomes.

The quality of provision

77. Learners develop good practical skills through the purposeful hands-on activities in lessons. Tutors' are very particular to ensure that learners always use the correct techniques. Tutors demonstrations are very precise and their descriptions of methods and good horticultural practices leave the learners in no doubt as to how the task should be performed. Learners are very enthusiastic about the good range of demonstrations. They arrive early for the classes and start work immediately, effectively extending their learning hours. They are very attentive throughout the lesson and work hard to achieve the desired result. All learners take extensive notes to ensure that they know exactly what is required for the next arrangement. Tutors use a wide variety of methods appropriate to the learners' needs, and encourage design, creativity, colour, texture and seasonal awareness. Tutors' demonstrations set a high standard and learners are encouraged to aim for a similar standard. Good use is made of well-prepared handouts, reference books and samples of the tutor's own work. Tutors' own enthusiasm for the subject is passed on to learners. They assist learners where necessary during practical sessions but allow the learners to express themselves through their work.

78. Learners receive satisfactory advice and guidance before joining courses. Prospective learners are sent course information and are also offered personal advice from staff if required, with many preferring to use this face-to-face advice. Tutors also provide good advice during the course on progression opportunities.

79. Satisfactory progression routes exists within the service from entry level up to level 2 and learners regularly progress through the levels. However, level 3 courses are not available, either within the service or at other local providers.

80. The courses offered generally meet the needs of the community. Courses are reviewed annually and the subsequent years' courses are decided following the review and learners' feedback. Although accredited and non-accredited courses are both offered at different venues within the borough, at some venues only one or the other type of provision is offered. Some learners, who wish to enrol on non-accredited courses, enrol on accredited provision because the non-accredited course is not available at a centre close to their home. Two horticultural projects have recently started to help widen participation in the community. These projects are popular with learners and are successful in attracting learners who have not previously participated.

81. Support for learners' additional needs is satisfactory. Tutors identify each learner's needs at induction and throughout the course. When issues are identified, satisfactory support is provided.

82. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified occupationally and have many years of industrial experience. Eighty per cent of the staff hold teaching qualifications. In the newer centres, the rooms are well appointed with adequate space and light for the practical activities. The rooms in some of the older centres are satisfactory, but in two cases they are upstairs with no lift available. This makes it difficult for learners to bring in the materials required for the lesson and to carry their completed work back down the stairs.

83. Although tutors give learners feedback on their arrangements at end of each session, the learners are not always involved in this and are not invited to critically analyse their own work or that of other learners. Learners are not encouraged to use this part of the lesson to help develop analytical competences or work out how they can improve their own designs. In the one case where learners were involved, the designs were excellent, showing that the learners have a full understanding of the principles of design of arrangements.

84. Assessment for accredited courses is satisfactory. Tutors assess learners' work regularly and assessment practices meet the awarding body's standards. Although learners' progress on non-accredited courses is monitored through tutors review sheets, the process is incomplete. Targets set and agreed with the learners are not sufficiently clear, and in some cases do not indicate gaining of competences. The service is slow at developing a systematic approach to recognise and record these learners' attainment. For example, while a few tutors use an adequate range of evidence to recognise the learners' achievements, tutors in most non-accredited lessons make insufficient use of the learners' photographic evidence of their work to measure progress or recognise achievement.

Leadership and management

85. Curriculum leadership and management in the area of learning are satisfactory. Managers meet regularly to review course targets and discuss operational issues. Targets for retention and achievement rates are set and reviewed annually. All staff are part-time employees but are kept well informed of the outcome of the meetings. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. These arrangements are sound and tutors use the standardised systems and forms to good effect. Schemes of work, lesson plans and other course documents are all completed to a standard with little variation between the tutors. All of the tutors have been observed teaching and actions plans have been agreed on how to improve further their teaching practices.

86. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. It recognises the strengths and main weakness identified at the inspection. However, the development plan drawn up from the report does not sufficiently identify how strengths are to be further improved or the weakness eradicated.

Information and communications technology**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ICT for users		2
Adult and community learning	713	2

87. From September 2005 until the time of the inspection, there were 713 enrolments on ICT provision. Approximately 70 per cent of all learners are women and around 7 per cent are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most ICT courses take place at four centres in Bury, Whitefield, Prestwich and Radcliffe. Non-accredited courses include beginners' taster sessions and a range of introductory courses such as web design and family history on the internet. Most learners study towards qualifications for IT users, in subjects including text processing, spreadsheets, databases, preparing business presentations, e-mail and use of the internet. ICT workshop lessons offer a range of qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 that can be studied in the same class, although most provision is at level 1. Courses leading to qualifications are available during the day and in the evening for two or three hours each week over 10, 15 or 31 weeks. Although many learners start in September, there are opportunities to begin study at most times during the year. Most courses are offered in dedicated computer rooms, although supplementary short courses and a mobile ICT van with laptop computers support learners in other venues. The manager for this area also has responsibility for the other areas of learning. Eighteen part-time tutors are involved in this provision.

ICT for users**Grade 2***Strengths*

- good retention rates
- very effective individualised teaching
- very well-planned additional learning support
- good assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- broad range of courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient ICT and ILT resources

Achievement and standards

88. Retention rates are good. In 2004-05, the overall retention rate was 94 per cent for accredited courses and 91 per cent for non-accredited courses, a slight improvement over the previous year. Achievement rates are satisfactory. In accredited provision, achievement rates improved from 60 per cent in 2003-04 to 67 per cent in 2004-05. The non-accredited achievement rate in 2004-05 was satisfactory at 79 per cent. Effective arrangements are made to extend support and study periods for learners who need more time to achieve qualifications.

