

INSPECTION REPORT

City Lit

19 January 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
- **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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

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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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. City Lit is located in Covent Garden, in the London Borough of Camden. It was established in 1919 by the London County Council as one of five literary institutes. Its original brief was to stimulate demand for evening study among office workers, mainly in the arts and humanities. This is still part of its mission, though its provision has been broadened extensively since then and now includes courses in a number of specialist areas such as skills for life, speech therapy, sign language and lip reading. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. City Lit was incorporated in 1990 and is both a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, City Lit was designated as a specialist adult education institution, and since 2001, it has been funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for London Central. In 2005-06, the local LSC accounted for 58 per cent of City Lit's income. A further 27 per cent came from tuition fees and 15 per cent from other sources. Since it was last inspected, City Lit has moved to new premises in Covent Garden. The building is the largest adult education centre in Europe and has 58 classrooms.

2. City Lit serves a number of communities, both local and throughout London. Its main aim is to enhance the lives of adults and improve employers' workforces by providing inspiring lifelong learning opportunities. Good transport links attract local residents and commuters. Approximately 25 per cent of the learners live in the boroughs surrounding City Lit's premises, and 90 per cent live inside the M25. City Lit also attracts learners from outside London because of the specialist nature of many of its courses. In recent years, it has developed a growing programme of community outreach courses to meet the learning needs of under-represented groups of adults in local neighbourhoods. In 2005-06, more than 23,000 learners took up over 46,000 places and enrolled on 3,340 courses at City Lit. Sixty-eight per cent of learners were women. The largest age group was between 30 and 39 years old, but 14 per cent of learners were aged 60 years or over. Almost 20 per cent of learners were from a minority ethnic group. In the current year, 12,784 learners have taken up 21,247 places at City Lit.

3. City Lit offers 14 areas of learning. The courses are all part time, and are organised into five faculties and 20 departments. The largest subject areas are visual and performing arts, humanities and languages. Family learning provision is subcontracted to City Lit from the London Borough of Camden Council, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council and from the Corporation of London. City Lit is managed by the principal, together with two vice principals who are responsible for programme development and quality, and resources, respectively. They report to the governing body. Five heads of faculty manage the curriculum areas, learning support, information, advice and guidance, and the learning centre, and are supported by 20 heads of department and a number of other managers in cross-college roles. City Lit employs 1,071 permanent members of staff, of whom 127 are lecturers and academic managers and 129 are support staff. It employs some 800 part-time specialist tutors.

4. The largest proportion of City Lit's learners comes from the London Borough of Camden. Camden is a relatively well-educated and prosperous community and is well

known as an important business district. In September 2006, the borough's unemployment rate was 3.4 per cent, compared with 2.6 per cent nationally. According to the 2001 census, minority ethnic communities represent 15.4 per cent of the borough's population, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** This grade is given as a substantial amount of the provision is outstanding or good. Only 5 per cent of the total provision is inadequate and this is in an area of learning where there are established plans for improvement. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are good. Quality improvement is satisfactory. The quality of provision in health, public services and care, and arts, media and publishing is outstanding. In languages, literature and culture, it is good and in family learning is satisfactory. The quality of provision in preparation for life and work is inadequate.

6. **Achievement and standards are good.** Learners' attainment of skills and their standards of work are good or very good in most curriculum areas. Many learners use the skills gained at City Lit in their work and personal lives, or to further their education. Learners' work is very good in arts, media and publishing. Retention rates are very good on non-accredited courses in speech therapy and crafts. Overall success rates on accredited courses longer than 12 weeks are poor and have fallen from 62 per cent to 57 per cent since 2004-05. Retention rates on accredited courses are good. In 2005-06, the retention rate was 86 per cent, which represented a slight decrease from 87 per cent in 2004-05. Success rates for accredited courses vary considerably. They are good in sign language, but poor on some modern foreign and classical languages courses, and in skills for life.

7. **The quality of provision is good.** Standards of teaching and learning are good overall. Of the 87 learning sessions observed by inspectors, 67 per cent were judged to be good or better, 28 per cent were satisfactory and 5 per cent were inadequate. On the best courses in all areas of learning, tutors are very knowledgeable and many are expert professionals in their subject. Lessons are planned well and learners are challenged to develop independent learning skills and to produce work to current industry standards. Teaching is unsatisfactory in skills for life. Processes to recognise and record progress and achievement on the large number of non-accredited courses are insufficiently developed in some curriculum areas.

8. **The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is outstanding.** An extensive choice of courses is offered in all curriculum areas. Links with employers and partnership working are very good. City Lit has made a deliberate decision to expand its provision for under-represented groups of learners. Courses take place at times of the day to suit the needs of a wide range of learners. Many learners travel a considerable distance to take part in courses at City Lit. Consultation with learners is good. City Lit places a high priority on the use of learners' feedback to develop and improve its provision.

9. **Support for learners is good.** Tutors provide appropriate and effective personal support for learners. Guidance and support for learners are excellent in dramatic arts. The provision of information, advice and guidance and the support for study skills are good.

