

REINSPECTION REPORT

City of London Reinspection

05 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	5
Equality of opportunity	6
Quality improvement	8
Visual & performing arts & media	10
English, languages & communications	13
Foundation programmes	16

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The adult and community learning service (the service) for the City of London (the City), forms part of the local authority's adult service within the community and children's services department. This is a new department which was established at the beginning of 2006. The aim of the department is to bring together education, social services, housing and leisure services and to create greater synergy between them. The department is headed by the director of community and children's services. The head of adult and community learning is managed by the director of adult services and is supported by one full-time professional assistant, two part-time staff with responsibility for widening participation and family learning, and one full-time centre administrator.
2. The City's adult and community learning service currently subcontracts out more than 90 per cent of its service to external providers. The main providers are the City Literary Institute, City and Islington College, City University and the City of London School for Girls. The service also funds a series of short courses.
3. The service provides courses at the City's community education centre, Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School, Middlesex Street Estate, City of London School for Girls and the Barbican, including the Guildhall Art Gallery. Classes include computing, humanities, modern foreign languages, health and social care, arts and crafts, family learning, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and exercise. At the time of the reinspection in October 2006, 121 learners had enrolled on arts and craft courses, 75 on language courses, and 88 on ESOL courses.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Reinspection Grade 3

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** The City's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. In visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes, the provision is satisfactory.
5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process has improved year on year and the involvement of staff, subcontractors and learners in self-assessment activities is very good. Staff's and managers' knowledge of how the various parts of the service perform is good. The current self-assessment report identifies some normal practices as strengths, and does not identify some of the weaknesses. However, the text does reflect much of what was found on inspection and presents a thorough consideration of the service's operations.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Since the previous inspection, retention and achievement have improved as the City has developed better systems with which to gather information. Managers share improvement strategies with staff and subcontractors, and manage the subcontracted provision more effectively. Significant improvements have been made in the past year and development planning is thorough and realistic.

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

Visual & performing arts & media			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Arts			
Adult and community learning	133	4	
Crafts			
Adult and community learning	59	4	

English, languages & communications			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Languages			
Adult and community learning	262	4	

Foundation programmes			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ESOL			
Adult and community learning	87	4	

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

Visual & performing arts & media			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Arts			
Adult and community learning	57	3	
Crafts			
Adult and community learning	64	3	

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages Adult and community learning	75	3 3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL Adult and community learning	88	3 3

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

7. At the previous inspection, the inspection reported on and graded three areas of learning. Other areas of learning did not have sufficient numbers of learners to allow secure judgements about the quality of provision. The reinspection team inspected the same three areas of learning, visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes. Three reinspection monitoring visits were completed in addition to the final reinspection visit.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	18
Number of learners interviewed	31
Number of staff interviewed	4
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	4
Number of visits	4

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- very effective management of subcontractors
- good use of local partnerships to widen participation
- particularly good initiatives to improve provision

Weaknesses

- incomplete implementation of new quality improvement initiatives

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good development of technical skills in arts and crafts classes
- good additional benefits to learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good achievements on many courses during 2005-06
- good use of individual learning plans

Weaknesses

- much uninspiring teaching and learning
- weak lesson planning

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- good additional benefits for learners
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment practice
- insufficient sharing of good practice at curriculum level

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective management of subcontractors
- good use of local partnerships to widen participation
- particularly good initiatives to improve provision

Weaknesses

- incomplete implementation of new quality improvement initiatives

8. The City has introduced a range of initiatives which allow it to manage its subcontractors very effectively. This was an identified weakness at the previous inspection. The number of subcontractors has been reduced and tighter controls have been established. Sound and comprehensive contracts have been developed, with support from the City's legal department. These contracts include targets for the retention and achievement of learners. The City details its expectations of each provider, and the arrangements for monitoring performance. The contracts clearly outline roles and responsibilities and expected compliance with the City's quality improvement procedures. The contracts are monitored through termly meetings with subcontractors. These meetings produce useful minutes.