89. Learners' practical ICT skills are satisfactory. Learners show secure understanding of

creating documents using text and basic graphics. In digital photography, some learners have developed very advanced skills in digital image manipulation. Many learners have no previous experience of using computers and they readily identify the skills they have developed over short periods of time. Many older learners completing courses describe their increasing confidence when talking to younger family members who use computers with ease.

The quality of provision

90. Most lessons are thoroughly prepared and have clear individualised learning objectives that learners understand well. Most lessons are organised as workshops where learners progress at their own pace. For example, on an introductory modular computer course, learners can choose from eight different modules at three levels. They can study these modules in any order over different periods depending on their personal choice and previous experience. The better lessons use imaginative and varied teaching methods to enliven learning and engage individuals. For example, a tutors' demonstration of a purpose-designed website had links to census data, church records and worldwide information, and helped many learners to develop how they can use ICT skills for their own interests. In the workshops, tutors' good expertise allows them to respond effectively to the needs of individual learners who are developing skills at different levels in a range of modules. In many sessions, the tutors coach the learners to further explore the application of their newly learnt ICT skills.

91. Additional learning support for ICT learners is very well planned during the lessons. In 2004-05, 17 per cent of learners in ICT had an identified support need. Tutors and learning support staff work well together to plan and review activities with individual learners. Assistive technology, including large-key keyboards, adjustable-height computer tables and speech and magnification software are effectively used to help learners to achieve their learning goals. Tutors offer effective personal support during lessons. Many learners describe how their confidence has improved through patient, supportive teaching. Parents of young children appreciate the crèche facilities that support many daytime courses. Although all learners feel valued, tutors do not overtly cover issues of diversity and equality of opportunity during lessons.

92. The broad provision of ICT courses ranges from very short taster sessions to advanced level qualifications in IT skills with clear progression routes. Courses include several specialist qualifications in areas such as medical text processing and digital imaging. The effective scheduling of ICT courses across centres provides flexibility for potential learners to combine several modules to build up to full qualifications. Learners often attend more than one centre and many learners progress successfully to higher levels of study within the service.

93. The assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' progress is good. Initial assessment identifies previous learning and skills in ICT to ensure that learners enrol on appropriate courses. From the very outset of the course, tutors monitor progress through questioning, short assignments and the observation of learners' skills in using computers. Many learners are encouraged to identify and write down what they have learnt during each lesson, and to reflect on their progress. Schedules to monitor the competences of each learner are updated accurately and regularly. As courses progress, summary assessments effectively identify the skills achieved and the need for any further practice.

94. While the literacy, numeracy and language support provided is generally satisfactory, learners on introductory courses are not always sufficiently encouraged to improve and record progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, learners on courses in text processing and the use of spreadsheets have insufficient practice materials to develop simultaneously their ICT skills and their language and number competences.

95. Learners receive satisfactory pre-course guidance and information. Brochures and course leaflets provide clear information about course content and assessment. Occasionally, advance publicity about courses offered has not reached potential learners and they join courses late. Induction at the start of courses is thorough and each tutor completes a check-list of essential information for each learner.

96. Insufficient ICT and ILT resources are available, and teaching and learning methods are restricted. Intranet and network connections are inadequate. Although computer application software is appropriate to qualification requirements, the processes relating to storing learners' work on floppy disks do not reflect up-to-date IT practices. However, the service has made a number of improvements to ICT facilities during the past two years and plans to install a computer network across centres during 2006. Insufficient use is made of ILT in lessons. Accommodation is welcoming, although several ICT rooms have inadequate heating or air conditioning.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership of the ICT curriculum is satisfactory, with sustained improvements in retention and achievement rates being made during the past three years. All tutors are part-time employees and are supported well through meetings with the programme manager to review the provision. Each tutor is observed annually and clear opportunities for staff development are available. All tutors have obtained teaching qualifications. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. Internal verification systems are clear and are thoroughly documented. Learners' surveys consistently show a high level of satisfaction with the ICT provision. Any individual concerns or complaints are quickly investigated. The self-assessment report's findings broadly match those of the inspectors, although the self-assessment report does not identify the weakness of insufficient resources.

Retail and commercial enterprise**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> Adult and community learning	205	3 3

98. The service offers accredited courses at entry level basic food hygiene, and at levels 1 and 2 in cookery and cake decorating. Non-accredited courses include Asian cookery, chocolate cookery and food from the Mediterranean. So far in 2005-06, of the 205 learners in this area, 155 learners have enrolled on non-accredited courses and 50 are on accredited courses. All courses are offered at two hours a week over a period of six or 12 weeks. The courses are provided predominantly at the service's main centre during the day and evening, with some weekend provision. There is also outreach provision for 12 vulnerably accommodated and homeless people. In 2005-06 so far, 10 per cent of the learners are from minority ethnic groups and 81 per cent are women. A manager, four part-time tutors and two technicians are involved in this provision.

Hospitality and catering**Grade 3***Strengths*

- very good retention and good achievement rates on level 2 cake decoration courses
- good retention rates on non-accredited courses

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on level 1 accredited courses
- inadequate structured teaching in cookery lessons

Achievement and standards

99. Retention and achievement rates on level 2 cake decoration are good. In 2004-05, the retention rate was 93 per cent and the achievement rate was 83 per cent. During the same period, retention on most non-accredited courses was also good, averaging 88 per cent for longer courses and 100 per cent for short and one-day courses. However, the retention rates have declined on most level 1 accredited courses. In 2004-05, the retention rate for the beginners' cake decoration course fell by 34 per cent to 57 per cent. The retention rate during 2004-05 for the level 1 cookery course has also decreased, by 28 per cent to 60 per cent.