City Lit uses the learner support fund well to enable a wide range of learners to attend courses.

10. The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process. The self-assessment process is inclusive and well defined, and staff are given clear guidelines on how to contribute. Data is used well throughout the process to support judgements about the quality of the provision. The strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors matched many of those in the self-assessment report. However, some of the grades in the report are not an accurate reflection of the quality of the provision. In some cases, the report does not identify clearly what evidence has been used to support the judgements.

11. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements. Since it was previously inspected in 2003, City Lit has made significant progress to rectify some of its weaknesses through the move to new premises. Retention and success rates have improved in some curriculum areas, but declined in others. The profile of grades given during the inspection is broadly similar to those at the previous inspection. The skills for life provision, which was judged to be satisfactory at reinspection in 2004, is now inadequate. City Lit has rectified most of the weaknesses identified in the areas of learning at the 2003 inspection, but some still remain to be resolved.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CITY LIT:

- continue to offer outstanding provision
- maintain the extensive range of courses
- improve and maintain the skills for life strategy
- develop the processes to measure and record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses
- improve the effectiveness of the quality improvement processes

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Health, public services and care			1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Other subjects and vocations allied to medicine</i>		1	
Adult and community learning	68	1	

Arts, media and publishing		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Dramatic arts</i> Adult and community learning	1,205	1 1
<i>Music</i> Adult and community learning	2,076	2 2
<i>Crafts</i> Adult and community learning	1,076	1 1

Languages, literature and culture		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning	3,260	2 2

Preparation for life and work		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	863	4 4

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	390	3 3

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

12. City Lit was first inspected in January 2003. Its skills for life provision was reinspected in January 2004 and judged satisfactory, and a quality monitoring visit took place in November 2005. Fifteen inspectors visited City Lit for five days to carry out the inspection in January 2007. They reported on and graded five areas of learning.

Number of inspectors	15
Number of inspection days	72
Number of learners interviewed	518
Number of staff interviewed	160
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	7
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	4
Number of visits	1

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of change
- good strategic planning and management
- extensive range of courses to meet the needs and interests of learners
- very good engagement with employers and partners
- strong promotion of equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established processes to measure and record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses
- incomplete skills for life strategy
- insufficiently effective aspects of quality improvement

Health, public services and care

Strengths

- outstanding retention rates
- very good achievements
- very good teaching and learning
- extensive range of courses
- outstanding leadership and management

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses

Arts, media and publishing

Dramatic arts

Strengths

- very good standards of work
- very good progression to employment
- much very good teaching by experienced practitioners
- particularly extensive course provision
- excellent support and guidance for learners
- strong curriculum leadership and management

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

Music

Strengths

- good attainment of performance skills
- innovative teaching to promote creative learning
- rich and diverse curriculum
- good planning to develop the curriculum

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of targets to challenge learners and measure progress
- insufficient use of technology to extend teaching and learning

Crafts

Strengths

- exceptionally good standards of learners' work
- very good retention rates
- very good teaching and learning
- good range of specialist provision
- very good leadership and management

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses

Languages, literature and culture

Strengths

- good achievements on sign language courses
- good attainment of listening and receptive skills in spoken and sign language
- much good teaching and learning
- extensive languages provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of identified needs to plan learning and review progress

Preparation for life and work

Strengths

- wide range of skills for life provision
- good study support

Weaknesses

- poor success rates on accredited courses
- unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient planning to meet individual needs
- inadequate action to monitor and improve the provision

Family learning

Adult and community learning

Strengths

- very good attainment of personal and social skills
- good teaching and learning on language, literacy, numeracy and childcare courses to develop parenting skills
- very effective partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on meeting learners' individual needs
- insufficiently established quality improvement processes

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CITY LIT:

- the support for learners - 'without a crèche, I couldn't attend'
- the social aspects of the classes - 'our class is a community'
- the friendly and approachable tutors - 'they are always there for you'
- the standard of course information and guidance - 'the website is great and drew me in'
- the respect shown to learners by staff
- the new building
- the tutors' professional expertise

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CITY LIT COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of opportunities to perform music
- the shortage of rehearsal facilities in drama
- the size of some classrooms which are too small for the numbers of learners
- the enrolment system
- the availability of longer courses
- the processes for recognising and recording progress on non-accredited courses - 'I didn't understand the need for self-evaluation at the beginning of the course'
- the availability of popular books which are recommended for courses

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good management of change
- good strategic planning and management
- extensive range of courses to meet the needs and interests of learners
- very good engagement with employers and partners
- strong promotion of equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established processes to measure and record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses
- incomplete skills for life strategy
- insufficiently effective aspects of quality improvement

13. City Lit's management of change is good. Managers have skilfully implemented a number of significant changes since the previous inspection, closing the old centres and successfully transferring the provision to a single purpose-built building. The new accommodation provides a very professional and welcoming environment for learning. Classrooms and resources at the new centre are used efficiently to offer a wide range of courses. A new principal has been appointed since the previous inspection, and the programme of change has widened. The strategy has successfully retained the best of City Lit's provision while developing new business to protect its traditional course offer. The provision has continued to increase during a period of significant reductions in funding for adult courses. Managers have successfully promoted this strategy for growth to staff, and provide good support for them to bring about changes to the provision. Communications are very good, and staff feel involved in the future development of City Lit. Financial management is good. Well-planned strategies to mitigate the effects of reduced LSC funding have enabled significant investment in new information and learning technology (ILT).

