

REINSPECTION REPORT

Walsall LEA Reinspection

01 March 2007



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Walsall College of Continuing Education (the college) was established in 1993 by Walsall local education authority (the LEA). Up until 2004, it provided accredited community learning in Walsall. In August 2004, the college was given responsibility for the LEA's adult and community learning provision, which was formerly managed by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council Walsall (MBC) and delivered by a range of community-based associations throughout the borough.
2. The college's directly delivered provision is based at two main sites in Walsall, the main site at Hawbush, and the Whitehall centre, which provides mostly English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. The college has directly delivered information and communications technology (ICT) courses at a number of schools and community venues. The provider delivers its non-accredited provision either directly or through 12 subcontracted partners in a large number of community locations throughout the metropolitan borough.
3. Fifty-six permanent staff and 73 part-time teaching staff, including nine support workers, are employed at the college. The 12 external community associations and organisations that deliver adult and community learning provision employ their own, mostly part-time, tutors. The college also works with a variety of partners including the Primary Care Trust, the LEA, community associations, schools, libraries, Sure Start and other providers.
4. The directly delivered provision mostly comprises ICT and preparation for life and work. These areas account for 75 per cent of the provider's total provision, and leisure, travel and tourism, languages, literature and culture, arts, media and publishing, and the other eight areas not inspected make up the remainder. The highest proportion of direct provision is for ICT. The largest area of adult and community non-accredited provision is now arts, media and publishing, with small numbers of learners in the other areas of learning. The total number of learners in the year 2005-06 was 8,696.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

| Information and communications technology 3 | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>ICT for users</i> Adult and community learning | 739 | 3 3 |
| Leisure, travel and tourism 4 | | |
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning | 1,090 | 4 4 |
| Arts, media and publishing 3 | | |
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Dance</i> Adult and community learning | 367 | 3 |
| <i>Music</i> Adult and community learning | 27 | 3 |
| <i>Fine arts</i> Adult and community learning | 241 | 3 |
| <i>Crafts</i> Adult and community learning | 488 | 3 |
| Languages, literature and culture 4 | | |
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Language, literature and culture of the British Isles</i> Adult and community learning | 8 | 4 |
| <i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning | 324 | 4 |
| Preparation for life and work 3 | | |
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning | 389 | 3 3 |
| <i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning | 281 | 3 2 |
| <i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning | 300 | 3 3 |

Grades awarded at reinspection

| Leisure, travel and tourism | | 3 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> | | 3 |
| Adult and community learning | 37 | 3 |

| Languages, literature and culture | | 3 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Language, literature and culture of the British Isles</i> | | |
| Adult and community learning | 6 | 3 |
| <i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> | | |
| Adult and community learning | 151 | 3 |

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

5. This was a partial reinspection. It covered only leisure, travel and tourism and languages literature and culture, which were the two aspects of the college's provision found to be inadequate at the previous inspection.

6. The reinspection took place in four stages. There were three monitoring visits of which the first was by one inspector for one day in June 2006, the second by two inspectors for one day in October 2006, and there was a further visit by one inspector in January 2007. A final visit was made by two inspectors, one for three and one for four days, in February 2007.

7. The college received a full inspection in December 2005. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity were satisfactory. Quality improvement was inadequate. ICT, arts, media and publishing, and the provision in preparation for life and work were satisfactory. The provision in leisure, travel and tourism, and languages, literature and culture was inadequate.

8. The college has made significant changes to its leisure, travel and tourism, and languages, literature and culture provisions, in particular, in the co-ordination and management of both areas, and in the setting and assessment of learning goals. The leisure, travel and tourism, and languages, literature and culture provisions are now satisfactory. Overall effectiveness remains satisfactory.

