

REINSPECTION REPORT

Leeds Adult and Community Learning Service Reinspection

07 December 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

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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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Leeds Adult and Community Learning Service (LACLS), which is part of the Leeds Local Education Authority, sits within the jobs and skills service of Leeds City Council. The jobs and skills service is placed within the council's department of learning and leisure. LACLS manages adult and community learning in the city through a contract with West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council. Most of the provision is contracted out to providers across the city from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. At the time of the inspection, LACLS was contracting with 23 separate providers to deliver provision at 194 venues across the city. A small proportion of the provision is directly delivered, including some family learning and mobile outreach information and communications technology (ICT) provision. LACLS provision is targeted in wards and communities which exhibit the highest indices of deprivation. The programmes are predominantly first-step non-accredited provision aimed at engaging or re-engaging those who are not participants in learning. The service directly employs a team of 33 workers, of whom 20 are on permanent contracts and 13 are hourly paid. The manager of the service is supported by a neighbourhood learning co-ordinator, a family programmes co-ordinator, a co-ordinator for learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and two quality improvement officers.

2. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Leeds is 10.8 per cent. However, in some areas of the city, people from minority ethnic groups account for over a quarter of the population.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		4

Information and communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ICT for users		3	
Adult and community learning	271	3	

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Arts, media and publishing		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Dance Adult and community learning	52	2
Music Adult and community learning	381	2
Fine arts Adult and community learning	88	2
Crafts Adult and community learning	231	2

Languages, literature and culture		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other languages, literature and culture Adult and community learning	179	3 3

Preparation for life and work		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy Adult and community learning	54	None
Independent living and leisure skills Adult and community learning	386	4
Access programmes Adult and community learning	145	4

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning Adult and community learning	339	3 3

Grades awarded at reinspection

Preparation for life and work		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy Adult and community learning	67	None
Independent living and leisure skills Adult and community learning	369	2
Access programmes Adult and community learning	112	3

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

3. Inspectors reported on and graded LACLS's preparation for life and work provision which was judged to be inadequate at the previous inspection. ICT, arts, media and publishing, languages, literature and culture and family learning were not reinspected as they had been judged to be satisfactory or better. At the end of the reinspection process, preparation for life and work was found to be good. The overall effectiveness of the provision remains satisfactory.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	15
Number of learners interviewed	21
Number of staff interviewed	14
Number of subcontractors interviewed	21
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	23
Number of visits	3

AREAS OF LEARNING

Preparation for life and work

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy Adult and community learning	67	None
Independent living and leisure skills Adult and community learning	369	2
Access programmes Adult and community learning	112	3

4. LACLS provides learning for 548 learners in preparation for life and work. Of these, 44 per cent are men and 15 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. Twelve per cent of learners are aged under 25 and 10 per cent are over 65. LACLS subcontracts with 15 learning providers, which deliver learning programmes in 50 centres across the city. Venues are located in the most deprived wards.

5. The service offers 50 classes in independent living and leisure skills for 369 learners through a combination of direct and subcontracted provision. LACLS provides classes for 129 learners. Ninety-five learners attend classes at Swarthmore Education Centre, 65 are at the Northern College for Residential Adult Education (Northern College) and 80 are at Park Lane College. Most learners have learning difficulties or mental health difficulties. All learners are part-time including those at Northern College, who attend short residential courses.

6. At the time of the inspection, 67 learners were attending six classes in literacy and numeracy. Most classes are taught over 30 weeks for two hours a week. Two subcontractors run literacy and numeracy classes at community venues. All classes are taught during the day. LACLS provides access programmes for 112 learners. Learners can follow a range of daytime personal development courses in active retirement, life coaching, building confidence and coping with stress.

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at Swarthmore Education Centre
- good development of learners' confidence and skills
- particularly good support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- particularly effective steps to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of individual learning plans
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress in literacy and numeracy
- insufficient sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

7. Attainment of social, behavioural and creative skills and the achievement of goals for learners at Swarthmore Education Centre are good. Learners extend and enhance their abilities to work co-operatively and to communicate and discuss experiences with their peers. They increase their self-confidence and can effectively carry out everyday tasks. The standard of most learners' work is good. Learners on arts courses produce work to a high standard. Achievement of basic skills qualifications is good. In the past 12 months, of the 58 learners entered for the national tests, 38 have passed. All the learners entered for a British Sign Language examination were successful.

8. Learners' development of confidence and social skills is good. They gain confidence in learning activities and improve social skills through better interaction with tutors, carers and others in the group. Learners are able to work constructively in group activities. For example, in a creative dance group, learners were able to initiate their own movements and perform solo dances, while others in wheelchairs improved their warm-up exercises and communicated better with support assistants. Learners on an art course use public transport to visit galleries and museums and this enables them to meet and speak with members of the public, which they were previously unable to do. Learners from Northern College develop skills to help them write a curriculum vitae, use a computer and gain literacy and numeracy qualifications. One learner chairs a staff/learner forum and can now write up better notes from meetings. Literacy and numeracy learners are now able to help their children and grandchildren with school work. One learner in an active retirement class can now confidently act as treasurer.

