

REINSPECTION REPORT

Wolverhampton Adult Education Service 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.

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

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Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Grades	2
About the reinspection	3

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	6
Equality of opportunity	7
Quality improvement	8
Information & communications technology	10
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	13
Visual & performing arts & media	16
Foundation programmes	19

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Wolverhampton Adult Education Service (WAES) is contracted by the Black Country Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver adult and community learning in the area. In 2005-06, 10,497 learners were enrolled on courses. All provision is directly delivered, with around 51 per cent being further education accredited and 49 per cent being non-accredited adult and community provision.

2. WAES has undergone major structural changes since the previous inspection in June 2005. It is led by a head of service and three senior managers. Responsibilities of the senior management team have been comprehensively revised. Operational management of WAES has also been extensively restructured. WAES now has six service managers, each responsible for a particular functional area or theme, and a further eight curriculum service managers with responsibility for the planning and delivery of the curriculum. Service managers are supported by a team of 19 service co-ordinators.

3. Since the previous reinspection, WAES has been relocated to the directorate for adults and community within Wolverhampton City Council (the council). The quality of provision is now monitored by the senior management team of WAES and the two portfolio holders for adults and community within the council. The head of WAES reports directly to the councillor and portfolio holder for leisure and community.

4. Wolverhampton is a multi-racial city with a population of 236,582. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 22.2 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Reinspection Grade 3

5. At the previous inspection in June 2005, the provider's leadership and management and quality assurance were inadequate, while arrangements for equality of opportunity were satisfactory. Provision was satisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT) and in English, languages and communications. It was good in family learning. Provision was inadequate in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, in visual and performing arts and media, and in foundation programmes. Inspectors confirmed that WAES has maintained the quality of provision in the areas graded as satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision reinspected were found to be satisfactory. The overall effectiveness of the provision is now satisfactory.

6. The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process. The process identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors and sufficiently involves managers and tutors.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements. Although quality improvement procedures are not fully implemented, all curriculum areas have demonstrated clear improvement, and are now satisfactory. Curriculum management is now satisfactory in all areas, as are teaching and learning in all areas.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Information & communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Using IT</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	841	3	

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i>		4	
Adult and community learning	1,082	4	

Visual & performing arts & media			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Arts</i>		2	
Adult and community learning	434	2	
<i>Crafts</i>		4	
Adult and community learning	756	4	

English, languages & communications			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Languages</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	887	3	

Foundation programmes			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>ESOL</i>		4	
Adult and community learning	513	4	
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		4	
Adult and community learning	343	4	

Family learning			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Adult and community learning Adult and community learning	489	2 2	

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Information & communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Using IT Adult and community learning	516	3 3	

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Leisure, sport and recreation Adult and community learning	463	3 3	

Visual & performing arts & media			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Arts Adult and community learning	327	3	
Crafts Adult and community learning	232	3	

Foundation programmes			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ESOL Adult and community learning	159	3	
Literacy and numeracy Adult and community learning	114	3	

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

8. The reinspection took place between January and October 2006. The four areas of

WOLVERHAMPTON ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE REINSPECTION

learning inspected and graded were ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, and foundation programmes. English, languages and communications and family learning were not reinspected.

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	46
Number of learners interviewed	198
Number of staff interviewed	79
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	32
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	7
Number of visits	3

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- good leadership to bring about improvement
- good partnership arrangements
- good strategies to support learners with additional needs

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of management information
- insufficient implementation of quality improvement processes

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good use of specialist resources

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good health and social benefits for older learners
- particularly effective provision for those with special needs
- good support for new tutors

Weaknesses

- ineffective assessment practice
- insufficient planning of resources to meet the needs of learners

- insufficient implementation of quality improvement systems

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good variety of provision to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners
- good standards of work on access programmes

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- incomplete implementation of quality improvement systems
- insufficient support for severely disabled learners

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good partnerships to promote access and progression

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- insufficient use of management information for curriculum development and management

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good leadership to bring about improvement
- good partnership arrangements
- good strategies to support learners with additional needs

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of management information
- insufficient implementation of quality improvement processes