100. Learners develop a satisfactory range of cookery skills, with some learners producing a good standard of cakes and basic cuisines. Learners enjoy the opportunity to meet new friends and to develop their appreciation of food. Vocational skills developed by learners on the provision for vulnerable housed and homeless people have significantly improved their employment opportunities and their wellbeing.

The quality of provision

101. Resources are satisfactory. Most of the provision is provided in the service's main premises, in the newly developed teaching room dedicated to food preparation and cooking. Two of the workstations in the teaching room are modified to accommodate learners with restricted mobility. However, while there is generally a sufficient range of small equipment available, access to microwave ovens and large electric food mixers is restricted and some commodities used are of poor quality. The standard of hygiene in the kitchen at the Ramsbottom centre is often unsatisfactory on learners' arrival. Learners' handouts are of a variable quality. They often use imperial measures, with the occasional use of metric measures or a mixture of both.

102. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress on accredited provision is satisfactory. On level 1 and level 2 cake decoration courses, learners' progress is assessed and recorded well. On level 1 cookery programmes, effective use is made of learners' diaries and photographic evidence to monitor progress. While monitoring of the group's goals and objectives is adequate, the assessment and monitoring of each learner's progress on non-accredited provision is not always effective.

103. Learners receive satisfactory advice and guidance. Initial assessment is available to all on request and learners are made aware of their entitlements through their induction and the learners' agreement. Course information sheets generally provide adequate information about the courses, even though some do not always indicate sufficiently the course content or an appropriate progression opportunity.

104. Learners with identified learning or physical support needs are supported well by the learning support staff during the practical classes. Learners highly value this support, which enables them to participate fully in cooking and cake-making activities. However, information on the learners' support needs is not always systematically shared with the tutors. Learners receive satisfactory literacy, numeracy and language support. However, in some lessons, too little attention is given to providing literacy and numeracy support through cookery training. In these lessons, learners have insufficient practice materials to simultaneously develop their cookery skills and their literacy, numeracy and language competences.

105. Teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. In the better lessons, there is some effective development of learners' skills and food hygiene, and learners welcome the professional guidelines and advice they receive. However, in many cookery lessons the planning of structured teaching is inadequate. Planning for individual learning is insufficient and consolidation of previous learning outcomes is poor. Many learners in these sessions start their activities with insufficient clarity of the work which they need to complete during the session and the standard which they should aim for.

Leadership and management

106. The operational and daily management of the curriculum is satisfactory. The four tutors and two technicians, all of whom are part-time employees, attend meetings regularly and update their skills and knowledge. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. Internal verification arrangements are clear, thoroughly documented and used well across accredited and non-accredited courses. All tutors are observed annually. Many

developmental issues identified at the time of inspection have already been identified and the service has devised action plans to resolve the issues. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and recognises some of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The service has acted to rectify some of the identified weaknesses through the development plan, particularly the retention and achievement rates.

107. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, with learners of diverse backgrounds working and supporting each other well. The staff have developed effective strategies to increase the number of learners from minority ethnic groups in cookery and cake decoration classes. Learners from minority ethnic groups currently comprise 10 per cent of the total intake. However, 81 per cent of current learners are women and there are insufficient strategies to attract men to classes.

Leisure, travel and tourism**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	189	3 3

108. At the time of the inspection, 189 learners were studying on 15 sport and recreation classes at five different centres, of which four are dedicated adult learning centres and one is a library. The number of enrolments for 2005-06 so far is 389, representing 5.3 per cent of the overall service provision. Courses include yoga, tai chi and bird watching, with classes for beginners, advanced learners and mixed-ability groups. Most courses run for between 10 to 12 weeks, although some courses have a duration of 30 weeks. Each lesson lasts for between 90 minutes to two hours. The courses are offered during mornings, afternoons and evenings. Most classes are provided during the week but there is some provision on Saturday mornings. All courses are non-accredited. Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds comprise 1.9 per cent of the intake. Eighty per cent of learners are women and 32 per cent are over the age of 60. Four part-time tutors currently teach in this area of learning, managed by a part-time programme manager.

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

- good enhancement of learners' wellbeing
- very good development of knowledge in bird watching
- good teaching and learning of practical skills in tai chi and bird watching

Weaknesses

- inadequate health assessment in yoga
- insufficiently effective monitoring of learners' achievement and progress

Achievement and standards

109. The development of learners' general wellbeing is good. Learners in yoga and tai chi lessons improve their management of stress, gain knowledge of relaxation techniques and become more aware of correct posture. These benefits significantly improve learners' everyday lives. Bird watchers achieve health benefits from walks in the countryside, and learners comment how they are more aware of countryside and environment issues. Learners also develop good social interaction both in and out of the lessons. On one tai chi course the tutor arranges annual visits to China, with some learners attending. Development of knowledge in bird watching is very good. Learners demonstrate a very good knowledge of distinctive features of different birds, and respond well to some challenging questions in the lessons. Learners also very competently discuss a range of relevant topics such as natural history, migration, habitat, breeding habits, field craft and bird identification. All learners have comprehensive course files, and use structured learning well to enhance practical bird watching skills.

110. The overall retention rate is satisfactory at 86 per cent during 2003-04 and 2004-05, with many learners attending courses for long periods. Attendance during the inspection week was good at 84 per cent, and punctuality was satisfactory.