14. Strategic planning and management are good. Senior managers and governors at City Lit work well together to provide strong leadership and to set a clear direction for its future development. Managers take account of a wide range of internal and external evidence to ensure thorough strategic planning. A full strategic review was carried out in 2005 during which strategic planning was integrated with the planning cycle for other important business processes. City Lit has its own detailed annual strategic plan to support the three-year development plan submitted to the LSC. Actions in the strategic plan are supported well by a wide range of detailed performance targets. Senior managers and governors monitor the performance of City Lit closely through regular analysis of important performance indicators. Governors are knowledgeable about the work of City Lit and the community it serves, and they carry out their role well. The senior management team acts as a very effective interface between governors, middle managers and other staff. Senior managers use an innovative risk-management process to provide

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staff with a valuable and easily understood interpretation of the extent and status of risks that might affect teaching and learning at City Lit. A wide range of effective working groups enables staff to make their views known to managers. Staff welcome the way in which the principal maintains a visible presence in their curriculum areas.

15. There is an extensive range of courses to meet the needs and interests of learners. The curriculum offer at City Lit is diverse with over 3,000 programmes available across 20 curriculum areas. Many of the courses are offered at different levels. City Lit is one of the very few centres in the country to run some of the programmes, and in some cases, it is the only provider of particular subject areas. Its courses have an excellent reputation, nationally and internationally. Curriculum planning and management are good in many areas of learning. Some learners travel considerable distances to attend courses at City Lit. Staff continually seek new ways in which to offer courses and have expanded the provision to include courses late in the evening and on Sundays to fit with learners' working patterns in London. New courses are introduced carefully and supported well. City Lit has responded effectively to the need to expand skills for life provision and has continued to develop its community outreach programme.

16. City Lit engages very well with employers and partners. Relationships with employers and the local community are good. Over the past 18 months, City Lit has developed an effective business development unit, which is managed by staff with relevant professional experience. The unit has been expanded carefully to take account of existing resources and expertise. Good analysis is carried out of the needs of employers and the local community. Communications with external partners and employers are good and courses are responsive to the needs of individual customers. City Lit works in partnership with a number of prestigious companies and is often selected as a partner in competition with other education and training providers.

17. The use of management information to monitor and set targets is satisfactory. Governors and managers receive timely and reliable financial reports. City Lit has recently implemented a new management information system to rectify some of the weaknesses in its previous arrangements for collecting and analysing data. The introduction of the new system was planned well to incorporate the views of all staff, and has been supported by an ongoing programme of staff development. However, the system is not yet able to provide managers with a full range of timely and accurate data. Some managers are not sufficiently aware of the benefits of regular analysis of important management information to help them manage their curriculum areas.

18. Processes to measure and record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses are insufficiently established. City Lit has identified the development of these processes as a significant part of its strategy to recognise the importance and value of the substantial amount of non-accredited provision. Tutors are encouraged to develop a range of approaches which are suitable for the subject area. Some teaching staff have devised imaginative ways to demonstrate learners' progress and achievement of clear measurable learning objectives. However, not all tutors use initial assessment to identify learners' prior experiences or to set detailed and meaningful learning outcomes. Insufficient focus is placed on evaluating the extent to which learners fulfil their potential through the regular setting of challenging targets. It is not possible to accurately measure learners' achievements and some areas of learning do not have sufficiently rigorous systems to moderate tutors' assessment practices. In a number of curriculum areas, too

few statements of learning are submitted by tutors as evidence of learners' achievements on non-accredited courses.

19. The strategy for skills for life is incomplete. City Lit has substantially increased its skills for life provision since the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in some curriculum areas to develop a range of courses that offer learners the opportunity to develop their literacy, numeracy or language skills in the context of other subjects. However, the skills for life strategy does not accurately identify appropriate actions to improve the quality of provision or to increase awareness of the importance of skills for life across all areas of learning. Success rates on most accredited skills for life courses are poor and much of the teaching in the curriculum area is unsatisfactory.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

20. Equality of opportunity is good. City Lit's promotion of a culture of equality and diversity is strong. Its values are clearly stated in its mission statement and in its strategic and operational plans. Governors, the principal and senior managers take the lead in promoting equal opportunities policies and plans to staff and learners. Equality and diversity feature as important objectives throughout the year and are used to help set the agenda for all management groups. The equality statement written by the principal is displayed prominently in all public areas. The principal chairs a diversity action group, which has been set up recently. The group is responsible for the development of new initiatives, and complements the work of the equality and diversity committee well. The two groups are used to resolve issues relating to equality of opportunity and to promote change. Every section of the self-assessment report contains a commentary on equality. All significant proposals submitted to the senior management team are required to identify how they will affect equality and diversity.