9. Monthly provider forums promote effective communications and discussions of good practice and key concerns, including the arrangements for inspection and observations of teaching and learning. Record-keeping is satisfactory and accurately records a range of activities and contacts between the City and the subcontractors. Files are kept for each subcontractor, and include the contract, minutes of monitoring meetings, learners' lists with details of courses, fees, contact details and any additional provision. Enrolment forms and learning agreements are included and, where appropriate, individual learning plans. Correspondence, e-mails, notes of planning meetings and responses to planning assumptions also form part of the file. Retention and achievement information is included as part of the quality monitoring meetings with each subcontractor.

10. The management of learning programmes is effective. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. All adult and community learning programmes were reviewed. Curriculum review meetings were held and resulting actions were recorded. The review included discussions about the introduction of the recognition and recording of progress and achievement, as well as clearer guidance about teaching and learning methodology, and the recording of retention rates and learners' achievements. Retention and achievement data is collected for each area of learning. This is collated to show rates for the most recent full academic year and also for each course, on a termly basis. Implementation procedures have been developed for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement and an action plan has been drafted. A member of staff has been nominated to implement the initiative. Appropriate targets are set and clear responsibilities for action are identified. Good practice has been shared with one subcontractor which is a champion in this area. A range of training events has been

provided, and information has been used from a variety of sources to help all tutors understand the processes for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement.

11. Staff development and training are satisfactory. A training event was held for all tutors who had previously been employed by the City and are now employed by City and Islington College. Topics included general and course administrative procedures for City and Islington College and the City, as well as the course management file and examples of the recognition and recording of progress and achievement from City and Islington College's health and social care department. All tutors have staff development and training logs, and training plans. Records are kept of courses attended, staff's hours and venues. The City's staff receive annual appraisals and undergo staff development and training activities. These activities include induction, equal opportunities and any additional courses to enable them to improve their performance. One member of staff is completing an e-learning course before she assumes responsibility for this as part of her current job role.

12. Communications are effective within the City. A useful and informative newsletter has been created which outlines some developments within the City and other important issues in local adult and community learning, highlighting new subcontractors and courses on offer. Meetings with tutors are minuted. The minutes focus appropriately on learners' progress and progression to higher qualification levels or other courses, and whether these courses are meeting their needs and interests. Individual meetings also take place that relate to very specific issues such as the development of marketing materials. Other meetings have focused on key questions in the Common Inspection Framework as they relate to the self-assessment report.

13. The city's provision of skills for life, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, is satisfactory. The development of a skills for life strategy has involved the quality steering group. Funding has been obtained to train staff in organising and developing a skills for life provision. The City has clearly identified the need for its own workforce to develop their literacy, numeracy and language needs skills, as well as those workers based in City businesses. Strong, clear strategic aims and an implementation plan are linked closely with these goals. The City expects work-based learning funding to enable skills for life training at work.

14. The provision of information, advice and guidance is now well established. A useful new booklet has been developed to inform learners about other opportunities within the City, as well as with partner organisations. A member of the City's staff is available at the local library to give advice and guidance to prospective learners. Additional information, which includes displays and posters, is made available at all venues. A prospectus is distributed to all venues and local outlets, and includes information about the City's other services, and additional provision offered by subcontractors.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

15. The service makes good use of local partnerships to increase the participation of learners from under-represented groups. The City employs one member of staff who is responsible for widening participation throughout the adult and community learning provision, and one who is responsible for family learning. These roles complement each other very well and focus very effectively on working with under-represented groups of learners. Promotional materials are translated into the most common minority languages

used by local residents. Taster and drop-in sessions involve bilingual staff, and interpreters are available at these sessions as required. Some teaching staff speak local minority languages and are able to offer good additional support to learners. A very effective outreach worker provides a doorstep information service to learners. In areas where there are higher proportions of minority ethnic groups, the outreach worker is supported by a bilingual member of staff.