The quality of provision

111. Teaching and learning of practical skill is good in tai chi and bird watching. All tutors are very enthusiastic and motivational. They provide clear and very helpful explanations, demonstrations and corrections. For example, in bird watching, very clear descriptions of birds' sounds and characteristics together with their likely habitats help the learners to identify different bird species. Challenging targets are set and learners are encouraged to follow good techniques and postures. Schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive and the numerous handouts are very clear and informative. The pace of learning is good. In tai chi, learners demonstrate good skills development and are able to perform challenging poses and complex routines. The quality of movement is also good and there is good use of peer learning.

112. Arrangements for providing information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners are offered detailed pre-course literature, a learners' handbook and a learners' agreement. They have good access to tutors for any additional advice which they may need. While the more specific course information sheets are satisfactory, they do not provide adequate progression advice.

113. A specialist learners' support team provides good support for the learners who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who have been identified as needing literacy, numeracy, and language support. Bird watching learners who are offered this additional support fully participate in lessons.

114. The range of provision is broadly adequate, even though the courses are confined to yoga, bird watching and tai chi, with 80 per cent of learners being women. There is some awareness of other community provision by the service and progress is being made to identify the availability of courses offered by other providers.

115. Health assessment of learners in the yoga lessons is inadequate. Health questionnaires are not always adequately completed. Some tutors pay insufficient attention to this aspect of health and safety. Tutors' self-devised initial assessment forms are not always thorough and do not always provide clear information about the learners' health and how they may be affected by the exercises.

116. The arrangements for monitoring and recording learners' progress are insufficient, even though some tutors have devised adequate forms to record learners' progress. In most lessons, learners are encouraged to assess their own achievements and whether they have met course outcomes. However, the achievement criteria are not sufficiently clear and objective and the learners are not always able to make realistic or informed self-assessments. Some tutors monitor the learners' achievement on an informal basis, but do not record this clearly. Not all tutors systematically share the learners' assessment with the learners.

Leadership and management

117. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory. Tutors are responsible directly to the

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curriculum Leader. Communication is satisfactory, with regular meetings taking place. Management of resources is adequate, with tutors and learners providing additional resources such as candles, mats and blocks. Access to lessons is generally satisfactory, but first-floor access to one centre is unsuitable. Internal verification and teaching and learning observation processes are satisfactory, with all tutors having been observed annually. Staff development is adequate. Tutors often take part in training through their own associations, with the service supporting the tutors in vocationally specific and generic training. All tutors have contributed to the self-assessment process, and the self-assessment report generally identifies the findings of the inspection. Learners have a basic understanding of the equal opportunities and diversity policies and procedures contained within the learners' handbook, which they all receive.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 1**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Fine arts</i>		<i>1</i>
Adult and community learning	1,178	1

118. In 2004-05, the service offered 115 classes in this area, of which 55 were non-accredited and 61 were accredited courses at level 1, 2 or 3. During this period, 793 learners enrolled on non-accredited courses and 559 learners enrolled on accredited courses. Sixteen per cent of these learners were men, 8 per cent were from minority ethnic groups, 34 per cent were aged over 60 and 14 per cent declared a disability. Since September 2005, 617 learners have enrolled on non-accredited courses and 561 on accredited courses. Seventy-nine courses were on offer at the time of inspection. BACLS offers courses in art, calligraphy, patchwork and quilting, soft furnishing and upholstery, interior design, embroidery, pottery, jewellery making, garment making and guitar playing. Courses are offered during daytime and weekday evenings in a range of venues including five adult education centres, an art gallery, library, high school and church hall. The courses are spread geographically throughout the borough. They range from six-hour tasters and short four- to six-week summer courses to those which run for 31 weeks. Twenty-three part-time tutors, five administration managers and two programme managers are involved in this provision. Attendance rates during the time of inspection were 85 per cent.

Fine arts***Grade 1******Strengths***

- good achievement and retention rates
- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very good teaching and learning
- good range of courses
- very effective quality improvement strategy

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

119. Achievement and retention rates are good. The retention rate across all courses is very high at 90 per cent. Eighty per cent of learners on accredited courses achieved their qualifications in 2004-05. Attainment on non-accredited courses is excellent, with 94 per cent of learners achieving their goals. Learners are enthusiastic about their progress in reaching the high standard of skills required to create craft items and artwork. They are challenged by the very high expectations of their tutors and often exceed their own learning goals. They develop self-belief and progress to further learning. Learners living alone benefit from meeting people with similar interests and from a wide range of backgrounds in their classes. Learners not traditionally involved in learning develop many aspects of their broader skills, such as interpersonal skills. Learners quickly build up the

confidence to take their skills back to their families and into the community. Skills learnt in an interior design class enabled one learner to establish a successful business as a 'house doctor'.

120. Learners' work is of a particularly high standard in art and in crafts. Many learners' work is of a particularly high quality, and some learners produce work which is excellent. For example, in a garment-making class, one learner had made a complex, historically accurate dress, while a young man was making a tailored shirt. In embroidery, learners used a mermaid theme to inspire innovative surface work using materials such as pearls, sequins and knotted threads. A learner in patchwork and quilting had been commissioned to create a banner for her local church. Her design was inspired by the church's stained glass windows and her work is highly valued by her peers. Another piece of work featured photocopied images, printed onto fabric as an integral part of a commemorative quilt. More experienced learners are challenged to improve their skills still further. All learners and tutors strive to reach a professional quality of finished work across all art and crafts courses.