9. WAES provides good strategic leadership to bring about improvement. Strategic planning and management have been maintained as a strength since the previous inspection. WAES has a comprehensive three-year plan for 2006-09 and an annual plan for 2006-07. These are backed up by detailed strategic development plans for each curriculum area. The plans are clearly aligned with strategic priorities in the council's community, corporate plans and LSC targets. Significant changes have been introduced to rectify the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The service has been substantially reorganised to give greater coherence to the provision, and quality improvement and curriculum management have been strengthened. The major restructuring of WAES was delayed pending budget reviews, and was implemented from June 2006. This restructuring included a significant reduction in staff, which was very effectively managed largely through voluntary redundancy. Strategic management and leadership of WAES now sits with the head of service and three senior managers. Following the restructuring, WAES now has eight curriculum service managers who are supported by 14 curriculum co-ordinators, and six thematic service managers who are supported by five co-ordinators. WAES has effectively resolved the key weaknesses in curriculum management and planning identified at the previous inspection. All curriculum areas inspected were found to be satisfactory at reinspection.

10. WAES has maintained and extended its good partnership arrangements, which are well supported by the council. This area was recognised as a key strength at the previous inspection. Partnership work is well established and ensures coherent provision for adult learning in the city centre. The final stage of the development of the city learning quarter has just been agreed. The newly refurbished building will house provision from WAES, a local college and the library service. The further development of the local adult learning and skills strategy has strengthened WAES's partnership arrangements with the Wolverhampton learning partnership and the college. Ten learning brokers, appointed by WAES and a local college, now operate in eight neighbourhood priority areas. This year, WAES has taken over responsibility for the effective operational management of the local adult learning and skills strategy. It is working closely with a range of partners to build new capacity across the city and to provide new learning opportunities and skills development in priority neighbourhoods, although it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these new arrangements. Well-established and productive partnerships are now further consolidated through the publication of a handbook for partners, which clearly outlines

their rights and responsibilities.

11. Staff development arrangements are effective, and have been thoroughly reviewed since the previous inspection. WAES carried out an extensive training needs analysis in 2005-06, and training and development opportunities have been clearly prioritised to meet organisational needs. Management skills and improved teaching and learning are key priorities. However, delivery of the training programme is in the early stages of implementation, and it is too early to identify its effectiveness. Staff performance is currently monitored through two mechanisms. The council's employee performance review scheme is being implemented across WAES with staff who work over 400 hours a year. Formal observations and assessments are conducted with all tutors, advisers and additional support staff, regardless of how many hours they work for the service. WAES has identified that the two processes need to be more closely linked, with identified core competences common to both.

12. Internal communications remain satisfactory. Most staff have access to e-mail. Weekly staff briefings are held by the head of service and weekly meetings with senior staff are scheduled for service managers. Regular team meetings take place. However, attendance at some meetings is variable, and the distinction between meetings and training events is not sufficiently clear.

13. WAES has an effective strategy to identify and meet learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs.

14. WAES continues to make insufficient use of management information. It has taken some action to rectify the previously identified weakness. For example, curriculum administrators have recently been appointed to take ownership of and responsibility for inputting the data relating to their curriculum areas. The reliability and accuracy of management information has improved. However, the most recent self-assessment report identified that data input needs to be more efficient. Service managers now have improved direct access to information, and targets are set at curriculum level. However, not all curriculum managers are confident in the use of management information. They have not yet received sufficient training in how to analyse and explore data so that they can use it effectively as a management tool.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

15. WAES continues to have good strategies to support learners with additional needs. A range of additional support for learners is provided across the provision. The number of learners receiving additional learning support has doubled since the previous inspection, from 144 learners in 2004-05 to over 300 in 2005-06. WAES also makes effective use of an extensive range of specialist equipment such as adaptive computer equipment and hearing loops to support learners with disabilities.

16. WAES has maintained its good child support facilities, enabling class attendance by learners who would otherwise be excluded from learning. In addition to the good crèche facilities provided in its main centres, WAES makes effective use of its team of childcare support workers to provide mobile childcare in 38 additional community venues around the city. A team of guidance workers provides effective information, advice and guidance for learners across the provision, and the guidance team routinely visits more than 30 local community venues to provide information and advice directly to learners, many of whom

speak English as an additional language. WAES also provides a range of other support for learners, such as assistance with transport, enrolment and examination fees, and books, and continues to work effectively to widen participation. It has further developed its strategies to engage learners from deprived communities as part of the city's neighbourhood renewal strategies.