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of inspectors | 2 |
| Number of inspection days | 11 |
| Number of learners interviewed | 25 |
| Number of staff interviewed | 10 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 7 |
| Number of visits | 4 |

AREAS OF LEARNING

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 3

| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> | | 3 |
| Adult and community learning | 37 | 3 |

9. Walsall MBC devolves management of its adult and community learning provision to the college. The college provides a range of sport and leisure courses which are aimed at attracting participants to meet the authority's identified strategic objectives. These are to recruit primarily older participants who are 55 years of age and over, men, and members of minority ethnic groups. The programmes offered are all non-accredited and currently include only exercise, keep fit and swimming. A new programme called Sporting Steps is under development which will offer a range of levels in all activities. Courses are offered at a range of learning centres throughout the borough. At the time of the reinspection, 37 learners had enrolled. In 2005-06, the programme had 1,322 enrolments.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Strengths

- good support to tutors to improve their teaching
- very effective management to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- very narrow range of provision

Achievement and standards

10. Achievements by learners are satisfactory. In the classes observed by inspectors, there were good levels of activity and learners were obviously enjoying their activities. Tutors make every effort to set challenging activities. Learners confirm that they experience a wide range of additional social and health benefits by attending these classes.

The quality of provision

11. Tutors have received good support to improve their teaching. They have had opportunities to attend a wide range of training events, and identify and recognise the value and objectives of these courses. Tutors observed now demonstrate a much-improved focus on, and implementation, of the principles of recognising and recording progress and achievement. Revisions to documents such as individual learning plans and records have been well received and tutors' use of individual learning plans has improved. Some tutors make very good use of the plans to record and monitor learners' progress against identified aims and objectives.

12. Examples of better teaching include well-developed and detailed schemes of work,

with very effective lesson plans for each session. Tutors are very aware of individual learning objectives. They use individual learning plans and pre-activity health questionnaires to ensure that learners gain maximum enjoyment, and participate fully. Learning sessions are enjoyable and greatly appreciated by the learners, some of whom have been attending for long periods of time. Group activities and tasks are used effectively to reinforce learners' knowledge and understanding. A range of assessment methods is used, which includes peer observation, self-reflection and tutor observation to monitor learners' progress against set goals. Learners' attendance at the sessions observed by inspectors was good.

13. Tutors are well qualified, and have current qualifications or sport/activity awards from recognised awarding bodies. Classes are held in appropriate facilities. Tutors provide good-quality handouts to enable learners to practise and reinforce their understanding and knowledge.

14. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Tutors provide adequate support and guidance to learners during classes. The college has established systems to provide advice and guidance to learners at its main sites. Support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs is not a key priority for this type of provision, but tutors are supportive and provide non-specialist support when needed.

15. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Only a small sample of classes was available to be observed during the reinspection process, and none of the sessions observed was unsatisfactory.

16. The focus on health and safety has improved since the previous inspection. Tutors carry out risk assessments of activities and venues, and a standardised pre-activity health questionnaire is used for all classes.

17. The current range of activities is very narrow. At the time of the reinspection, only four classes were offered, two of which are in swimming, and two are exercise/keep-fit related. The reason for the narrow range provision is recognised by managers as being a necessary stage in the redevelopment of the programme. Management's actions to resolve the identified weaknesses and deliver better-quality provision to learners have contributed to the current narrow range on offer. Some subcontracted provision is no longer available because the providers refused to meet new quality system demands. Some tutors who were observed and identified as needing substantial support are no longer providing tuition. The provider plans to develop a new programme which will include a wider range of courses at all levels at a number of venues throughout the borough. Free taster sessions are currently being promoted to the target populations. A 'needs analysis' exercise is currently being carried out by an external consultant in order to identify the course needs of the target minority ethnic groups.

Leadership and management

18. Management of the area has been very effective in resolving the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Good strategic management is supported by a detailed strategic and development plan for the area, which clearly identifies the target population groups. Regular meetings have been held with the main providers, and a fractional curriculum co-ordinator has been appointed. Regular curriculum group meetings are held with tutors who are paid to attend these sessions. A detailed inventory

of all provision in the borough is available. Key decisions have been taken regarding the further use of subcontracted provision and the increase of direct provision. This process will enable more direct control of a larger proportion of the provision.