21. City Lit's equality and diversity policy is comprehensive and fulfils its obligations under the relevant race relations, disability and equality legislation. The provider's disability equality scheme is used to eliminate discrimination against any learner with a disability, and is supported by action plans for each client group. Staff development and training on equality of opportunity are thorough and take account of both general and specialist areas of equality and diversity. Learners with a wide range of disabilities are able to access the building easily. However, the arrangements for the large number of deaf learners who attend City Lit to call for assistance in lifts are incomplete. There was a 25 per cent increase in the number of learners at City Lit with a declared disability and/or learning need in 2005-06.

22. There is good widening of participation. City Lit has a wide range of courses for learners from under-represented groups, including significant amounts of provision for learners with hearing difficulties and speech impediments. In addition, City Lit provides specialist support for staff who teach learners with disabilities in other further and higher education establishments. Community outreach work is used successfully to recruit learners who experience significant social and economic barriers to learning. City Lit uses a wide range of partners to provide relevant work experience for non-traditional learners, such as hostels for the homeless. Good use is made of access funds to support learners who find it difficult to afford travel, materials and childcare expenses. City Lit uses its own funds, including bursaries, to continue to support some learners when access funds are no longer available. Important performance indicators for different groups of learners are monitored to assess the effect of City Lit's widening participation strategies. Challenging

targets are set to recruit learners and staff from minority ethnic groups, and the proportions are higher than in the local population.

23. The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some tutors integrate examples of cultural diversity very well with their teaching, for example in music and humanities. However, in some curriculum areas and individual subjects, tutors and/or learners are not sufficiently aware of the dangers of cultural stereotyping or the need to reflect the diversity of the learners through appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

24. Quality improvement is satisfactory although some aspects are insufficiently effective. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made in some curriculum areas, others have maintained the same, or lower grades, than at the previous inspection. The weaknesses in the skills for life provision identified at the reinspection have not been rectified sufficiently. The grade for leadership and management has remained the same as at the previous inspection.

25. Quality improvement is an important priority in strategic planning at City Lit. The provider's quality framework is integrated fully with its wider planning processes. The outcomes from self-assessment are incorporated into development and action plans. The work of the quality committee, which is chaired by the vice principal for development and quality, is integrated with the work of other important strategic and operational committees. Governors play an important part in quality assurance, particularly through the work of the quality and standards committee.

26. Governors and managers make good use of a range of learners' feedback to improve specific aspects of the provision and to focus on important operational issues. Learners' complaints are analysed in detail and improvements are made where appropriate. A strong culture exists at City Lit of listening to learners' views and enabling them to express their opinions.

27. City Lit's approach to quality improvement is detailed clearly in the quality handbook, which is revised annually. The handbook provides helpful guidance to staff on how to implement the quality framework, and includes a number of quality assurance procedures. Course reviews are carried out every year and are used appropriately in most departments for wider curriculum and service reviews. However, some course reviews are insufficiently detailed and do not analyse data about learners adequately to plan for improvements.

28. City Lit has recently improved the process for the observation of teaching and learning so that it is now more coherent and rigorous. The use of observations to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning is generally effective. However, the grades given by observers do not always accurately reflect the written feedback. Many of the grades given are too generous. The use of observations to identify individual training requirements for tutors is satisfactory, but there is insufficient analysis of trends and common themes for broader staff development. The arrangements for the moderation of lesson observation grades are not thorough enough and have not identified the over-grading in some curriculum areas. Planning for the observation of teaching and learning does not ensure that all tutors are observed sufficiently frequently.

29. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The framework and guidance for the process are clear. Many tutors are consulted, but gaining feedback from the large number of part-time tutors is difficult although they are particularly well involved in arts, media and publishing. The process uses information from a wide range of sources, including learners' feedback. Inspectors' judgements matched many of those in the most recent self-assessment report. However, in some areas of learning, the significance of the strengths is overstated and important weaknesses are overlooked. The report does not always identify adequately what evidence exists to support particular strengths and weaknesses, or how the grades have been determined. In some cases, self-assessment grades are not an accurate reflection of the evidence in the report and do not match the grades given by inspectors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 1

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other subjects and vocations allied to medicine</i> Adult and community learning	68	<i>1</i> 1

30. At the time of the inspection, 68 learners were enrolled on speech therapy courses. In 2005-06, 351 learners took part in courses in this curriculum area which is based in the faculty of performance and health. Eighty-four per cent of the learners are men. One-third of the learners are aged between 30 and 39. The provision for adults who stammer includes intensive courses, evening classes and topic-based workshops. Group speech therapy is offered for adults with dysphasia. City Lit also offers a range of specialist training courses for qualified speech and language therapists. Most programmes take place at City Lit, but some evening courses are offered at another centre nearby. None of the courses is accredited. They vary in length from five hours to several weeks. A head of faculty and a head of department are responsible for speech therapy and they work with three co-ordinators, one of whom works full time, and six part-time tutors.