17. Since the previous inspection, WAES has satisfactorily completed its work to ensure that all four main sites are fully compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

18. WAES has satisfactory policies for equality and diversity. It has revised its learner induction materials to focus more effectively on learners' entitlement and to clarify its complaints procedures for learners. Induction materials now contain a simply and clearly expressed learners' charter, and learners are generally aware of their rights and responsibilities and of the complaints procedures. Any complaints made by learners are carefully followed up within a defined period, and this has led to improvements in facilities for learners and to additional training for staff, for example in mental health awareness.

19. WAES has recently begun work to reinforce its promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity within the different curriculum areas. Detailed training plans are in place to support this development through awareness raising and the sharing of good practice among WAES's managers and tutors. However, it is too soon to assess the effect of these measures on learners.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

20. WAES has improved the overall quality of provision since the previous inspection. Inspectors found clear improvements in curriculum management, which was previously unsatisfactory in three curriculum areas. Teaching and learning have also improved and are now satisfactory in all curriculum areas inspected. Through its quality improvement team, WAES has used the post-inspection action-planning process very effectively to improve the quality of its provision. Its system for the observation of teaching and learning, which was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. The system has been thoroughly revised and is being further refined for 2006-07 to resolve inconsistencies identified through WAES's monitoring processes. For example, some observations were over-graded and written feedback and judgements were not sufficiently evaluative. In addition, feedback to tutors does not always clearly identify strengths and areas for development, and precise targets are not always set.

21. WAES has not yet implemented quality improvement processes sufficiently. At the previous inspection, WAES was identified as having appropriate quality improvement policies and procedures which were not adequately implemented across the provision. Following the inspection, task and governance groups were established within WAES to lead and support quality improvement. They have provided good support for the introduction of improvements in the service. In particular, WAES has recently introduced a comprehensive new approach to quality improvement, based on a performance management framework. A range of key performance indicators has been introduced within WAES, based on the nine stages of the learners' journey and clearly cross-referenced to the five key questions of the Common Inspection Framework. Performance measures are now being identified for each key indicator. During this first year of implementation, processes are being continuously reviewed and further refined.

Performance management reports are scheduled to be produced three times a year. To date, two reports have been produced. However, at present, the new processes are not fully understood by all staff, and are not being applied fully within all curriculum areas. Implementation of some improvements is inconsistent across the curriculum areas, and it is too early to identify the overall effectiveness of the new processes and their effect on the quality of provision for learners.

22. WAES uses satisfactory additional procedures to support and complement its performance management framework. These include quality audits, a confidential assessment of the service by employees, and thorough analyses of complaints and compliments by learners and employers. Feedback from learners continues to be satisfactory, and WAES has retained its learners' council which meets to discuss concerns, which are fed back to the provider.

23. The overall self-assessment process is satisfactory. WAES produced a full self-assessment report and development plans in February 2006. Its most recent performance management report was produced in September 2006, and this forms the basis of a draft self-assessment report for 2005-06 which was produced in October 2006, before reinspection. However, inspectors found the draft report to be too descriptive and insufficiently evaluative. In some curriculum areas, inspectors identified different strengths and weaknesses to those identified in the draft self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT Adult and community learning	516	3 3

24. WAES currently runs 75 courses in ICT for 516 learners. Programmes are delivered at two main sites, in the city learning quarter and at Pendeford Community Learning Centre, and at a range of community locations as part of the widening participation strategy, including Stowheath Computer Centre. The programme includes a mix of accredited and non-accredited learning through open learning and taught sessions.

25. WAES provides ICT courses predominantly at entry level and level 1. These are often offered as a first step into learning. Many of these courses focus on a basic introduction to word processing and using the internet and e-mail. Some courses are targeted at particular groups of learners such as minority ethnic groups, the elderly, learners with a visual impairment and learners with learning difficulties.

Using IT

Strengths

- good use of specialist resources

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

26. Overall retention and achievement on accredited programmes remains satisfactory. On non-accredited courses, the development of learners' personal and learning skills is satisfactory. Learners are well motivated, and most produce satisfactory standards of work. Many of the learners have not attended formal learning for some considerable time and for many older learners, the courses are their first experience of adult learning and ICT. Courses provide an effective route back into education, and most learners also gain additional confidence as well as practical computing skills. Elderly learners new to ICT quickly overcome fears of using computers and develop effective skills in word processing and the internet, which they are able to use in their daily lives. For example, one learner was particularly proud of the fact that they could now use a computer to create a greetings card for their grandchild. Some learners use their newly acquired skills to support their voluntary work in the community. Other learners have progressed from entry level courses to accredited courses, and have successfully gained external qualifications.