The quality of provision

9. Support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. Learning support assistants and volunteers are well managed. Learners benefit from individual coaching during sessions. This helps them to develop social skills and awareness and tolerance of others. In some classes, carers make a positive contribution to the lesson by supporting learners and tutors. Tutors are highly sensitive to the complex and diverse needs of learners. In a cookery lesson, a tutor provided calm and effective support to a learner who could be very volatile, enabling the learner to prepare and produce a meal using fresh ingredients.

10. Teaching and learning have improved and are now satisfactory. In the better sessions, tutors take account of the individual needs of learners when planning, delivering and managing lessons. They set challenging targets for learners. Learners participate fully in sessions. Tutors use a range of learning methods, resources and differentiated learning materials. In the less effective lessons, activities to meet the different levels of learners' abilities and needs are not sufficiently well planned and the range of teaching techniques is too narrow.

11. Resources are satisfactory. Tutors are suitably qualified and have good access to staff development opportunities across the provision. Resources and facilities for teaching and learning at Swarthmore Education Centre are particularly good. Classrooms are of a good size and are well furnished and well maintained. Facilities for dance, pottery and art are excellent. Basic skills resources are good and include a wide range of learning aids, games, exercises and activities.

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12. Accommodation and facilities have been improved and are now satisfactory. A comprehensive report on accommodation and facilities was produced after the previous inspection, and this formed the basis of an action plan to update all venues used for adult learning. Venues are now carefully monitored to ensure that they meet the authority's standards for learning centres.

13. Arrangements for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement are effective. There is a thorough and detailed policy and guidelines for implementing this process for all subcontractors. Staff have received appropriate training to support this initiative. Paperwork has been standardised and subcontractors that are unable to carry out the processes are no longer offered contracts. Procedures are particularly effective in the 'Stepping Out' provision at Park Lane College. In a minority of subcontractors, tutors are reluctant to apply the process fully. The supporting paperwork is insufficiently individualised to meet the needs of learners and is often completed as an afterthought, rather than integrated with the learning.

14. Most programmes across the provision meet the needs of learners. These include active retirement courses and courses in centres for people with mental health needs, homeless people and refugees. A range of independent living and leisure skills programmes is provided in contemporary dance, art in the community and trampolining. LACLS has developed a range of literacy and numeracy courses across the city to meet identified gaps in provision.

15. There is relatively little provision of literacy, numeracy and language by LACLS because many of these needs are met through college provision. LACLS has now ensured that there is a much greater emphasis on literacy, numeracy and language in the area of learning.

16. There is insufficient use of individual learning plans across the provision. Although some tutors complete good individual learning plans with clearly defined and achievable targets, many are insufficiently individualised. They do not enable learners' progress to be effectively recorded. In literacy and numeracy lessons, group learning targets are often vague. The use of initial assessment is inconsistent across the provision. In some classes, tutors use initial assessments effectively and identify clear targets for individual learners. In other classes, tutors do not use initial assessments to identify starting points or to plan learning effectively.

17. There is insufficient monitoring of learners' progress on literacy and numeracy programmes. Tutors do not keep adequate records of activities completed by learners. They do not cross-reference learning to individual learning goals where these have been identified by initial assessment. Learners record activities at the end of the session, but tutors do not concentrate on identifying achievement with learners. Tutors give good, clear verbal feedback to learners in lessons, but this is not formally recorded.

Leadership and management

18. Managers have taken particularly effective steps to make improvements. Strengths identified during the previous inspection have been maintained and most weaknesses successfully resolved. Accommodation and facilities have been improved and quality improvement arrangements are rigorous. Monitoring of subcontractors is good. Teaching is now satisfactory overall. A rigorous observation of teaching and learning scheme is

now in place and tutors are observed once each year. They receive constructive feedback which helps them to improve. Observation reports are moderated to ensure consistency. Seventy-one observations were carried out in 2005-06 and a summary report produced for managers. This report correctly identifies many of the key strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning found by inspectors. Managers have begun to make use of these reports to improve the standards of teaching and learning.

19. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners are treated with respect and consideration of their individual needs. Tutors and learning support assistants are aware of the diverse needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with mental health difficulties. Most tutors demonstrate appropriate awareness of equality of opportunity principles during teaching and learning sessions. There is good access to learning venues for those with restricted mobility and an appropriate range of specialist resources and facilities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

20. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Inspectors found most teaching to be satisfactory, but insufficient that was good or better. LACLS has a well-established tutor forum for sharing good practice in teaching and learning but attendance is often poor. The observation of teaching and learning scheme has begun to identify good practice, but an effective strategy for sharing this good practice is not yet in place.

21. The self-assessment process is now rigorous and inclusive. LACLS's staff provide subcontractors with help and support during the self-assessment process. Subcontractors now have an appropriate understanding of self-assessment and know how to use the process to make improvements. Service level agreements are thorough and clearly identify roles and responsibilities for each subcontractor. The self-assessment report identified most of the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Inspectors gave a higher grade than that in the self-assessment report.