16. The service has made a useful contribution to the City's children and young people's plan. More recently, discussions have taken place with the City's community services team to combine elements of the family learning provision with the activities of a newly created children's centre. The family learning provision is growing and includes an increasing number of families from minority ethnic groups. Eighty-nine per cent of enrolments in 2005-06 were for learners interested in family learning courses. More than 70 per cent of these enrolments were by people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Specific events and short courses bring together a wide range of learners including residents and their families, City workers and City employees. These short courses are useful in helping to meet the social, educational and cultural needs of City workers and isolated residents. More than 60 per cent of local residents live alone. An equal opportunities implementation plan sets out a range of activities to increase participation rates. An initiative to work closely with adult services in providing adult and community learning opportunities for older residents is being planned, in addition to specific efforts to increase participation by men in courses.

17. The City has an equal opportunities policy and procedures that apply to the adult and community learning service and comply with recent legislation. These are reviewed annually and updated as and when required. An equal opportunities action plan is produced and focuses appropriately on monitoring the subcontracted provision. An adult and community learning student charter makes clear the City's commitment to learners and states how learners can make a complaint. These are recorded appropriately and responses are made within agreed timescales. Publicity materials contain an equal opportunities statement that the service expects all staff and learners to adhere to. All subcontractors have their own organisational equal opportunities policies and procedures that reflect the City's principles and values. At the previous inspection, the monitoring of equality of opportunity was inadequate for some contractors and was not covered effectively in a contract or service level agreement. This situation has now been resolved.

18. The City gathers data and uses it effectively to monitor participation by gender and ethnic background. Since the previous inspection, data is used to monitor achievements by different groups. For example, the data for 2004-05 shows that in the visual and performing arts and media area of learning, approximately 58 learners stated that they had a disability. Analysis of this data shows that a learner's disability does not have a negative effect on their ability to achieve individual targets. Promotional material shows learners from a range of ethnic and cultural groups and offers positive images of men and women learners.

19. Access to the various locations continues to be satisfactory, and the City has a wide range of adaptive technologies available for learners with specific needs. Audits of sites and training courses continue to be carried out routinely, to ensure that they meet the needs of the learners and that suitable resources are available. The City makes good use of its neighbouring boroughs in providing progression opportunities for learners, and in

providing wider learning opportunities. Provision is made available at all levels, during the day-time and in the evening, and on Saturdays where appropriate and feasible.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

20. A range of particularly good initiatives has been introduced to improve the quality of the City's adult and community learning provision. This includes a quality toolkit which is available on the intranet for tutors and managers of the subcontracted provision, and the City's staff. The toolkit provides a range of good practice examples, policies, procedures and guidance notes for tutors to help them to improve standards of teaching and learning. References to equality and diversity are included in lesson planning and methodology. A quality assurance team has been established and comprises consultants with considerable experience, knowledge and skills in the areas of learning offered by the City. This has had a significant effect on standards throughout the service. The recognition and recording of progress and achievement and observations of teaching and learning by forum members have been introduced. The monitoring of teaching practice is more thorough, and there have been improvements in recording learners' achievements.

21. Quality assurance arrangements are now satisfactory. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. A quality assurance team was established to oversee developments in quality improvement. Meetings were held and actions were recorded. A quality assurance framework was developed. The details were clearly expressed and stated the subcontracting arrangements. These were discussed with the providers' forum and resolved the weakness identified in the previous inspection report. A quality assurance schedule has been developed that links key actions to the annual quality cycle, and highlights the person responsible for each component part. Clear connections are made with self-assessment and the development and improvement plan. The quality assurance team divides tasks by area of learning or subject, to ensure that there is a strong focus on curriculum development. The service expects subcontractors to manage their own areas of learning effectively and to share good practice at providers' forum meetings.