The quality of provision

27. Since the previous inspection, WAES has maintained its good use of specialist resources at the main sites in the city learning quarter. Learners are taught in well-equipped classrooms with good computers and a range of software at the two main sites. WAES has also purchased additional equipment such as interactive whiteboards and has installed an audio loop which provides appropriate support for learners with hearing difficulties. In particular, WAES continues to make very effective use of specialist equipment for learners with visual, motor and speech difficulties. This includes keyboards with large keys, tracker balls, touch screens, and specialist software to magnify text and provide audio support. Learners are given good additional support by key workers, and value the facility for enabling them to achieve a high degree of independent living.

28. Teaching and learning remain satisfactory, with sessions taught by knowledgeable and supportive tutors. Lesson planning has improved since the previous inspection. Tutors use clear schemes of work and detailed lesson plans. In most workshop sessions, learners work effectively at their own pace on different exercises and tutors give satisfactory support for individual learners. A new individual learning plan and diary have been introduced recently across the area. All learners now have an individual learning plan and a learning diary, which records their learning aims and progress. The learning diaries are updated regularly by the learners and tutors at the end of each training session. However, it is too soon to judge the effect of this on learners' progress. In better sessions, tutors provide very clear instructions for learners and make very effective use of questioning, clear explanations and appropriate examples to improve learners' understanding. They also use interactive whiteboards to support effective learning. In weaker sessions, tutors use too much technical terminology without sufficient explanation, or use a single computer screen to demonstrate a particular function to a large group of learners.

29. Initial assessment was weak at the previous inspection. Since then, initial assessment procedures have been thoroughly revised, and initial assessment is now satisfactory. WAES now makes effective use of a range of interactive ICT activities to identify learners' needs. All learners now take an initial assessment based on interviews and informal literacy and numeracy tests. Some of the assessments use tests provided on a national learning support website. The assessment is documented well and is used to prepare an individual learning plan for each learner.

30. Resources overall are satisfactory. Tutors on accredited programmes make effective use of training guides within teaching sessions. The training guides provide comprehensive training material together with computer-based exercises. Effective use is also made use of sample examination materials to assist learners with their preparation for external examinations. However, the training guides are too limited in number, and learners are not always able to access them sufficiently outside the sessions to support their homework. On non-accredited courses, tutors generally make effective use of training material which they have developed. However, some materials are of insufficient quality. Most accommodation is satisfactory. However, in a minority of community venues, classrooms are subject to distracting background noise and learners are adversely affected.

Leadership and management

31. WAES has recently appointed a new curriculum manager and curriculum planning is now effective. New systems for monitoring learners' retention and achievement have been introduced to provide more accurate management information. Staff development is satisfactory, and tutors are encouraged to attend courses to improve their teaching effectiveness and to support the new initiatives.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i>		3
Adult and community learning	463	3

32. WAES currently provides 46 sports and leisure courses for 463 learners. It offers a range of different non-accredited courses, including keep fit, yoga, tai chi, gentle exercise, swimming, Pilates, belly dancing and keep fit for the over 50s. WAES also offers one accredited course, a seated exercise qualification at level 2. Most classes are for mixed-ability learners and several offer progression to intermediate and advanced levels. Some courses are targeted at specific groups of learners. At the time of inspection, 61.8 per cent of learners were aged over 60. Courses are offered during the day and evening, and range in length from one day to 36 weeks. WAES has 24 different venues throughout the city, including leisure centres, halls, schools and community centres. In 2005-06, a total of 1,168 learners took courses. Twenty per cent were identified as having a physical or learning disability, 23 per cent were from minority ethnic groups and 86.5 per cent were women.

Strengths

- good health and social benefits for older learners
- particularly effective provision for those with special needs
- good support for new tutors

Weaknesses

- ineffective assessment practice
- insufficient planning of resources to meet the needs of learners
- insufficient implementation of quality improvement systems

Achievement and standards

33. Overall retention and achievement are satisfactory. Standards of learners' work and performance levels are also satisfactory. Learners generally report clear gains in skills and confidence.

34. Older learners gain good health and social benefits. The proportion of learners aged over 60 at the reinspection was 61.8 per cent. This represents a further increase since the previous inspection when 48.7 per cent of learners were in this age group. Many learners reported significant health and social benefits linked to their participation in activities. For example, one learner aged 88 participating in a yoga class found that the class specifically helped her to retain flexibility and mobility and to improve her lifestyle. Other learners were able to identify improvements in specific muscle groups and reported tangible and significant health benefits and improvement in the quality of their lives. Older learners are challenged and extended in appropriate ways.