Strengths

- outstanding retention rates
- very good achievements
- very good teaching and learning
- extensive range of courses
- outstanding leadership and management

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses

Achievement and standards

31. Retention rates are outstanding. In the three years since 2003-04, they have been above 90 per cent. In 2005-06, the overall retention rate was 95 per cent. Many of the learners who enrol on speech therapy courses have low self-esteem and poor self-confidence. Some of them find it difficult to admit that their speech is restricted in front of their peers.

32. Learners' achievements are very good. In 2004-05 and 2005-06, the achievement rates on non-accredited courses were 100 per cent and 89 per cent respectively. Many learners use the increased self-confidence and better management of stammering, resulting from their City Lit courses, to progress at work. Some unemployed learners are successful at interviews or become self-employed after attending speech therapy courses. Three learners have set up self-help groups locally that provide an important service for adults with speech impediments. One learner has set up an e-mail group in partnership with the British Stammering Association based on narrative therapy principles. Most

learners experience positive changes in their lifestyles and are able to carry out tasks that they previously avoided, such as answering the telephone at home and at work. They improve their communication skills and learn how to use a range of very effective strategies to control their fear of stammering.

The quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are very good, and some of the teaching is outstanding. Tutors use innovative and successful psychological and behavioural approaches to teaching. Learners receive intensive support through limiting classes to small groups and the use of team teaching strategies. Support for learners is very responsive, particularly where individual learners feel unable to cope with the challenge of completing a course. Tutors make very good use of regular assessments to monitor learners' progress. Learners' targets are reviewed at the beginning, middle and end of courses using a wide range of assessment methods, including video recordings. Tutors plan activities extremely well to improve word connection on courses for learners with aphasia. Tutors are very experienced and very well qualified. A number of them have received international recognition for the work they do.

34. City Lit offers an extensive range of courses to meet the needs of a wide range of learners with different types of speech impediment. Specific courses are developed to meet the needs of different groups of learners, such as adults with learning difficulties. Some programmes focus on the development of a particular skill, for example, using the telephone and managing interviews. Learners can attend individual therapeutic support sessions. City Lit provides external training events for qualified speech and language therapists in education and health settings and runs programmes for employers in the public and private sectors. Clear progression routes are provided from general stammering therapy courses to specific themed programmes such as speaking circles and mindfulness meditation for people who stammer.

35. Support for learners is good. Learners are closely monitored throughout their courses and have regular meetings with their course co-ordinators. Individual support needs are discussed in detail at these meetings. Initial assessment and guidance are good. Learners are required to have a thorough pre-entry interview to determine the most appropriate course to meet their individual needs. Additional language support is arranged where necessary, and handouts used in learning sessions are adapted to support learners with poor English skills.

Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management are outstanding. Internal communications and support for staff are very good. Meetings are used very effectively to discuss curriculum planning and operational issues. Outcomes and action points from meetings are shared with part-time teaching staff. They feel well informed about the department. New staff are mentored carefully and supported through team teaching. Staff development and training activities are used very effectively to enable tutors to attend national and international conferences and seminars.

37. The arrangements for quality improvement are very good. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, and through City Lit's own self-assessment processes, have been rectified. Tutors have an important role in the self-assessment process. The most recent self-assessment report is an accurate summary of the quality of the speech therapy

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provision. Observations of teaching and learning are used very effectively to bring about improvements in classroom practice. New staff are observed in their first term of teaching. Tutors use course reviews to monitor retention and achievement rates carefully.

38. Equality of opportunity is good. At the start of every course, learners are required to agree a constitution for the group, which identifies the rules for classroom behaviour. Learners are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 1**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Dramatic arts Adult and community learning	1,205	1 1
Music Adult and community learning	2,076	2 2
Crafts Adult and community learning	1,076	1 1

39. The arts, media and publishing provision is the largest curriculum area at City Lit and is located across two faculties and five different departments. At the time of the inspection, 4,357 learners were enrolled on 571 courses in music, drama and crafts. In 2005-06, 2,580 learners took part in music programmes, 1,536 learners in craft courses and 5,218 in drama, dance and speech courses. Music courses account for 9 per cent of the total provision at City Lit and include piano workshops, songs from shows, string quartets, folk and popular guitar, city opera, jazz theory, recorder ensemble and essential ear training. Drama courses include acting, movement, voice, mime, circus, stage-fighting, magic, comedy and film, television and radio acting. The craft programme is made up mainly of courses in sculpture, ceramics, wood and stone carving, jewellery, book binding and conservation, textiles, basketry and calligraphy. Music courses are almost all non-accredited and are available at a range of levels from beginners to advanced. Approximately 40 per cent of the learners on music courses are men. Accredited and non-accredited drama courses are offered, including six courses where skills for life teaching is integrated with the specialist subject. Most craft courses are non-accredited. Courses take place at a variety of times across the whole week, including some provision on a Sunday. They vary in length from two or three hours, to courses which run for two years.