The quality of provision

121. Teaching and learning is very good, with significant number of lessons which are excellent. Tutors are well qualified and appropriately experienced, and some who have recent commercial experience use their skills well to share their wider knowledge with learners. Tutors use a good range of teaching styles to meet learners' diverse needs, including appropriate methods to include learners with disabilities. A life drawing class taking place in the local art gallery used the surroundings to inspire and influence the outcome of the final pieces of work. Many inspiring demonstrations involve learners in discussion and the development of analytical skills leading to increased perception of the wider cultural aspects of art and crafts. Peer group learning is used highly effectively to develop learners' critical skills. In one garment making class, the tutor paired learners off for part of each session to evaluate each other's work. The learners enjoyed this new experience and gained further skills and in confidence. Tutors have detailed and easy-to-follow schemes of work with lesson planning which allows swift reaction to the diverse needs of the learners. Clear, constructive verbal and recorded feedback informs learners of their progress and what they need to do next. On non-accredited courses the monitoring, recording and assessment of learning is effective. Access to ILT is readily available. Some courses use digital photography and research their subjects on the internet. One tutor is in regular e-mail contact with the learners, sending images to consult about designs. Tutors create a safe environment in which learners feel confident to take their first steps back into learning.

122. A good range of courses is offered in art and crafts. Classes are provided during the day and on weekday evenings. Short taster sessions in the summer offer learners the opportunity to try new skills, for example in making bags and belts, textile jewellery and sewing using the internet. Longer non-accredited and accredited courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 are available over three terms. Lessons take place in a range of venues such as adult education centres, libraries, school and church halls and in the local art gallery. Many subjects include introductory courses and clear progression routes leading to qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3. The courses are spread geographically throughout the area and many learners benefit from being able to walk to their local venue.

123. Learners receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance. Brochures, leaflets

and press notices inform the public about which courses are being offered. Learners are able to enrol easily at centres, by telephone or in person. Managers and tutors provide advice on progression.

124. Tutors are sensitive to learners who need support. In one craft class, hearing-impaired learners were sensitively included into the group with the help of the tutor who gave them 30 minutes extra time before the arrival of the main group. This support enabled the learners to identify any problems without pressure. Two tutors support a class with complex language needs to ensure that all learners are able to participate fully. Where additional literacy, numeracy or language support is identified to help learners complete their programmes successfully, it is readily available and effectively provided.

125. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, with some good features. Most centres have good access arrangements for learners with restricted mobility. However in one centre, lessons are offered in the basement where access is poor and another class is very cramped with learners having difficulty moving around the room. Good specialist facilities include a fully equipped jewellery studio, textiles room and pottery studio.

Leadership and management

126. Effective quality improvement strategies have been implemented and have significantly improved the provision. Many tutors teach on accredited and non-accredited courses and use their monitoring and assessment procedures in all of their lessons. Effective initiatives include improved initial assessment processes, feedback, progress reporting and planning of teaching sessions. Internal verification is very effective in ensuring that non-accredited courses are subject to the same scrutiny as accredited courses, giving all learners valuable experience. A detailed, effective and well-considered system of teaching and learning observations has been established. All tutors have been observed over the past two years, and improvement actions are identified. However, the implementation of the actions is sometimes slow. The teaching and learning observation grades given by the service generally match those given by inspectors, but in some cases were lower. The self-assessment report identifies some of the strengths found at inspection but over-estimates the effect of the weaknesses it identifies on the learners.

127. Communication between all staff is effective. Part-time tutors are supported by management, who are very approachable. Regular meetings take place and good practice is shared. The attendance at internal staff development days is high and tutors are able to attend external training. For example, a textiles tutor attended an extensive development session to advance her skills in using a computerised sewing machine.

Languages, literature and culture**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning	438	3 3

128. At the time of the inspection, 332 learners were studying on 27 courses in modern foreign languages and 106 learners were studying on 10 courses in English or creative writing. Sixty per cent of English courses are non-accredited. Creative writing is offered on an accredited and non-accredited basis at levels 1 and 2. The service also offers British Sign Language (BSL), French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish with progression available in French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Of the 37 courses, 23 are accredited. Accreditation includes a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in English, and level 1 and level 2 certification in modern foreign languages. The BSL course also leads to a qualification. Accredited courses, which mostly begin in September, operate over 31 weeks. Non-accredited courses are offered for an average of 10 weeks a term. The non-accredited courses in modern foreign languages offer opportunities to progress to accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. Urdu was offered in 2004-05 but is no longer offered.

129. Some classes are held in schools. Other venues include some purpose-built premises. Most of the classes are offered in the evening but some daytime classes are held during the week. Learners from minority ethnic groups comprise 1 per cent of the learners and 74 per cent of the learners are women. Courses are offered in five locations by 18 part-time tutors, of whom seven are native speakers of the language taught. A manager is responsible for this area of learning.

Other languages, literature and culture**Grade 3***Strengths*

- good achievement rates in accredited courses
- good initiatives to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress on non-accredited courses
- insufficient attention to learners' individual learning needs

Achievement and standards

130. Learners on accredited courses achieve good results in most languages. Achievement rates overall on accredited courses for languages are good at 81 per cent. This includes a poor achievement rate of 40 per cent for the Urdu course, which is no longer offered. Retention rates for accredited and non-accredited courses are satisfactory at 85 per cent. Attainment is good on all courses. Most learners are confident in their use of the language. They demonstrate a good understanding of vocabulary and language structures. Most learners effectively obtain and give information in the language which they are learning. Standards of pronunciation vary and some tutors correct pronunciation and intonation

more frequently than others. The standard of learners' written work on accredited courses is good and learners' portfolios are well organised. Most learners have attained at least a satisfactory standard of written work for the stage of the course. Many learners achieve their personal goals, such as acquiring greater cultural awareness and increasing their self-confidence.