35. Learners with special needs are supported particularly well. Since the previous

inspection, WAES has continued to target provision for learners with special needs and has maintained its targeted provision in sports. The good support provided enables learners with additional needs to participate very effectively in a wide range of provision. For example, one learner who uses a wheelchair participated in a mainstream yoga class, another learner with Down's syndrome made good progress in swimming, and another learner with a broken leg participated in a yoga class.

The quality of provision

36. At the previous inspection there was too much unsatisfactory teaching on non-accredited courses. Teaching has now improved, and all classes observed at the reinspection were satisfactory or better. Tutors are vocationally qualified and experienced, and they prepare their lessons well. Lessons are delivered effectively with clear demonstrations and explanations. Many of the classes observed were of mixed ability and appropriate strategies for differentiation were employed effectively, with learners given clear, individual choices around range of movement and number of repetitions. Learners enjoy classes and are well motivated. Some learners participate in activities outside the classroom. For example, a group of learners from the belly dancing class participated in an open day display.

37. At the time of the previous inspection, insufficient attention was given to the health and safety of learners. In particular, initial assessment of the health and fitness levels of learners was inadequate. Clear progress has been made in the arrangements for health and safety since the previous inspection, and these arrangements are now generally satisfactory. Additional enrolment sessions have been held to give advice, and health and safety advice sheets are now routinely provided for learners. Referrals for additional learning support are routinely made through the WAES's information, advice and guidance section. A useful pre-exercise checklist has been introduced and checks are completed and summarised on an 'at a glance' class profile sheet. However, subject-specific risk assessments are not always carried out, and some learners were not suitably equipped to participate in classes.

38. Assessment practices remain ineffective. Assessment methods are not always identified on lesson plans and there is insufficient clarity about what constitutes achievement in non-accredited classes. WAES has introduced revised individual learning plans and these are used effectively to identify personal and group long-term learning goals. Although WAES has made changes to individual learning plans, the plans are still not used effectively by tutors to agree and set sufficiently specific, measurable and time-bound targets for learners. Although most tutors are clearly aware of the individual progress of their learners, they do not review this frequently enough with learners, nor do they record their progress clearly enough in the individual learning plans to give specific guidance to learners on the steps they can take to improve their own performance. The use of individual learning plans remains too inconsistent between tutors.

39. Planning of physical resources is insufficient to meet the needs of all learners. Although most venues that deliver courses are generally satisfactory, the overall accommodation and environment is not suitable in some instances for the teaching and learning of sports. For example, some learners commented adversely on standards of cleanliness and water temperatures in swimming pools. Some groups are too large for the venue provided, and rooms do not always allow full involvement by all learners. This has

an effect on the ability of some tutors to manage their class effectively and in some sessions, more able learners do not receive adequate attention.

Leadership and management

40. New tutors receive particularly good support. WAES has made substantial changes in staffing arrangements since the previous inspection, appointing five new tutors. Very careful consideration has been given to the needs of these new tutors. They have been particularly well supported into their new roles through thorough, informal observations and supportive mentoring arrangements. Mentors have also provided very detailed help to familiarise tutors with new systems and processes.

41. Curriculum management has improved since the previous inspection. The curriculum has been thoroughly reviewed and, where appropriate, WAES has supported the development of 'club' classes for sports. New progression routes have been established, for example in Pilates and swimming. Regular team meetings take place and tutors have opportunities to share good practice through small group meetings. Good community links are being established and this is guiding further curriculum development.

42. Quality improvement systems are not sufficiently implemented. Quality improvement was insufficiently developed at the previous inspection. Since that time, WAES has thoroughly reviewed and improved its systems and processes. The curriculum team has carried out extensive work since the previous inspection, for example reviewing all course planning documents in relation to the learners' journey on programmes. Lesson plans are now routinely checked and the team has made use of training from the Standards Unit of the Department for Education and Skills. Although some progress has been made, the new systems and processes are not yet part of everyday practice and it is still too early to measure the full effect of their implementation.