22. Course reviews clearly state the City's expectations, and include observations of teaching and learning and learners' evaluation of the courses. Curriculum review meetings are held and outcomes are recorded. Policies and procedures for the observation of teaching and learning have been established. Guidance is provided, together with a useful aide memoire. Meetings are held to moderate grades, and useful discussions are held about the appropriateness of judgements and evidence concerning the grade changes made. Guidance, policies and procedures include the appeals process and give examples of what is required to support a grade.

23. The self-assessment process includes all relevant stakeholders and has improved significantly each year. Useful management information is used in making judgements, together with input from all subcontractors, staff and learners. The self-assessment report was comprehensive and detailed, but many of the strengths and weaknesses identified did not match those found by the inspection teams. The supporting text reflected the position more accurately, and identified many of the findings from inspection.

24. Some quality improvement initiatives have not been fully implemented. The individual learning plans supplied by subcontractors do not all contain the same level of information, or provide sufficient details of each learner's needs. For example, some plans are cross-referenced to core curriculum requirements with group aims, and a very small

element of personal development that is often a global target. No milestones are set to help learners to work steadily towards this target, and no timescales are set. Individual learning plans do not always match the activities in the lesson plans. Good practice is not shared within or among all areas of learning.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts Adult and community learning	57	3 3
Crafts Adult and community learning	64	3

25. The City has 121 learner enrolments on arts and crafts courses, 90 per cent of which are by women, 74 per cent are by learners aged between 19 and 59 years, and 26 per cent are by learners aged 60 years or more. The range of classes is small and includes crafts, painting and drawing, mixed media and creative art, sewing and textiles, gallery art, and family learning arts and crafts. These courses last for 12 weeks and several of them are repeated throughout the year. Nine part-time tutors deliver the courses. The City also offers single and annual events, which it uses to attract new learners to the provision. Classes are provided during the week throughout the day, and there are also twilight and evening classes. Most classes in this area of learning are currently delivered by one local college. Most of the classes take place in the community education centre. Gallery art classes take place at the Barbican and at the Guildhall Art Gallery.

Strengths

- good development of technical skills in arts and crafts classes
- good additional benefits to learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

26. Learners develop good technical skills in arts and crafts classes. They employ a good range of materials and techniques. In one sewing class, learners used their skills to recycle clothes by altering them to fit, and in the same class young mothers made costumes for their children for Halloween. In a beginners' felt-making class, learners made high-quality experimental samples. In painting and drawing classes, learners use a good range of experimental mark making, drawing, and rubbing techniques to produce good-quality work. Learners understand the relevance of the skills they have developed and are able to speak knowledgeably about what they have learnt.

27. Learners gain significant additional benefits from attending classes. Those who live alone make social contact within classes, and some learners spoke of their courses as being a 'life saver' for them. In addition to the new skills that they learn, learners gain mental and physical benefits from attending the classes. In some classes, learners for whom English is an additional language develop English language skills in addition to their artistic skills. Retention and achievements of learners are satisfactory. Their attendance

during inspection was good.

The quality of provision

28. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most course programmes show a structured and sequential development of knowledge and skills. Tutors make good use of pre-prepared teaching aids and visual source materials. The work of artists and craftspeople is used well to inspire learners. Some teaching and learning strategies are innovative and delivered well. Some tutors make good use of lesson planning, but some lesson plans are repetitive and are not detailed enough. The learning outcomes in some schemes of work are vague, such as the use of 'improve drawing' as an outcome which cannot be measured. Some schemes of work do not identify learning goals and are simply lists of topics for each week.

29. Learners are actively engaged and focused on their studies. They feel challenged and supported. They are keen and enthusiastic, and ask questions to clarify their understanding. They learn from each other, and some learners continue their work at home. However, some of the more experienced learners are not challenged sufficiently.

30. In most learning sessions, the tutor provides good individual coaching, but the management of some group learning is less effective. Most of the group sessions observed were too tutor-centred. There was no use of question and answer activities and learners were not involved sufficiently.