Dramatic arts*Strengths*

- very good standards of work
- very good progression to employment
- much very good teaching by experienced practitioners
- particularly extensive course provision
- excellent support and guidance for learners
- strong curriculum leadership and management

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

40. Learners' work is very good in drama. Learners demonstrate very well-developed practical skills. They are highly articulate and are encouraged to work independently to

express their own talents. Their insights into textual analysis are very good. Learners use public performances to celebrate their considerable achievements. These performances approach professional standards. Learners engage successfully with a wide range of challenging repertoire and demonstrate particularly good stage craft.

41. Progression to employment is very good. Seventy per cent of the learners on the advanced diploma course have gained employment in professional theatre and television. Internal progression rates to higher level courses and different programmes at the same level are good. Sixty-five per cent of the learners currently enrolled on the foundation course have progressed from part-time, non-accredited programmes. Success rates are good on the small number of accredited courses. In 2005-06, the success rates on the access and diploma courses were 98 per cent and 100 per cent, respectively.

The quality of provision

42. There is much very good teaching by experienced practitioners in drama. Tutors set learners challenging tasks and expect them to perform to professional standards. For example, learners are expected to develop character maps, recite Shakespeare using only vowel sounds, and carry out detailed physical inhabitation of characters. Tutors are enthusiastic and energetic and inspire learners through a dynamic range of teaching strategies. Staff have extensive professional expertise and a very good knowledge of current theatrical practices. The nurturing of the ethos of a professional theatre company in many of the learning sessions is particularly effective in promoting a supportive and strong work environment. Learners' independent learning skills are developed through challenging activities. They have recently nominated the head of department for a prestigious national teaching award. However, in a small number of learning sessions, lesson planning is weak and schemes of work are insufficiently detailed.

43. The course provision is particularly extensive and programmes successfully recruit a wide range of learners. The curriculum provides good progression opportunities. The extensive range of programmes includes dance, movement, stage-fighting, magic, comedy and mime. Courses are popular and several new programmes are offered each year. An increasing number of courses take place at the weekend. In 2005-06, only three courses were cancelled because of poor enrolments from a total of almost 330 programmes. So far, no courses have been cancelled in 2006-07. Many courses have been moved successfully from the evening to the daytime to resolve problems with cramped accommodation in the evening.

44. Support and guidance for learners are excellent. The arrangements for initial advice and guidance interviews are particularly thorough. Practical auditions are used very effectively to ensure that learners are placed on the appropriate course to meet their individual needs. Additional support for professional career development is very good. Staff help learners to prepare for auditions and to write curriculum vitae. Learners with additional learning needs are supported very well to enable them to take a full role in drama classes.

45. Resources are satisfactory. Classrooms in the new building are spacious, and there is suitable equipment for specialist courses such as acting for television. ILT resources are available, but their use is not yet integrated sufficiently with teaching and learning practices.

46. Assessment practices are generally satisfactory. Some tutors provide good support for learners to formally identify their progress and achievements. However, other tutors have insufficient awareness of the need to develop progress records for learners. The identification of individual learning outcomes is poor on some short courses. Learners receive sufficient verbal feedback about their progress from tutors. In the best learning sessions, peer assessment is used well and learners self-assess their own progress. Productions and final assessments are recorded through a range of media including CDs, DVDs and videos. However, they do not always clearly identify learners' progress in relation to their starting points.

Leadership and management

47. Curriculum management is strong in drama. Tutors are supported well. Managers are very responsive to tutors' requests for staff training and development. Communications are very effective and attendance at the regular team meetings is good. The appointment of experienced professionals as tutors maintains good links with industry.

48. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Cultural diversity is incorporated into the curriculum, and staff make good use of opportunities to celebrate the work of different cultures. In 2005-06, 25 per cent of the learners who attended drama, dance and speech courses were from a minority ethnic background. A high proportion of men are enrolled on drama courses.

49. The arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory overall. Observations of teaching and learning are used well to identify important strengths and weaknesses and to agree areas for future development. However, the grades given during observations are not always an accurate reflection of the observer's comments, and some tutors have not been observed for a long time. Inspectors' judgements matched most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report.

Music

Strengths

- good attainment of performance skills
- innovative teaching to promote creative learning
- rich and diverse curriculum
- good planning to develop the curriculum

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of targets to challenge learners and measure progress
- insufficient use of technology to extend teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

50. Learners' attainment of performance skills is good. They develop good creative and technical skills and their performances are expressive. In jazz, learners use complex rhythmic patterns to achieve successful group performances. Tutors encourage learners' individual styles and approaches to performance. Learners develop their musicality and enjoy the classes. Learners on instrumental courses demonstrate good playing skills and

improve their technical skills and musicianship.

51. Learners on singing courses apply good breathing techniques to enhance their performances. They develop good aural skills and the ability to improvise harmonies and melodies. Learners extend their range of repertoire and musical styles and gain the confidence to perform as soloists and in musical groups at public venues. They are able to discuss subtleties in musical performance through the use of appropriate music terminology.