Visual & performing arts & media**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts Adult and community learning	327	3
Crafts Adult and community learning	232	3

43. WAES offers a variety of arts and crafts courses. At the time of inspection there were 559 enrolments. Courses are offered in nine centres including three main sites. A wide range of courses is available including access to art, embroidery, ceramics, pottery, millinery, dressmaking, knitting, soft furnishings and interior design. WAES also offers specific classes to attract learners from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and disabilities, such as garment making for the visually impaired, art classes for learners with severe learning difficulties and classes at Asian and Caribbean community centres. Currently, 73 per cent of enrolments are by women. Five per cent of learners are following an accredited programme, a reduction of 33 per cent from the previous year.

Strengths

- good variety of provision to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners
- good standards of work on access programmes

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- incomplete implementation of quality improvement systems
- insufficient support for severely disabled learners

Achievement and standards

44. Overall retention and achievement for learners in adult and community learning and further education provision are satisfactory. Progression to higher education in 2005-06 was good, with 90 per cent of completers progressing. The standard of learners' work is generally satisfactory and learners develop satisfactory practical skills. Learners are well motivated. They develop social skills, value cultural diversity and gain confidence through their achievements. Progress of new learners is satisfactory. However, more experienced learners progress slowly in relation to their prior attainment and years of experience.

45. Learners' work on Access to Art programmes is good. Work is of a particularly high standard and clearly challenges the learners to experiment and develop a wider perspective of the subject, for example through working on different scales and using a range of media experimentally. The best work is lively and reflects good research and ideas development. In a machine knitting class, learners were confident to try new and ambitious techniques. Much work in a millinery lesson was of a high standard including a striking trilby, a beret and a variety of felt hats.

The quality of provision

46. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory in arts and crafts programmes. Most lessons are satisfactory and some are good. In one embroidery lesson the tutor used historical and cultural comparisons to introduce and contextualise beading. Tutors foster warm and positive relationships and build learners' confidence. Clear schemes of work and lesson plans are in place and lessons are generally structured well. Good individual support is provided for learners, and tutors routinely give useful verbal feedback to help learners develop their skills. However, some teaching focuses too much on skills development rather than the development of creativity and originality. In weaker sessions on non-accredited programmes, teaching is insufficiently stimulating or challenging for learners and some sessions are slow and undemanding.

47. Individual learning plans are not used effectively. New individual learning plans have been introduced recently and are now in place in all lessons. They are used adequately as a record of skills acquisition. However, they are not used effectively in identifying learning outcomes for more experienced learners and ensuring that learners work towards these targets over time. Tutors have limited understanding of how individual learning plans can be used to develop creative practice and to set more challenging learning goals

48. Resources are satisfactory. Equipment is suitable and enables learners to participate in a range of unusual subject areas such as millinery, jewellery making and picture framing. Accommodation is adequate in all venues inspected and good at the main sites. However, classroom displays are uninspiring and do not develop a wider perspective of the subject areas.

49. Insufficient support is provided for learners with severe learning disabilities. Learning support is generally available on request and WAES provides effective support for a wide range of additional literacy, numeracy and other learning needs, such as dyslexia. However, insufficient support arrangements are in place for learners with severe learning disabilities. For example, in some pottery lessons, insufficient support was arranged to accommodate the personal care and learning opportunities of those attending a class for visually impaired learners. Although some additional support was provided, some personal carers were not requested to remain with learners, and tutors had not received training relevant to the learners' specific needs.

Leadership and management

50. The area has recently been restructured to combine the craft and arts areas, which are now managed effectively by one curriculum manager. Quality systems have been standardised and a more coherent approach has been developed to managing the provision. Roles and responsibilities of managers and tutors have been clarified, and staff are now working more cohesively to develop and monitor targets. However, it is too soon to judge the effect of some of the recent changes.

51. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with 43 per cent of learners from non-white backgrounds, in 2005-06. Targets to increase the numbers of learners from Asian, African-Caribbean and Eastern European communities are in place. Twenty-four per cent of learners have declared disabilities. Provision has been provided for specific groups such as learners with visual

impairment and severe learning difficulties.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	159	3
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	114	3

52. WAES offers English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes from entry level to level 2 in community and city centre venues. A total of 159 learners are enrolled in 50 classes. Seventy-eight per cent of learners are women, 44 per cent are aged between 20 and 30, and 30 per cent are aged between 30 and 40. Thirteen classes take place in the city learning quarter, with 37 classes taking place in a range of community venues including schools and community centres. Most classes are provided during the day, with 10 classes running in the evening. Learners attend classes from two hours to nine hours a week. The ESOL team consists of one full-time curriculum manager, three co-ordinators and 11 tutors.