31. Resources are generally satisfactory. Courses are situated in learning centres which are located conveniently in the local community. The accommodation is appropriate, clean, tidy and well lit. Some noise disruption occurs when two classes take place in one room. Restricted storage facilities create problems for some courses. Tutors have to set up and clear all the furniture and equipment before and after each class in the most frequently used classroom. Most of the equipment is appropriate for the level of courses offered, and the number of learners. Most materials are offered free of charge to learners.

32. The range of programmes offered is restricted. However, the provider is operating within a small geographical area, and there is a wide choice of alternative local provision. Under these circumstances the range of programmes offered is satisfactory.

33. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of pre-course information since the previous inspection. Course descriptions are generally full, accurate and valued by learners for their clarity. Opportunities for progression are now communicated and understood more effectively, primarily through the new course progression guide which is available to all learners.

34. Learners' progress is not monitored sufficiently. Individual learning plans are established and most staff have attended a recent recognition and recording of progress and achievement training session. However, individual learning plans are not being used effectively to support learning and learners see little relevance in them. There is no formal monitoring of progress.

Leadership and management

35. Arrangements to ensure equal opportunities are satisfactory. The provider has a high number of learners with stated disabilities. Provision is also made for learners with additional needs. These include older learners, those recovering from accidents or illnesses, learners for whom English is an additional language, and learners recovering from depressive illnesses. Tutors give sensitive support and good peer support is supplied by other learners.

36. A part-time specialist curriculum manager has been appointed, but has only been in post for two weeks. Some specialist training and development has taken place, and curriculum managers are encouraged to share information at regular meetings. However, these developments have not yet had any significant effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

English, languages & communications**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages		3
Adult and community learning	75	3

37. Language courses are available at beginners' level in French, Italian and Spanish, at elementary level in French and Spanish, and at intermediate level in French. Advanced level conversation courses are available for French. Lessons take place weekly and normally last for between one and half and two hours. The City has recently contracted out most of these courses to a local college. However, a pilot course in beginners' French, linked with e-learning, has been contracted out to a local secondary school. None of the programmes lead to external accreditation. Seventy-five learners from a range of age groups have enrolled on these courses so far this year. Most of the learners are women.

Languages*Strengths*

- good achievements on many courses during 2005-06
- good use of individual learning plans

Weaknesses

- much uninspiring teaching and learning
- weak lesson planning

Achievement and standards

38. Levels of achievement are good on many of the current language courses for 2005-06. Reliable data for language courses was available for the first time in 2005-06, and therefore an analysis of achievements for past years was not feasible. Retention of learners on these courses is mostly satisfactory. Some learners reach satisfactory or better standards in the skills of listening and speaking. Others, however, do not reach the expected levels of competence or accuracy in lessons and have weak comprehension and verbal skills. At this early stage in the courses, little written work is available for analysis and comment.

The quality of provision

39. The provider's good use of individual learning plans was identified as a strength at the previous inspection and remains so for all tutors. Learners have a clear understanding and appreciation of the purpose of these plans. The related documents are well maintained and provide an accurate and reliable guide to learning. They record the process of negotiation and monitoring between learners and their tutors effectively.

40. The excessive use of English during the sessions, identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, has been improved. In most lessons, English is now used satisfactorily

by tutors and learners, solely to develop and improve communication skills in the taught language. In good lessons, tutors use the taught language to good effect to promote verbal skills.

41. Assessment, which was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, has improved and is now satisfactory overall. Initial assessments have been carried out for all non-beginners' courses and for one of the beginners' courses. Tutors have used these assessments in preparing individual learning plans. They have also begun recording individual achievements and progress made against the targets set in the plans. These targets, however, are not always effective enough to ensure that learners make the maximum possible progress. As courses are not accredited externally, learners do not have objective criteria against which to check their progress.

42. The range of language courses, identified as strength at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. The City no longer funds courses for the business community and the range of languages and levels is narrower. However, many other opportunities for learning a language are provided in neighbouring areas.