52. Retention rates are satisfactory on music courses. In 2005-06, the retention rate was 90 per cent for non-accredited programmes, most of which are short courses. Success rates on the very small number of accredited music courses were poor at 59 per cent in 2005-06.

The quality of provision

53. Tutors use innovative teaching to promote creative learning. Many of the tutors are expert practitioners in their subject area and have credibility amongst learners as paid professionals. They use their knowledge of current performance techniques to help learners improvise and experiment in learning sessions. Classes are taught to industry standards. Tutors ensure that the high standards of learners' work and observations of peers' performances are discussed in a positive and critical manner. Tutors carry out very good demonstrations of musical techniques in learning sessions. They create an atmosphere in which learners work together well with other musicians and accompanists. Tutors promote rehearsal and practice methods effectively as a way of sustaining learning between classes. Learners develop a commitment to regular practice. Their knowledge is extended through a diverse and challenging repertoire, which includes new musical compositions.

54. The music curriculum is rich and diverse. Courses match learners' aspirations to improve their performance skills and to expand their knowledge of musical repertoire. A very wide range of courses is offered and includes traditional classical instruments, piano and guitar and singing programmes in rock, gospel, jazz, opera and popular music. Courses also explore contemporary music, musical theatre and classical repertoire. Other subjects include music-teacher training, conducting, music technology, composing and arranging. City Lit has its own opera company. Courses are culturally diverse and cover Indian, Latin and black music traditions. Many courses are offered at different levels from beginners to master classes. There are clear progression routes to higher level performance courses, but little analysis of learners' progression. The curriculum is enriched through opportunities for learners to perform in public at a variety of different venues. Partnerships with other colleges and music societies to provide venues for performances are good.

55. Advice and guidance for learners are satisfactory. On many courses, auditions are carried out before enrolment to help learners choose the correct type and level of programme. Tutors give learners useful specialist advice on progression routes as they approach the end of courses. The learning centre has an appropriate range of reference materials for music. Course information is clear and descriptive.

56. On many courses, there is insufficient development of targets to challenge learners and measure progress. Learners' starting points on courses are not defined clearly.

Individual learning goals are too general and are not sufficiently detailed in learners' personal statements. Learners are not always set individual targets. They are insufficiently challenged in some learning sessions and are not involved in monitoring their own progress. Some course paperwork is incomplete. Assessments are not always analysed or dated. Recording processes do not measure learners' progress and achievements accurately. Assessment records and review paperwork are not monitored sufficiently by managers. Some tutors do not incorporate processes to recognise and record learners' progress and achievements into their teaching practice.

Leadership and management

57. Planning to develop the music curriculum is good. Managers have good specialist knowledge of the music industry. Some accredited courses at City Lit have been developed by staff who work there. Expert staff are recruited as tutors from the music industry. Staff retention is good. Tutors' suggestions for new courses are used effectively to develop the provision. A small but innovative project, led by the music technology co-ordinator in partnership with an independent radio station, has encouraged the development of an employer-engagement strategy. Managers have successfully developed the music curriculum across other departments at City Lit through linking music teaching with other subjects such as history, skills for life, politics and languages. Complementary programmes are offered such as music technology course for jazz, which runs at the same time as a jazz composition course.

58. Staff development is satisfactory. Music tutors have received useful general staff training on topics such as the use of ILT and teaching learners with dyslexia. However, there are too few opportunities for some tutors to carry out specialist professional development in music. Communications are effective and the regular staff meetings are well attended.

59. Processes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Observers' feedback is detailed and useful. However, the grades given are not always an accurate reflection of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the observations. Some tutors have not been observed for a long time, and a small number have not been observed since the previous inspection. There is too little sharing of good practice. Data is not used systematically to evaluate the provision and set targets for improvements. Tutors' assessment and review practices are not checked consistently. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process, and the most recent self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses of the music provision.

60. Insufficient use is made of technology to extend teaching and learning. City Lit has been slow to introduce technology to enhance classical disciplines, and some tutors write learning materials by hand as they cannot operate music-writing software. Insufficient technical support is available for tutors. In one learning session observed by inspectors, the failure of data projection equipment led to a significant reduction in teaching time. Some staff are not trained in the use of ILT and do not integrate it with their teaching. Too many tutors are unable to use technology to record learners' work. Music software is not available for learners to use in the learning centre. The development of aspects of composition, performance and orchestration skills is restricted by insufficient use of integrated technology.