The quality of provision

131. Although teaching and learning is satisfactory, the service recognises that further improvements are needed and has introduced a number of good initiatives to improve teaching and learning. The tutors who have participated in quality development projects in languages use structured schemes of work, good lesson plans and effective quality assurance procedures across the area of learning. The schemes of work of these tutors are comprehensive and lesson plans include activities in all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Some lessons provide a wide variety of learning activities, including role-play, simulated visits abroad and guessing games. Some tutors participate in an ILT initiative to increase their use of ILT in the classroom. In the best teaching sessions, tutors make excellent use of a wide range of learning resources. These include the interactive whiteboard, video and audio recordings, overhead projectors and picture cards. In some sessions, tutors rely excessively on handouts or the textbook.

132. Resources are satisfactory, with all tutors having teaching qualifications. However, in some venues, tutors have difficulty in gaining access to learning resources such as cassette recorders and overhead projectors.

133. Initial assessment of learners' needs provides tutors with good information at the beginning of the course. Tutors carry out systematic initial assessment to determine the learners' linguistic needs. Initial assessment of learners' needs, interests and levels of ability is recorded in detail in the form of a 'mind map'. In addition to this, all tutors complete 'pen profiles' for the learners in their group, to record additional information which may not be found in the 'mind map'.

134. Advice and guidance available to learners before enrolment is satisfactory. Course descriptions are helpful and provide detailed information. Any additional learning needs are identified at pre-course interview, enrolment or induction and effective additional learning support is put in place. Additional support for literacy, numeracy and language skills support is also available and is provided at a satisfactory level. Tutors provide satisfactory support for learners. Tutors send learning materials to learners who are absent from the lessons, and follow this up with telephone calls. Tutors give support to all learners who are known to have additional learning needs. For example, one class was moved to a ground-floor classroom to accommodate a learner with restricted mobility.

135. On non-accredited courses, there is insufficient monitoring of progress. Practices for monitoring progress vary from tutor to tutor. Some tutors carry out informal assessment of learners' work but they do not record the oral feedback they give to learners. Where written records are kept, they rarely give sufficient detail for the effective planning of learners' improvement. Tutors do not sufficiently record the separate skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Many learners do not work towards measurable or challenging targets and they are unaware of the full extent of their progress.

136. In some lessons, insufficient attention is paid to learners' individual learning needs. In

these lessons tutors do not always use the detailed information from the initial assessment mind maps and 'pen profiles' to plan for the needs of each learner. Tutors in these sessions do not always take account of learners with different abilities within the class and they provide the same activity to all learners.

Leadership and management

137. The management of this area of learning is satisfactory. A curriculum specialist leads the provision and gives good insight into the area's requirements. Clear arrangements exist for the observation of teaching and learning, which is mostly carried out by the curriculum manager. Tutors are given clear and detailed feedback with specific action points. They appreciate the specialist support and find the feedback helpful. However, some managers who carry out lesson observations are not curriculum specialists. Even though they have some knowledge of the curriculum, they do not provide adequate language-specific teaching assessments. New tutors are supported well through a mentorship programme to improve their classroom practice. New tutors are observed as soon as possible to improve the learners' experience.

138. Attendance at staff meetings in this area of learning is sometimes poor. Regular staff meetings take place in which good practice is discussed. For tutors who are unable to attend these meetings, essential information is communicated through letters, e-mails, telephone calls and direct contact. All tutors can access staff development opportunities such as quality development projects, but some do not participate. BACLS supports tutors effectively in the use of ILT. Every language tutor has an ILT mentor to assist them in their use of ILT in lessons. The 'laptop loan' scheme allows tutors to have their own laptop computers to develop materials. Six tutors have taken part in staff development in the use of a computer presentation application and the interactive whiteboard. These tutors effectively use ILT in their classrooms.

139. Satisfactory strategies exist to improve rates of retention and achievement. Targets are set for rates of retention, achievement and diversity in all courses. The manager for this curriculum area attends regular curriculum review panels with senior managers. Managers make use of the data for retention and achievement rates to plan continuous improvement. When courses with poor retention and achievement rates are identified, appropriate improvement strategies are put in place. However, the achievement rates in Urdu in 2004-05, at 40 per cent, remained considerably lower than the rest of the area of learning. Learners' views are currently collected twice a year, although plans are in place to collect them each term for short courses.

140. Tutors have a satisfactory understanding of the arrangements for quality assurance. The internal verification process on accredited courses is managed appropriately. Most tutors are involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision but is too descriptive.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	476	2
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	334	2
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	73	2

141. So far in 2006-05, the service has offered 71 courses for 883 learners in preparation for life and work. Courses have run at 10 venues, comprising five adult education centres, one secondary school, one church hall, a hospital forensic unit, a supported housing development and an allotment. Sixty-six per cent of courses are held at one main centre. There are 22 literacy, 17 numeracy, 20 ESOL and 12 independent living skills courses. In 2004-05 there were 1,058 learners, of whom 34 per cent were men, 32 per cent were from minority ethnic groups and 7 per cent disclosed a disability. Almost all literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners work towards external qualifications in skills for life at all levels from entry 1 to level 2. Approximately 50 per cent of independent living skills courses are also accredited at entry level. Twenty-three per cent of courses take place in the evening. Course length ranges from five to 30 weeks and lessons run for between 90 minutes and three hours. In addition, three- and six-hour skills for life diagnostic assessment and national test tasters and preparation courses are offered. Learners can begin skills for life courses at any point in the year. New learners are interviewed and assessed before joining a group. Learners' induction is completed at regular intervals throughout the year. Four programme managers manage the provision, supported by five skills for life tutors on fractional contracts and 34 sessional tutors.