19. A range of free taster sessions is currently being offered to promote the revised programme and some good marketing strategies are being used, such as sponsoring a local football team match day. This included promotion of the football coaching taster sessions in the match day programme.

20. Extensive use of a range of external consultants in areas such as the observation of teaching process, and making links with other key providers, has been a positive and constructive process. Relationships have been developed to establish access to expert staff, and staff training and updating. There are now good links with local colleges, which are used effectively to moderate observation outcomes as well as to conduct joint observations.

21. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. A current position statement matches inspectors' findings and provides a realistic appraisal of what stage the provider has reached in relation to achieving its key objectives.

Languages, literature and culture**Grade 3**

| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Language, literature and culture of the British Isles</i> Adult and community learning | 6 | 3 |
| <i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning | 151 | 3 |

22. At the time of reinspection, 151 learners were distributed among 18 modern foreign language courses and six learners were on a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English course. Overall, 81 per cent of the provision is in the evening. Modern foreign languages courses are offered at six community centres and, in addition to GCSE English, at the main sites of the college. One lunchtime Spanish course attended by council employees is provided on their own premises. French and Spanish are the most popular taught languages and together account for all of the current provision apart from one course for Welsh and one for Arabic. Seventy-eight per cent of the courses are at level 1. Spanish is also currently offered at level 2, and French is offered up to level 4. All current language training above level 1 is at one learning centre.

23. Courses are provided for two hours each week, for between 10 and 30 weeks each year for non-accredited provision, and 35 weeks each year for accredited provision. Sixty-one per cent of learners are women, 36 per cent are aged 55 or more, 9 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, and 4 per cent of learners have a declared disability. There are 10 part-time language tutors and two fractional curriculum co-ordinators. The observation of teaching and learning team leader has responsibility for curriculum development and quality improvement.

Strengths

- good achievement rates in modern foreign languages
- good pass rates in GCSE English
- good use of target language in modern foreign language classes
- very supportive learning environment
- very effective management action to improve provision

Weaknesses

- narrow range of provision

Achievement and standards

24. Success rates in modern foreign languages are good. In 2005-06, 90 per cent of learners achieved their learning goals, and many courses had achievement rates of 100 per cent. Most learners currently on programme are making good progress. No achievement data was available at the previous inspection.

25. Pass rates for GCSE English courses at grade C or above are good. One hundred per cent of the learners who entered for the examination in 2005-06, achieved a grade C or above. This was also a strength at the previous inspection, but retention for that year was

poor, at 50 per cent. The current profile is small, but retention so far is much improved and only one learner from a total of seven had left at the time of the inspection.

26. Attainment in most of the learning sessions observed is satisfactory overall. Most modern foreign language learners speak with fluency and demonstrate levels of comprehension appropriate to the level of their course. Learners make progress and gain confidence.

27. Retention on modern foreign language courses is satisfactory. Retention at the same time in 2005-06 was 82 per cent, and so far in 2006-07 it is 84 per cent.

The quality of provision

28. In modern foreign language classes, tutors and learners use the target language well. Tutors use the target language in the classroom. Learners respond by using the target language themselves to ask questions and participate in discussions. At the previous inspection, the excessive use of English by tutors and learners was a major contributor to inadequate levels of teaching and learning. Standards of teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall. Individual tutors make good use of objects from everyday life, information and learning technology (ILT), and a variety of audiovisual material to involve learners, but the quality and availability of these resources is not consistent. Lessons are generally well planned and lesson objectives reflect group and individual learning goals. There is some planned differentiation in terms of the support needed and outcomes expected for individual learners.