43. Guidance and support remain satisfactory overall. Tutors work individually with learners on their learning plans, encouraging them to take ownership of, and responsibility for, their own learning. The City provides family learning lessons in French and Spanish as part of an initiative to support parents and children in learning languages. Support for literacy and numeracy is available for learners. Subcontractors provide learners with details of courses available. However, some learners feel that they have not received sufficient information regarding the full range of language courses provided in local and neighbouring areas.

44. A great deal of the teaching is uninspiring and does not help learners to perform to their full potential. Many of the learning resources used by tutors are not stimulating enough for learners. Tutors rely too heavily on photocopies of pages from books. As identified at the previous inspection, tutors do not always make enough use of pair and small-group work to stimulate learners' use of the taught language. There is too much emphasis on whole-group tasks, which do not meet the needs of all learners. Tutors do not make sufficient use of the available information and learning technology resources.

45. Lesson planning is weak and lesson plans do not focus adequately enough on teaching strategies and effective learning. Tutors do not plan sufficiently to provide activities relevant to learners at all levels of competence. Opportunities for pair and small-group work are not included sufficiently when planning. Schemes of work are not comprehensive, and are often simply a list of topics. They do not highlight strategies for effective teaching and learning sufficiently.

Leadership and management

46. The City has established very effective quality assurance processes for supporting and monitoring subcontractors. Some initial steps have been taken to provide tutors with relevant training, and to enable them to share good practice and good-quality materials for teaching and learning. These measures include an innovative online and interactive quality improvement toolkit. It is too soon to be able to judge the effects on teaching and learning. The City has identified that tutors require further training in planning lessons and using resources.

47. Curriculum management, identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory overall. The City has recently introduced a number of initiatives to further improve this area, but it is too soon to be able to judge their effects on learning, progress and achievement. Subcontractors have recently appointed curriculum managers to be responsible for language courses. These courses are subject to the subcontractors' effective quality assurance policies and processes.

48. Equality of opportunity remains satisfactory. Language courses comply with the equal opportunities policies of the subcontractors, which are designed to protect learners. The City monitors this situation. Language courses attract learners from a range of ages and backgrounds, who collaborate well. Language lessons promote tolerance and enthusiasm for other cultures.

49. The main accommodation is not always suitable for active learning. The shape of the room makes moving around the room difficult and obscures the whiteboard. The provision of specialist resources is limited and they are not readily available at all venues.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL Adult and community learning	88	3 3

50. The City currently funds eight ESOL classes which are provided by two subcontractors, The City Literary Institute and City and Islington College. Eighty-eight learners were enrolled at the time of inspection, 66 per cent of whom are women. Courses are offered at one Sure Start community centre in the north of the borough, in two primary schools, and in the City of London Community Education Centre. Four classes take place in the daytime, with one class in the evening and three classes on a Saturday. Most classes are at entry level 1, 2 and 3, with one evening class at level 1. Forty-one learners attend the Saturday classes which take place at the City's main community learning centre. The provision is co-ordinated by the subcontractors' relevant curriculum managers.

ESOL*Strengths*

- good additional benefits for learners
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment practice
- insufficient sharing of good practice at curriculum level

Achievement and standards

51. In addition to their achievements in speaking, listening, reading and writing in English, learners make great gains in confidence. They are able to speak more competently with other learners, with tutors, with their children's teachers, and at work. Learners are much more confident in supporting their children at school. They find out about other courses available to them and take advantage of those courses. One ESOL learner had completed the 'volunteering in your child's school' course and was supporting lower-level learners in the ESOL classes.

52. Achievement, retention and attendance are satisfactory. The recognition and recording of progress and achievement is now being introduced and tutors are being trained to use it effectively. External accreditation is available for all learners. Target-setting on individual learning plans and statements of learning has improved. The targets set are specific and measurable and relate closely to learners' needs and interests. Tutors spend time negotiating targets with learners and ensuring that they understand them. Retention is satisfactory overall, at 74 per cent. Attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was poor, but many learners did not attend because of religious commitments. Most learners are making satisfactory progress in developing their language skills.

