

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Kent LEA Reinspection**

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

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

## Grading

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

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

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Kent Adult Education Service (KAES) is one of the largest adult education services in the UK, with over 40,000 individual learners ranging in age from 16 to 80 plus. Provision is delivered in three geographical districts: east Kent, west Kent, and the Thames gateway area. KAES has 21 main learning centres and 357 other subsidiary centres, and community and outreach venues. Across the county, provision ranges from entry level to level 3 and access to higher education. The service also offers family or intergenerational learning through its three areas. These programmes are offered in outreach and community venues throughout the county to meet identified need and widen participation. KAES raises additional funds for these local initiatives through competitive tender and partnership. The service offers learning opportunities in all but one of the fifteen areas of learning.

2. In each of KAES's three areas, there are programme development managers responsible for designing programmes and working with partners. They are supported by programme managers, who develop and deliver the curriculum, and line manage tutors. Each programme manager is responsible for the provision in two or more areas of learning. The provision is arranged in curriculum clusters under the headings of healthy living, creative skills, career and personal development, and skills for life, which is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language.

3. As part of an efficiency and rationalisation programme during 2006, there has been increased centralisation of the finance, personnel and some data management functions. There have also been some changes in the curriculum offer following a major internal audit of the quality of teaching and learning in the areas of learning judged inadequate at the previous inspection. The service has an overall budget of approximately £14 million, of which around £11 million comes from Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

### GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

Construction			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Construction crafts</b>			
Adult and community learning	371	3	

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Business administration</i></b> Adult and community learning	423	2
<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Using IT</i></b> Adult and community learning	1,150	2
<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> Adult and community learning	8,956	3
<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Complementary health services</i></b> Adult and community learning	1,265	2
<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Arts</i></b> Adult and community learning	5,320	2
<b>Humanities</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Other contributory areas</i></b> Adult and community learning	1,535	3
<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Languages</i></b> Adult and community learning	6,531	4

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ESOL</b> Adult and community learning	2,785	<b>4</b> 4
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b> Adult and community learning	2,141	<b>3</b> 3
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b> Adult and community learning	1,149	<b>4</b> 4

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Adult and community learning</b> Adult and community learning	3,096	<b>3</b> 3

Grades awarded at reinspection

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> Adult and community learning	4,149	3
<b>Translating and interpreting</b> Adult and community learning	107	3
<b>Communications</b> Adult and community learning	53	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ESOL</b> Adult and community learning	993	<b>3</b> 3
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b> Adult and community learning	219	<b>3</b> 3

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

4. At the previous inspection, KAES's provision in business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), health, social care and public services, and visual and performing arts and media was judged to be good. In construction, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, humanities, and family learning it was satisfactory, and in English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes it was inadequate. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity were satisfactory, while quality improvement was inadequate.

## KENT LEA REINSPECTION

5. At the reinspection, two areas of learning, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes, were reported on and graded. Both were judged satisfactory. The provider has also made significant progress in dealing with all the major weaknesses identified in quality improvement, and its quality improvement arrangements are now good. The overall effectiveness of KAES's provision remains satisfactory.

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	27
Number of learners interviewed	189
Number of staff interviewed	74
Number of employers interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	37
Number of visits	4

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### English, languages & communications

### Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> Adult and community learning	4,149	3
<b>Translating and interpreting</b> Adult and community learning	107	3
<b>Communications</b> Adult and community learning	53	3

6. There are 4,309 learners on accredited and non-accredited courses in English, creative writing, British Sign Language (BSL) and modern foreign languages. Most of the language provision is in French, Spanish, German and Italian with a small number of courses offered in Arabic, Greek, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, Finnish and Swedish. Courses take place at various times at 65 learning centres throughout Kent. Forty-four per cent of courses are held in the evening. Long and short courses are available and there are a number of tasters in both modern foreign languages and BSL. Courses in French, German, Spanish and Italian are offered from beginners to advanced level, and about 57 per cent of courses in modern foreign languages lead to a qualification. BSL is offered at levels 1 and 2. There are creative writing courses for beginners and for learners working towards publication. Most learning sessions last for two hours. Over 70 per cent of learners are women. There are 179 part-time staff in this area of learning, 74 per cent of whom hold a teaching qualification.