29. The college, and community centres and associations continue to provide a very supportive learning environment. This was a strength at the previous inspection. Learners make effective use of the friendly, informal atmospheres in learning sessions. Some groups of learners have worked together for several terms and learners provide each other with considerable support and confidence. The daytime provision enables many older learners to attend. Many tutors encourage learners to contact them outside the sessions for help and guidance.

30. Resources are satisfactory. Rooms are generally adequate and some are good. Resources such as video players can be reserved in learning centres, and some courses have access to good ILT equipment. Tutors are all linguistically competent and are either qualified teachers or are working towards an appropriate teaching qualification.

31. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The provision attracts new learners, and 65 per cent of current learners are new to the provision. At the previous inspection the provider did not recruit sufficiently from under-represented groups for this area of learning. The percentage of learners from minority ethnic groups has increased to 9 per cent. The provider has also commissioned a needs analysis for adult and community provision in the Walsall area, which has had a particular focus on the needs of minority ethnic communities. The report has not been produced yet and it is too soon to be able to judge its effect on the provision.

32. The setting and monitoring of learning outcomes is now satisfactory. At the previous inspection it was inadequate. The provider has adopted the five stage, recognition and recording of progress and achievement system, and has trained tutors accordingly. Tutors now negotiate and set clear group learning objectives which are supplemented by

learners' own individual learning objectives. The objectives are set in terms of what the learners will be able to do. Tutors evaluate learning effectively. Lesson plans include indications of in-session assessments of learning, and appropriate activities are used to assess the achievement of group and individual learning goals. Most tutors record assessments adequately. Learners also keep learning diaries and individual learning records.

33. The range of provision is narrow. Only four languages are currently being taught. French is offered at four levels, Spanish at two, and Arabic and Welsh at beginner level only. This represents a reduction since the previous inspection at which time the range was adequate. A number of tutors and some subcontracted learning centres are no longer involved in the modern foreign languages programmes, either by choice or because they did not respond adequately to the provider's quality improvement measures following the previous inspection. The provider is involved in a comprehensive recruitment programme to increase the number of suitable tutors and the range of provision. Providers' staff are in contact with community groups in order to promote the planned provision in community languages such as Urdu and Gujarati. The provider has adopted the language ladder as a nationally recognised set of language level descriptors. This provides clear progression routes within the college's own programmes, or into other non-accredited or accredited provision. New pamphlets for each language offered, with improved course descriptors and learning objectives, enable learners to choose the most appropriate course.

Leadership and management

34. Senior management have taken very effective actions to improve the provision. The previous inspection identified that there was not enough curriculum co-ordination among the partner providers. The college has clarified the role and the responsibilities of its fractional curriculum co-ordinator for this area. The co-ordinator has established direct communication with all tutors in addition to management-level co-ordination with learning centre managers. The planning of the curriculum and progression routes is now satisfactory. The adoption of the language ladder descriptors has clarified the start points and outcomes for each course, which are now fully understood by community centre staff. Non-specific course titles, such as 'beginner' or 'intermediate', are no longer used.

35. Tutors have attended a range of training events which included some which were aimed specifically at language training issues. They have received individual support when necessary, and have established mutual support groups to share good practice. Tutors' attendance at training sessions has been good. The college has set up a virtual learning environment to help tutors share good practice and training materials. It is planned to train tutors in its use, but it is too soon to judge the effect that this will have on the provision.

36. The college has invested in external reviews and consultants to identify and drive forward the necessary improvements to the provision. An effective programme of teaching and learning observations, carried out by subject specialists, has identified training needs and has established the content of training sessions. In the latest round of observations, the grades were similar to those given by inspectors.

37. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Adequate arrangements are made to provide

access for learners with restricted mobility. Tutors provide additional support as required to learners with additional support needs.

38. Community centres now submit their own self-assessment reports to the college for inclusion in the overall report. At the time of the reinspection the college self-assessment report for 2005-06 was some months old and the curriculum area report was no longer accurate. However, a position paper produced before the reinspection identified most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