53. Literacy and numeracy provision comprises 30 courses, all on the main city centre site. There are currently 114 learners, of whom 65 per cent are from minority ethnic communities, and 72 per cent are women. Most learners are between 26 and 59 years of age. The literacy and numeracy team consists of a full-time curriculum manager, a literacy and a numeracy co-ordinator and 11 tutors. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses are run for National Probation Service clients. During 2005-06, 77 clients attended classes.

Strengths

- good partnerships to promote access and progression

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- insufficient use of management information for curriculum development and management

Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and retention overall are satisfactory. In some ESOL classes, learners achieve high standards of work in spoken skills. Learners experiment with new language and gain confidence to experiment in new situations. Learners on foundation courses report an increased confidence in using the skills they have, and in continuing to develop them. All foundation learners have satisfactory access to national qualifications at all levels. ESOL learners are also able to take high-level qualifications and pre-university qualifications. Testing takes place regularly throughout the year for some qualifications.

55. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes now have satisfactory systems to manage absence and lateness. Attendance and punctuality, which were identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, have improved and are now satisfactory. Data for the autumn term in 2005-06 is not yet available, but during the reinspection, attendance was recorded

as 84 per cent for ESOL classes and 74 per cent for literacy and numeracy classes. Learners' punctuality is generally good. In cases of lateness, most learners were challenged appropriately by tutors.

The quality of provision

56. Foundation programme staff have developed good partnerships to promote access and progression. A well-managed initiative with the Probation Service and the local college offers access to a disadvantaged group that is unlikely to use mainstream services. During 2005-06, 77 National Probation Service learners attended literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes. The learners take national literacy and numeracy tests and are taught in small groups. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. The partnership with the college has enabled WAES to develop progression routes from its literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses on to more advanced and vocational further education courses. The partnership reduces competition and duplication of classes. A transnational partnership has developed training routes into work as ESOL tutors for disadvantaged residents. The ESOL service has effective partnerships with community groups representing residents from the new European Union states and the South Asian communities. These partnerships have increased access for learners from these communities. The ESOL service's long-standing partnership working with schools increases access to on-site ESOL classes for parents.

57. Teaching and learning in ESOL and literacy and numeracy have improved since the previous inspection, when there was much unsatisfactory teaching. All lessons observed during the reinspection were satisfactory or better. In the better ESOL classes, learners make good progress in developing language skills. Lessons are well structured and lesson plans are detailed and realistic. Tutors have clear and realistic objectives which are shared with learners. Some tutors use a wide and appropriate variety of teaching methods to develop oral language skills. Learners are motivated by variations of pace and activity. In good ESOL classes, attention is paid to the achievement of correct pronunciation and intonation. In good literacy and numeracy classes, tutors ensure that complex concepts are clear to all learners. They regularly check learners' understanding. Learners complete their work diaries as a matter of course and understand their purpose. High standards are demanded of learners by some foundation programme tutors. They use very effective correction strategies which foster self-reliance in learners.

58. In weaker classes, the pace of learning is sometimes slow and the lessons lack variety. Tutors use a narrow range of approaches and activities to engage learners. They use too much whole-class teaching with little opportunity for group interaction. There is an over-reliance on completing mechanical exercises and a insufficient real-life contextualisation of literacy and numeracy in these classes. Tutors in weaker classes sometimes talk too much and do not give learners enough chance to practise and experiment with languages. Tutors do not always develop listening skills effectively in some ESOL classes.

59. All tutors develop good working relationships with learners. Lessons take place in a friendly and adult atmosphere which fosters confidence and effective dialogue between learners and tutors. Learners are at ease and able to ask questions. Tutors give individual support to weaker learners when this is needed.

60. Learning resources are used satisfactorily in foundation programmes. Some tutors use real-life materials to develop and practise concepts, for example, using pictures from holiday brochures to choose appropriate adjectives. There is insufficient use of materials from everyday life in some literacy, numeracy and ESOL lessons. Tutors in the poorer lessons rely too heavily on published written and computer-based material. In the better lessons in literacy and numeracy, ICT is used effectively. One tutor used a smartboard for an interactive crossword exercise to practise recognition of specific phonemes. ICT is available in city centre classes but not in all outreach venues. There are facilities for learners to use computers to study independently out of class time in the city centre premises. Dictionaries are available and used by learners in ESOL and literacy classes.

61. Staff generally have appropriate and up-to-date qualifications. Where updating or extension of qualifications is required, curriculum managers have prioritised this training. Accommodation is good in the city centre venue, and adequate in all others. Some teaching rooms have computers and most rooms have whiteboards. Rooms are sufficiently spacious and well furnished.