#### *Strengths*

- extensive and effective use of target language
- good range of provision that responds to local need
- effective arrangements to bring about improvements in teaching and learning

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor retention on accredited level 1 Spanish courses
- insufficient initial assessment to aid lesson planning
- insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT)

### **Achievement and standards**

7. Attainment in modern foreign language and British sign language is satisfactory. Most learners are able to manipulate language structures with a reasonable degree of confidence and accuracy. Written work is generally of a good standard. However, there are many instances of poor pronunciation, and some learners find it difficult to remedy poor skills in spite of the strong emphasis which many tutors place on correct pronunciation. Many learners in creative writing classes have had work published, and there is a good focus on presenting work professionally.



8. In 2005-06, the retention rate was poor on level 1 accredited Spanish courses. Spanish courses accounted for 45 per cent of the accredited provision at level 1. In 2003-04, the retention rate courses was 62 per cent, and it increased to 68 per cent in 2004-05. However in 2005-06, it fell to 58 per cent. This weakness was partially identified in the self-assessment report. The retention rates for level one courses in French, German and Italian are generally satisfactory at about 71 per cent. The average retention rate for long accredited courses in modern foreign languages was 73 per cent in 2004-05, falling to 68 per cent in 2005-06. Achievement rates for modern foreign languages were satisfactory at 78 per cent in 2004-05, but at the time of reinspection not all results for 2005-06 have been validated. In British sign language, 78 per cent of learners who completed their course in 2005-06 achieved a qualification at level one and 45 per cent at level 2.

### **The quality of provision**

9. The use of the target language in modern foreign languages and British sign language has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Tutors rarely use English, and give all explanations of vocabulary or grammar in the taught language. Tutors expect that the target language will be used throughout lessons. Learners at all levels use the target language for classroom interactions with the tutor and other learners. Tutors provide a good range of activities and resources to promote the use of the target language by learners and to enable learners to practise and improve their language skills. They are imaginative in the use of resources. In a beginners' French class, the tutor used flash cards of flags from different countries and a game to reinforce the learning of nationality, country and adjectival agreement. In BSL, the game hangman was used to aid the development of finger spelling. Learners in a Spanish class were able accurately and confidently to use newly learnt vocabulary to describe colourful pictures which the tutor had created on a flipchart. The levels of fluency in classes are good and most learners have well-developed listening skills. Learners are generally confident in speaking the language, and those at the higher levels are able to justify ideas and opinions fluently using a range of sophisticated structures.

10. The range of provision is good and responds to local need. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report and at the previous inspection, and has been maintained. Forty-five per cent of learners in 2006-07 are new learners and the remainder are returning for further study with the service. There are courses in French, German, Italian, Spanish and BSL across the county. There is provision at different levels ranging from short courses of five, 10 or 20 hours duration where learners can try out a language before committing themselves to a longer course, to 30-week accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. Courses at level 3 do not offer any accreditation. Courses run during the day and evening and there is accredited and non-accredited provision at both times. In addition there is non-accredited higher level provision through the University of Kent in the adult education service centres. Deaf studies provision is also available during the day and evening in nine venues. Courses range from deaf awareness and introductory courses in sign language to courses at levels 1 and 2. There are developing links with regional employers, and KAES has already run courses for employees in BSL, French, German and Spanish. There are, however, no formal links with other providers for the overall planning of modern foreign languages or BSL provision. Less commonly taught languages form 6 per cent of the total provision. The service provides courses in Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Portuguese, Greek and Arabic for about 190 learners. Greek and

Russian are the most popular languages.

11. The teaching and learning observed during the reinspection was satisfactory with 62 per cent of lessons graded good or better. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Schemes of work are in place and in the better lessons, the lesson plan outlines the activities, resources and assessment involved. The better lessons are mostly lively with good pace. There are, however, too few directed questions in some lessons to ensure that all learners participate and to enable tutors to assess their learning. In some classes tutors do not routinely correct errors in grammar or pronunciation.