The quality of provision

53. Support for learners is good. Tutors are supportive and aware of learners' cultural and ethnic backgrounds and the barriers to learning that may arise from those backgrounds. Learners have access to subcontractors' student services. City and Islington College has developed links with the Barbican library that ESOL learners at the City of London Community Education Centre can use access to information technology (IT) facilities, rather than travel to the college's main site. Learners have access to information, advice and guidance about courses available. Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School has a drop-in information, advice and guidance facility, and the outreach workers visit classes and make individual appointments with learners. Parents using the drop-in facility at the school are encouraged to visit classes and to join them when appropriate. Learners' learning records are kept in a single file, which enables the co-ordinator to check progress and identify problems. Some basic IT handouts have now been translated into Bengali. Records are kept about the progression of learners and a booklet has been produced about progression routes. All ESOL classes have free or very low-cost childcare. Isolated mothers and hard-to-reach learners are more able to take advantage of the provision.

54. Standards of teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. Lessons are planned around the needs and interests of learners. The atmosphere in lessons is relaxed and supportive and learners participate well in the various activities. They receive good verbal and written feedback about their work. Some learners are not challenged sufficiently by the work, and there is not enough development of learners' verbal skills. All learners take part in initial assessment and diagnostic assessment activities over the first few weeks of their courses. There is some over-reliance on the use of photocopied worksheets, and not enough time is allowed for learners to consolidate and practise their new skills. Some of the paper-based initial assessment tools used are not appropriate for entry level 1 and 2 ESOL learners. Learners know what their assessed levels are, but many found difficulty with the inappropriate assessment activities.

55. Resources are satisfactory. Most of the accommodation is adequate, although the small size of some rooms limits the number of learners and restricts the use of a variety of teaching strategies. In one room, external noise, and noise from the crèche inside the room makes it unsuitable for speaking and listening activities. There was no evidence of information and communications technology being used to support language and learning, but there are plans for one venue to provide laptop computers for all learners.

56. The City-funded ESOL provision is very small. There are eight classes but all levels are offered, from entry level 1 to level 1, and classes are available in the daytime, in the evening and on Saturdays. Learners appreciate the provision being close to where they live and easily accessible. Most of the provision is for learners at entry level 2 and 3, and learners at entry level 3 and above are encouraged to access the more formal ESOL provision of other local providers.

Leadership and management

57. Learners can access support in local ethnic languages if required, and some IT resources have been translated into Bengali. City and Islington College has a simplified induction booklet for ESOL and skills for life learners, and an equal opportunities statement that is specifically for the community provision. However, tutors do not always

use the diversity of learners in classes to promote cultural awareness, and teaching materials do not always reflect learners' cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

58. Subcontractors' quality improvement procedures are monitored and reviewed regularly at monitoring meetings. However, tutors do not always follow subcontractors' procedures. For example, one inappropriate initial assessment tool that was observed in learners' files was not part of the subcontractor's assessment pack. Staff are observed annually and the records of those observations match the inspectors' findings from observations. However, the quality of those records is inconsistent. Some records make little reference to the quality of teaching and learning and concentrate instead on the quality of the paperwork.

59. The findings of the self-assessment report match most of the inspectors' judgements. One of the strengths and one of the weaknesses identified at inspection were also identified in the self-assessment report, although with a slightly different focus.

60. Good practice is not shared sufficiently throughout the City-funded ESOL provision at curriculum level. Individual curriculum managers meet with City managers, and good practice is shared at providers' meetings. However, at curriculum level there is not enough collaboration to make the most of the good practice employed with learners throughout the borough. The City has no clear sense of direction for the development of the ESOL community provision, or the scale of need and the appropriate location for the provision.