Strengths

- high achievement and retention rates on accredited provision
- good teaching of independent learning skills
- very successful recruitment of new learners
- very good tutor development in ESOL

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of ILT by tutors

Achievement and standards

142. Retention and achievement rates are high in accredited provision. In 2004-05, average retention across all provision was over 90 per cent and the average success rate was over 80 per cent. Retention was particularly high in numeracy classes at 95 per cent. Many learners stay with the service for several years, progressing to higher levels or into other curriculum areas, such as ICT. There is also internal progression within the service from skills for life provision to GCSE courses and from independent living skills to mainstream provision, where appropriate. Skills for life examination pass rates are also

high. There have been some groups, such as trainee teaching assistants, who achieved particularly good pass rates in the national tests enabling them to access vocational training. Most learners are punctual and attend class regularly. They often inform tutors of reasons for absence. Attendance rates during the inspection were satisfactory at 70 per cent.

143. Standards of work in portfolios and in lessons vary, but are satisfactory overall. Most learners achieve their measurable learning goals and some surpass them. In independent living skills, some learners have successfully overcome multiple difficulties to achieve unexpected outcomes. For example, some learners have gained the confidence to collaborate on joint projects, which has contributed to decreasing the social isolation of many members of the group.

The quality of provision

144. Teaching of independent learning skills is good. In the best sessions, tutors use a wide range of activities and resources to stimulate learning. Tutors challenge learners to examine their acquired skills and use their life experiences to solve problems. They facilitate peer and group learning and teach a range of very good, specific study skills, which many learners have not gained in their earlier education. This helps these learners to remain motivated and eager to take part in the lesson activities and to make progress. This approach also supports the learners highly effectively to develop confidence and to take an active part in planning their education and training. Some learners become active participants in their community, while others develop skills and confidence to take further opportunities in education or employment. Teaching and learning is satisfactory, with 50 per cent of the lessons observed graded as good or better. However, some tutors give complex verbal explanations of grammatical rules, which hinder progress or effective learning.

145. Assessment and target-setting are adequate. Most learners are assessed at the beginning of their course and agree individual learning targets with their tutor, which are reviewed at reasonable intervals. However, the quality of this process is not consistently effective for all learners. Some tutors set very vague targets which are not easily measurable and do not challenge the learners. While most ESOL learners have adequate learning plans, a few ESOL learners attending literacy classes have not negotiated clear targets.

146. A suitable range of courses in skills for life is offered at several venues in priority wards. Most learners can attend courses near to where they live, to study with other learners at the same level. A satisfactory choice of accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities is offered in independent living skills. A few innovative skills for life courses are aimed at widening participation. They include a horticulture course for homeless people, where learners gain the literacy and numeracy skills needed to make good use of an allotment.

147. Most learners receive appropriate pre-course information, advice and guidance, in addition to visits from advice and guidance workers to help them with progression decisions. Many ESOL learners can access course information in their native language. Free childcare is available to all learners in this area of learning, although some learners are unaware of this. A few learners are also unaware of accreditation opportunities. Additional learning support is satisfactory and is provided to several learners who need individual supervision during the lessons.

148. The quality and range of resources is satisfactory. Most tutors are well qualified and some are very experienced. Accommodation for classes is generally suitable. Many classes are well equipped with ICT and audiovisual equipment, although some venues do not have good access to appropriate technology. There is a good range of teaching materials, but little dedicated IT software for skills for life or ESOL learners. Some tutors in independent living skills provide some of their own resources, such as glue, scissors and thread.

149. Tutors in many classes make insufficient use of ILT. The interactive whiteboards and computers that are available in the classrooms are not adequately exploited. Use of IT is often not adequately planned to enhance teaching and learning.

Leadership and management

150. There is a very successful approach to encouraging new learners to join learning through formal and informal community partnerships. Outreach workers use their contacts well in setting up courses for groups with poor essential skills who are not traditionally involved in learning. The approach has been significant in bringing about an almost threefold increase in the recruitment of learners to this area.

151. ESOL tutors are supported well to develop their teaching skills. Reports on the observation of teaching and learning are very insightful and suitably judgmental. There are clear links between weaknesses observed and staff development planning. Tutors share good practice and regularly attend joint training events in a regional forum. Newly qualified or recently employed tutors are offered support through a very effective mentoring system. Literacy, numeracy and independent living skills tutors are also observed regularly and have clear, related action plans. There is good attendance at a variety of appropriate training events.

152. Quality improvement processes are generally satisfactory. Observation reports and records of learners' progress and achievement are sampled regularly for moderation and adjusted if necessary. However, there is still insufficient standardisation of tutor records. For example, some tutors do not specify methods of assessing progress in planning documents, and learning targets are not always measurable or timebound.

153. The self-assessment process is sufficiently accurate and inclusive. Programme managers are responsible for drafting a self-assessment report which uses a range of data including learners' feedback. Tutors are consulted and invited to make suggestions. Management information system data is also used to identify trends and gaps in provision when planning the curriculum.

154. Equality and diversity are promoted appropriately. Learners from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are specifically the focus of marketing activities and are well represented in the provision. Learners are regularly reminded of the benefits of equality of opportunity and diversity. However, the participation of men is low, and there are no specific actions to resolve this issue.

Family learning**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		3
Adult and community learning	42	3

155. FLLN provision is managed by a full-time programme manager and wider family learning is managed by two managers who job share. The programme managers report to the assistant head of adult and community learning skills for life. Forty-two learners are currently enrolled on family learning courses in eight venues. Fifty per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. All learners are women and one has a disability. So far in 2006-05, the total number of enrolments is 166, with 89 per cent being women, 33 per cent being from minority ethnic groups and two learners having a disability. In 2004-05, 221 learners enrolled on courses in 18 venues. The service offers non-accredited and accredited programmes with FLLN learners being offered the opportunity to take the national tests in literacy and numeracy. Courses are offered in partnership with other providers. They run during the daytime in community venues such as schools, children's centres and community centres in the daytime. Courses are mostly introductory short courses and workshops with a few longer courses. They are provided by part-time tutors and school teachers.