12. Support for learners is satisfactory. The tutors are friendly and helpful and there are good relationships in classes which create a good learning environment. In a creative writing class, the atmosphere was relaxed but purposeful, with all class members contributing freely to discussions. Additional grammar lessons are available at a number of centres on Saturdays to help learners understand the grammatical concepts required for learning a language. Additional support is available for learners who identify a need. In one centre a class was relocated to a ground floor room to meet the needs of a learner with mobility difficulties.

13. Initial information, advice and guidance given to learners are satisfactory. Course outlines are available in leaflets, brochures and on the KAES website. There is a short placement test available in the main languages to help learners assess their level. For BSL courses, there is a leaflet and information in brochures with details of the courses, costs and progression opportunities. Enrichment opportunities are good and are appreciated by the learners. There are opportunities to use the target language at Christmas markets, visits to restaurants, visits to deaf centres and units, and trips to European cities.

14. There is insufficient initial assessment to aid lesson planning. The service has introduced learning and assessment records to enable learners to assess their own level of competence against the course learning objectives. Tutors carry out an initial assessment either informally or formally to help develop a learner profile. However, this process is not yet systematic or sufficiently detailed to aid lesson planning and enable clear targets to be set. Lesson plans do not indicate the activities or learning for individual learners. Individual progress is not clearly recorded, although learners in general are pleased with their progress. Differentiated learning outcomes are identified on lesson plans, but in many lessons tutors do not use differentiated strategies and activities to meet the needs of all individuals.

15. There is insufficient use of ILT. This was identified as a weakness in the service's self-assessment report. Teaching resources are generally satisfactory and of an appropriate standard. Many tutors have produced very professional flash cards, pictures and diagrams, or selected authentic materials from the internet. However, in the lessons observed there was little use of ILT although electronic whiteboards were available in some rooms. Tutors do, however, use computers to produce paper handouts. There has been some limited staff development in ICT.

### **Leadership and management**

16. There are now very effective arrangements to improve teaching and learning, an area that was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. At the previous inspection there was a high proportion of poor teaching. The service carried out a thorough initial

audit of teaching and learning in January 2006. Following observations, individual action plans were put in place for tutors and monitored by managers. A team of managers is available to offer support and guidance, and a mentoring system has been set up for failing tutors using peer observations by colleagues who are identified as good practitioners. There are clear links from the observations to specific targeted professional development for tutors of modern foreign languages, BSL and creative writing, with opportunities for tutors to share good practice. A broad generic programme of continuing professional development was also put in place to deal with common issues such as differentiation and classroom management. A second audit took place in May 2006 and a programme of further development is planned to deal with the issues identified. KAES also provided training for a team of observers to ensure a consistent approach to the observation of teaching and learning. The grades awarded by inspectors during the reinspection broadly matched those of the service observation team.

17. Curriculum management is satisfactory. There are programme managers in each geographic area with specific responsibility for tutors in BSL, modern foreign languages and creative writing. Lead language tutors are in post to offer specific support to modern foreign languages and BSL tutors. They meet frequently to plan the languages programme, share ideas and discuss common issues. They hold frequent meetings with tutors to look at service-wide and subject-specific issues and provide a support network. Communications across the service are mainly good, and regular contact is maintained through e-mail, phone calls and personal meetings. There are course reviews, but these are mainly a paper-based exercise with insufficient opportunities for tutors to meet and review their courses. The service gathers feedback and is responsive to learners' and tutors' comments. For example, the start time of a class was changed to meet the work commitments of the learners, and new courses in Mandarin Chinese were put on in response to demands from learners. Tutors are able to select textbooks to suit their learners.

18. Accommodation is satisfactory and rooms are of an appropriate size and layout. Most of the rooms used have wall displays of foreign language materials and examples of commonly used expressions as a prompt for learners to use the target language. Rooms are equipped with whiteboards, tape recorders, video recorders and televisions, and overhead projectors.