62. Support for learners is satisfactory. The availability of childcare in some community venues increases access to foundation programmes for parents. Three nursery nurses are employed to look after children while their mothers attend ESOL classes. A learner on a teacher training course is able to improve her literacy skills to support her achievement. Support for learners with dyslexia is available and offered where appropriate. Learners are set homework to extend their skills. They receive an induction at the beginning of their courses which allows them to take full advantage of WAES's facilities. They remember key points, including those relating to health and safety.

63. The WAES information, advice and guidance service is used effectively to support Foundation learners. Information, advice and guidance staff are now timetabled to visit classes to explain their services and discuss progression opportunities with learners. The service has been well used in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision to support managers to help some long-standing learners to progress to more appropriate provision. An information day was set up for the relevant literacy and numeracy learners, where they were able to find out about new opportunities and receive impartial advice on progression. Information, advice and guidance support has helped curriculum managers to refocus literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision while keeping learners' interests at the centre of the process.

64. The range of courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is satisfactory. ESOL classes are run in the city centre and in many community-based venues in priority areas. Currently, literacy and numeracy courses are only run in the city centre. Curriculum managers are aware of this weakness and have plans to extend provision using the partnerships developed with schools through family learning activity. There is a limited range of provision in the evening in literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

65. Tutors do not focus sufficiently on the individual needs of learners in foundation programmes. Although there has been clear improvement since the previous inspection, many tutors still plan for and teach whole-class lessons. In many lessons, tutors make little in-depth preparation to differentiate their approach and the activities on offer to meet the needs of learners at different levels of ability. Individual learning plans are not used effectively to generate plans for each learner. Targets in individual learning plans are very

general and are frequently the same for the whole group. Some learners are not sufficiently challenged and do not achieve their full potential. For weaker learners, tasks given on a whole-class basis may be too difficult and they may be left behind. The process and documents to support differentiation for learners are in place but they are not yet established or being used as working processes.

Leadership and management

66. Clear curriculum management and co-ordination roles and responsibilities are now in place. Regular supervisions are held, team meetings take place frequently and actions agreed are clearly recorded and effectively followed up. Tutors understand the new management structures and have easy access to their managers. Communication in the programme area is now effective. It is achieved through meetings, e-mails, texting, letters and supervision sessions. Each literacy and numeracy meeting is held twice so that part-time tutors have more chance of attending. A summary of the meeting is sent to those not able to attend. A part-time ESOL tutor who only works one session a week said that he now feels well supported and finds it easy to keep in touch with activities in the department.

67. Curriculum changes in literacy and numeracy are beginning to have a positive effect on learners' achievement. Numeracy course lengths have recently been changed and the provision is now split into a series of short courses. Tutors report that this motivates learners, who are able to see their goals in terms of a set of short-term aims. This has now brought about a stronger focus within the curriculum team on achievement, and learners are clear about their goals. New course documents are beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Learners feel more involved in assessment and target-setting, and tutors find discussion with learners on progress and other issues is now easier. A numeracy co-ordinator has recently been appointed, although the development of this area has not yet begun.

68. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, and tutors reinforce this effectively in ESOL classes. For example, one tutor encouraged discussion between learners from a wide variety of faith groups, which developed language skills and at the same time allowed learners to explore others' cultural roots. However, insufficient use is made of notices, publicity and classroom displays to promote equality of opportunity. Access to support for disabled learners is good, and tutors and managers are confident in using the procedures to secure additional support.

69. Satisfactory quality improvement systems are in now place. However, the implementation of these systems is not yet complete. For example, observations of teaching and learning of most tutors have taken place. Where these were unsatisfactory, WAES has taken prompt action to support tutors in improving their performance. However, some post-observation action plans have not been followed up. Some observation records indicated a lack of rigour in the comments made by observers on tutors' performance. There is no systematic sharing of good practice between more experienced tutors and their less experienced colleagues across foundation programmes.

70. The self-assessment report for literacy, numeracy and ESOL does not identify all of the key strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. Tutors were only indirectly involved in its production.

71. Managers do not make sufficient use of management information for curriculum development and management in foundation programmes. They do not always trust the reliability of the data they are given, or have sufficient skills to select, access and use management information effectively. Data is not used routinely as a management tool to manage and monitor the effectiveness of the provision.