Adult and community learning**Grade 3*****Strengths***

- high retention rates
- good recruitment of minority ethnic learners
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- low recruitment rates
- insufficient collation and use of data on progression
- insufficiently developed family learning strategy

Achievement and standards

156. Rates of retention are high. In 2004-05, 80 per cent of learners who started an accredited programme and 94 per cent who joined non-accredited programmes were retained. On one-day courses, all learners were retained.

157. Learners' development of confidence and skills is satisfactory and they are more able to support their children. The standard of learners' work in sessions is satisfactory. Learners work well together in sessions and make satisfactory progress. They have a good level of satisfaction with their programmes. One group of learners contributed to the production of a calendar illustrated with recipes that reflect the multi-ethnic communities in Bury. A small number of learners gain externally accredited qualifications. In 2004-05, five learners gained a numeracy qualification and 23 learners gained a literacy qualification.

The quality of provision

158. Support for learners is good. The service effectively provides childcare support to enable learners to access courses. A crèche or funding for childminders or nursery places is provided wherever family learning takes place. The service also funds bilingual assistants who already work in the local schools and communities to give good and consistent in-class support for ESOL learners. On FLLN courses, end-of-programme advice and guidance is good and learners access individual or group sessions to discuss progression opportunities. Good partnerships and communication between school staff and the service provide effective support for learners. Initial assessment is satisfactory and arrangements to assess the learners' literacy and numeracy support needs are sensitive to the learners' fear of tests.

159. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Clear aims and objectives are explained to learners at the start of sessions. Session planning is satisfactory, with a satisfactory range of activities to achieve the learning outcomes of the sessions. However, some activities are too abstract or complicated for the learners and do not sufficiently take account of the differing learning styles of the learners. In the better sessions, tutors and school teachers maintain learners' interest and motivation. They use a variety of teaching methods and practical fun activities, such as games and the learners' interest in their children, to promote and reinforce learning. Relationships between staff and learners are good.

160. Resources for learning are satisfactory. The service has a resource bank at its Bury centre and partner schools share their resources for the delivery of programmes. Accommodation is satisfactory. Tutor-produced resources in sessions are satisfactory, although in some sessions there is insufficient use of stimulating and practical resources and an over-reliance on paper-based resources.

161. Literacy, numeracy and language support for learners is effectively provided by tutors in the lessons. Tutors monitor the progress of the learners, frequently but sensitively checking their use of literacy and numeracy. Lessons which include learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities have additional support tutors who provide help for individuals.

162. Recruitment is low and in 2004-05 the service did not fully use its funding allocation. The service did not recruit sufficient numbers of learners on courses. This year the service negotiated a 22 per cent reduction in funding. On the current courses, learners' enrolment is slow and most classes are below target numbers.

Leadership and management

163. The recruitment of minority ethnic learners is good. The service has consistently focused on the learners in priority wards and has developed very effective approaches to attract this group of learners. Thirty-three per cent of the 166 learners who have enrolled on programmes in the current year are from minority ethnic groups, which is significantly above the proportion of minority groups in the borough. Twenty-eight per cent of learners enrolling in 2004-05 were from minority ethnic groups, significantly exceeding the target of 15 per cent which the service set itself.

164. Staff development is effective in ensuring tutors have knowledge of the skills for life curriculum and the children's curriculum in early years. Communication between

programme managers, the small team of tutors and existing partners through formal and informal meetings is satisfactory.

165. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, with good recruitment of minority ethnic learners and a high percentage of new learners, but insufficient men are recruited. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities. In some schools learners benefit from good visual displays on other countries and cultures. Promotional material does not have appropriate visual imagery to reflect the diversity of the community.

166. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The service's arrangements for the observations of tutors are satisfactory, although some sessions are graded too generously compared with those observed during the inspection. Tutors teaching on the wider family learning courses have been observed in their subject area. The views of learners and partners are sought, but this is not sufficiently rigorous to identify what learners would like improved. The self-assessment report does not take an overall view of family learning and the effect of provision on learners is written in two parts. While the report identifies the weaknesses found on inspection, it overstates some of the area's strengths.

167. Progression data is not sufficiently collated. Programme managers do not have enough information to analyse and monitor progression, set targets and plan to improve learners' progression to further provision. Many learners who complete this first step to learning do not progress. Targets for retention are not sufficiently individualised by programme or centre and are all set to the average of 80 per cent.

168. The strategy for family learning is insufficiently developed, with insufficient strategic planning for the development of family learning and links to other aspects of the service. Programmes are targeted in the borough's most deprived wards and the service responds well to the schools that it has engaged with. However, the service's strategic planning to engage the parents of children in the other schools high on the social deprivation indices is inadequate. Progression routes from wider family learning to FLLN and other provision within the service are insufficiently established. The strategy to engage men in learning is not well developed and the recruitment of men is low. Parents, learners and schools are not sufficiently aware of all the opportunities available to them. There is an imbalance between the larger number of short- and one-day courses and the small number of longer courses. Partners are not sufficiently involved in strategic planning or target-setting for recruitment, achievement, retention and progression. There is insufficient staff capacity to co-ordinate and offer the provision within the service. The service is currently working with partners and the council to develop a council strategy for family learning.