19. There is too little use of target-setting for retention, achievement and success at course level. Retention is monitored regularly and absentees are contacted either by the tutor or by centre staff. The system for recognising and recording progress and achievement is in place but is not yet fully established across the area of learning.

20. The celebration of cultural diversity is a constant theme in modern foreign language and BSL lessons. There is a mechanism to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs, and tutors refer learners to guidance services if a need is identified.

21. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths found by inspectors. However, the weakness in initial assessment was not identified, as the report was written prior to enrolment for 2006-07.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>ESOL</b> Adult and community learning	993	<b>3</b> 3
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b> Adult and community learning	219	<b>3</b> 3

22. In 2005-06, 2388 learners enrolled on 566 courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). At the time of reinspection, 993 learners had enrolled during 2006-07. Courses are provided from entry level 1 to level 2 in 22 main centres and nine other venues across the county. Courses are part time and take place in the daytime and evening. They run for a number of different durations from 30 to 180 hours, and are all accredited. Learners can enrol on more than one course. Sixty per cent of ESOL learners are women. There are currently 42 ESOL tutors, and the area is managed within the skills for life team. There are two 0.5 ESOL development managers and five programme managers who line manage the tutors. In addition there are two ESOL tutor managers, in east and west Kent. The programme reduced in size by around 20 per cent between 2005-06 and 2006-07.

23. There are 219 learners with learning difficulties or disabilities enrolled on independent living and leisure skills courses. Twenty of those registered this term are new to learning with KAES. All the 37 courses last for 30 weeks, and learners attend for between two and four hours a week. The courses on offer include opportunities to develop independent living skills, literacy, numeracy, communication and computer skills. None of the courses are accredited. The courses are held during the day in 14 community venues. There are 14 part-time tutors, and they are supported and line managed by four programme managers. Overall management and development of the independent living skills programmes is the responsibility of a full-time project manager.

**ESOL***Strengths*

- good development of oral language skills
- good management support for improvement of teaching and learning

*Weaknesses*

- low retention and achievement rates on long courses in 2004-05
- insufficient planned support for progression

**Achievement and standards**

24. Attendance was satisfactory in classes observed. Attainment was also satisfactory, with good attainment in oral skills. Learners at the higher levels engaged in realistic and relevant tasks. At lower levels learners were supported in successful communication through the use of pictures and stories. Learners said they had gained confidence in

speaking at work and that they now communicated more accurately and fluently with colleagues and friends.

25. All ESOL classes are externally accredited, and KAES's data shows that most learners achieve at least a unit of a qualification. This is a significant achievement for most of them. Around 83 per cent of learners achieved at least one unit in 2005-06. However, in 2004-05 on long ESOL courses, the achievement rate for full qualifications and the retention rate were low, with retention at 57 per cent and achievement at 32 per cent. Low achievement was not identified by the previous inspection, but KAES's good response to the introduction of new qualifications was identified as a strength.

26. Learners' writing skills are not always systematically developed, and attainment in writing is lower than in speaking. In some classes tutors did not sufficiently promote the maximum learning and skills development in all learners.

### **The quality of provision**

27. The previous inspection judged teaching and learning to be inadequate. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory. The previous inspection identified inappropriate use of course books and exercises. Tutors now use a good range of materials and techniques to promote the acquisition of good communication skills. No inadequate lessons were observed during the reinspection. In most classes there is good development of oral language skills. Tutors are skilled in setting up group discussions and pair work for learners to practice speaking. Tutors encourage speaking by good eliciting techniques and good questioning. One tutor provided prompts such as 'make a comment' or 'ask a question' on the whiteboard, to help structure a conversation. In another class, level 2 learners were asked to describe different types of business documents such as memos and reports to each other, having previously researched them. Pronunciation is appropriately corrected in most cases.

28. Learners' work is attractively displayed in some classrooms. Induction information has been translated into ten of the languages most commonly spoken by learners attending the programme. There are clear lesson plans. Tutors identify learning outcomes for the lesson, and communicate them to the learners in suitable language. Initial and diagnostic procedures are satisfactory. Information from diagnostic assessment is used to plan courses. In the lessons observed there was some use of information learning technology including an interactive whiteboard, and use of internet sites to research job opportunities and practice grammar. In some centres learners can book time to use computers.

29. The use of individual learning plans has improved since the previous inspection. Learners negotiate one specific goal, broken down into targets, for each 30 guided learning hours. In some cases targets are expressed in language which is not suitable for the learners' level. Learners' progress reviews were identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. These are now satisfactory.

30. Resources in most centres are satisfactory. The published skills for life materials are used effectively and there is an adequate range of additional paper-based materials. Most rooms provide a comfortable learning environment and are well equipped. Tutors provide satisfactory support by giving information about employment and support

agencies. They claim additional support funding for learners who have dyslexia and other learning needs. At the previous inspection, the wide range of programmes was identified as a strength. The service continues to provide courses at a number of levels in centres and community venues across the county.

31. Some tutors provide learners with useful feedback on their written work, and overall this aspect of provision is satisfactory. However, in some lessons and schemes of work there is insufficient information about the writing skills appropriate to each level. A brief course outline is given to learners, but this does not provide an easily understandable picture of what language and skills they will learn in their course, especially at the lower levels.

32. There is insufficient planned support for progression. There is little collaboration with other providers to facilitate progression. There are no taster courses to allow ESOL learners to try other subjects, and few courses in which ESOL is established into other subjects. The schemes of work examined showed no evidence of outside agencies being used to inform learners about the opportunities and support available to them.

### **Leadership and management**

33. The management of ESOL has been strengthened by additional posts. In the previous inspection the monitoring of teaching and learning was identified as a weakness. Since then, managers have taken particularly effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The grades for observations of teaching and learning have improved significantly, and staff development days have been held on a number of useful topics. There is now an effective system of observations, with detailed and constructive feedback for tutors and action plans for completion. External consultants have been used effectively to improve standards.

35. Arrangements for partnership working are satisfactory. The service works with a number of employers, encouraging them to refer learners to classes or providing classes on their premises.

36. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. Learners are made aware of their rights and responsibilities at their induction, and tutors acknowledge different cultures and languages in their teaching.

37. The service's self-assessment report identified most of the same strengths and weaknesses as the inspectors. Staff were fully involved in the self-assessment process. KAES makes insufficient use of data to improve quality at programme and course level.

### ***Independent living and leisure skills***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of learners' social skills and confidence
- good leadership and support for quality improvements

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficiently differentiated teaching and learning

- incomplete development of curriculum

### **Achievement and standards**

38. Learners make good progress in developing their social skills and confidence. This strength has been maintained since the previous inspection. Learners participate well during group sessions and are attentive to tutors and support assistants. Learners' behaviour in classes is good and they set ground rules for group learning sessions. They develop appropriate adult relationships with tutors and their peers and are able to recognise and recall the rules on inappropriate behaviour such as not interrupting other people when they are speaking. Learners understand that regular attendance and punctuality are important. During the inspection, 84 per cent of registered learners attended sessions. Punctuality is generally good.

39. The retention rate is satisfactory on independent learning skills programmes. KAES no longer runs accredited courses and, as yet, there is no data on achievement for the new courses that replaced them.

### **The quality of provision**

40. At the previous inspection initial assessment was inadequate. Since then a comprehensive initial assessment tool has been introduced and is being piloted. The content of the initial assessment is appropriate to the client group, and enables tutors to identify learners' abilities against pre-entry level learning milestones and the entry-level core curriculum. The initial assessment process begins during pre-course, individual interviews and continues during the first three weeks of the course.

41. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory. After the previous inspection, the service introduced internal observations of teaching and learning. All tutors have been observed three times during 2006. The first observations identified over 50 per cent of sessions as inadequate. At the most recent round of observations the proportion of inadequate sessions was less than 25 per cent. The service introduced tutor support and performance management measures to rectify the inadequate teaching. No inadequate teaching was observed during the reinspection. Most tutors now use a wider range of teaching and learning strategies including a satisfactory mix of individual learning, paired work, small group work and multi-sensory approaches. Resources are satisfactory. Worksheets are now well-produced, and use colourful images and appropriate language and text size. However, there is too little access to and use of information and learning technology.

42. The range of programme choices was a strength at the previous inspection, but following an extensive and appropriate redesign of the curriculum offer, the range is now adequate. Activity-focused courses are no longer offered and the programme now concentrates on learning-oriented courses. The learning opportunities offered are appropriate for the needs and interests of the current learners. At the time of the inspection, however, the new intake of learners had only just completed a five-week period of initial assessment and introduction. It is too soon to assess whether the rest of the programmes fully meet the learners' needs and interests. The service is aware that it needs to research needs across the county to widen participation, but has not yet begun to do this.

43. Support for learners and learning is satisfactory. All classes are now supported by, or have access to, learning support assistants. They are deployed effectively, have been given guidance on their role, and are fully briefed by tutors before sessions. This is an improvement from the previous inspection where the use of assistants was ineffective. Additional support is also satisfactory and there are examples of appropriate use of the learning support fund to enable learners to travel to classes. For one learner with a visual impairment, the service obtained an assessment of their visual abilities and needs through the Royal National Institution of the Blind, which allowed it to identify adaptive technology that could be of benefit.

44. The service has made significant improvements in its strategy for teaching and learning methods, but there is still insufficient differentiation of teaching and learning to meet all individual needs and abilities in some classes. In some group sessions there are no clear individual learning objectives within the group activity. Less experienced tutors are not fully familiar with appropriate learning strategies such as language experience, directed activities to develop reading skills, or techniques to embed spelling or word recognition. In some classes tutors do not always extend the learning of higher-level learners. Teaching and learning materials are insufficiently differentiated for learners of different abilities. Some targets on individual learning plans are not sufficiently challenging, and some learners achieve their set learning objectives very quickly.

### **Leadership and management**

45. At the previous inspection, management of the independent living skills programme was ineffective. Since then the service has demonstrated good leadership and support for quality improvements in independent living skills programmes. KAES clearly recognised that learning was not being achieved by many learners who attended activity based classes. It negotiated the transfer of this provision to the county's social services department. The curriculum is now appropriately focused on learning outcomes and the accurate matching of learners to programmes which are appropriate for their needs. A new management team is in place and is effectively directing and encouraging improvements through a detailed and comprehensive action plan. Classroom observations are highly effective in improving standards of teaching and learning. The percentage of inadequate teaching has reduced from over 50 per cent to less than 25 per cent over a six-month period. Action plans for tutor development clearly identify competency expectations and are closely monitored by managers. Most staff attend the good range of continuous professional development on offer, and where appropriate, are closely supported and mentored by programme managers. Programme and project managers have visited other training providers to learn about national good practice. Although implementing the improvements has been demanding, the commitment and morale of tutors and managers is high. There is a strong focus on reflection and evaluation of the curriculum. The self-assessment process is firmly established and uses information from observations of teaching and learning, and tutors' and learners' feedback.

46. KAES offers training and information on disability to staff, and their awareness of disability issues has improved since the previous inspection. Most staff have attended training on adult protection. The requirements of the Children Act 2004 and the implications of Every Child Matters for vulnerable adults have not yet been communicated to staff. There is little evidence of the promotion of diversity awareness in teaching sessions.



47. Although significant progress has been made since the previous inspection, the curriculum for independent living skills is not yet fully developed. The curriculum scheme of work and documents are currently undergoing a pilot phase, and the evaluation of their effectiveness is not complete. Targets have not yet been set for performance in achievement, retention and attendance. Issues still to be evaluated include the usability and effectiveness of planning and assessment documents and how to involve learners more in identifying and setting learning goals. Cross-curricular links with the skills for life programme are being established. Literacy, numeracy and language are not sufficiently established within independent living skills activities. Initial advice and guidance is now clear and is presented in a more appropriate format for potential learners, but there is no strategy or process for information, advice and guidance on progression to other learning opportunities. At the time of inspection there was inconsistent use of some key documents such as risk assessments.