Crafts

Strengths

- exceptionally good standards of learners' work
- very good retention rates
- very good teaching and learning
- good range of specialist provision
- very good leadership and management

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses

Achievement and standards

61. Standards of learners' work are exceptionally good in crafts. Learners develop very good technical skills in specialist crafts such as jewellery, ceramics, bookbinding, printing and sculpture. Learners on textile courses use steaming and heat pressing techniques to deconstruct textiles skilfully and to create good-quality experimental samples. They are passionate about their work. Several learners have had their work exhibited in public and featured in national magazines. Other learners use the skills they develop at work, for example in book conservation. In basketry, learners use newspaper, tape and willow to produce outstanding woven exhibits. Most learners use sketchbooks very effectively to design and record their work. Learners are well motivated and very committed to their courses. They often do additional work outside the classroom to practise and develop their skills. Learners' punctuality is very good and many arrive early for classes or work through their breaks.

62. Retention rates are very good. In 2005-06, the retention rate for non-accredited courses was 92 per cent. Some courses run for up to 30 weeks. The retention rate for the small number of accredited courses was 89 per cent. The attendance rate in learning sessions observed during the inspection was 83 per cent.

The quality of provision

63. Teaching and learning are very good. Tutors are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Most are professional artists who frequently exhibit their work. Learning sessions are planned well to include exciting and challenging tasks. Learners take part in activities which challenge their traditional thinking, encouraging them to produce innovative and original work. Tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans are very detailed. They encourage learners to adopt a contemporary and experimental approach to their work. Tutors bring numerous examples of their own work to learning sessions, which inspires learners. They share their expert knowledge generously with learners. Complex technical processes are broken down into easily understood processes, which tutors explain clearly to learners. Tutors check learners' individual work very carefully and suggest helpful corrections where appropriate. Learners use specialist resources to produce professional standards of work. Tutors spend a considerable amount of time preparing resources carefully for courses. Well-designed handouts contain detailed information and are a very useful reference point for learners.

64. The range of specialist crafts provision is good. Internal and external progression routes are clearly identified and many learners progress to higher level courses and those

at the same level in different subject areas. Programmes are offered at many levels, from beginners to post-graduate level. Learners travel considerable distances to attend specialist courses, for example in basketry and bookbinding. Partnerships with galleries, museums and schools are good. Many of these partnerships have successfully targeted parents and school pupils from disadvantaged areas of London.

65. Assessment practices are satisfactory overall. Many tutors keep detailed records of learners' progress and achievements. Most staff have attended training to use ILT in learning sessions. Some use digital cameras imaginatively to provide visual references for learners. However, other tutors use insufficiently detailed assessment methods and their descriptions of learners' progress are vague.

66. Support for learners is effective. Learners value the support and advice they receive from tutors. Learners work positively together and learn from each other. Tutors are very sensitive to learners' needs and are very experienced at supporting adult learners. Promotional leaflets are well designed and informative. They include detailed course descriptions, which are easily understood by learners.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management of crafts are very good. Managers work purposefully to bring about continuous improvements, and plan change carefully. Course managers are encouraged to share information at the regular team meetings. Extensive training has taken place to establish the principles of recognising and recording progress and achievements on non-accredited courses and to improve lesson planning and schemes of work. Tutors are supported well and communications are very effective. Staff feel valued and they contribute to a very positive working environment. Managers are committed to improving achievements and widening participation.

68. The arrangements for quality improvement are effective. The numbers of full- and part-time tutors with a teaching qualification have risen by 10 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively, in the past year. Observations of teaching and learning are detailed. Action plans resulting from lesson observations include encouragement to tutors to observe good practice in learning sessions that have been judged as outstanding. However, some tutors are not observed often enough. The strengths identified in the most recent self-assessment report provide an accurate summary of the quality of the crafts provision.

Languages, literature and culture**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		2
Adult and community learning	3,260	2

69. The inspection of languages, literature and culture at City Lit covered modern foreign languages, classical languages, sign language and lip-reading courses, but not programmes on the language, literature and culture of the British Isles. The provision accounts for almost one-quarter of City Lit's total enrolments. At the time of the inspection, there were 3,260 learners on 190 courses in the subject areas inspected. Forty-four per cent of these learners are new to language learning. In 2005-06, 5,000 learners enrolled on modern foreign and classical languages and 304 learners on sign language and lip-reading courses. Sixty per cent of learners are women. Just over a quarter of learners are aged between 30 and 39, and almost 15 per cent are from a minority ethnic background.

70. City Lit offers 600 modern foreign and classical language courses in 20 different languages at seven levels from beginners to advanced. They include French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Dutch and Greek. Thirty-nine sign language and lip-reading courses are offered. Courses take place at City Lit and at a neighbouring languages college. City Lit also provides courses on employers' premises. Classes take place during the daytime and evening, for one and a half hours each week, and run for up to 12 weeks. Intensive language courses are also offered. Most of the foreign and classical language courses and all the lip-reading programmes are non-accredited. The foreign and classical language provision is managed by a head of department in the faculty of humanities and languages and is taught by nine full-time tutors and 88 part-time teaching staff. Sign language and lip-reading courses take place in the faculty of deaf education and learning support and are delivered by five full-time and 11 part-time tutors.

Strengths

- good achievements on sign language courses
- good attainment of listening and receptive skills in spoken and sign language
- much good teaching and learning
- extensive languages provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of identified needs to plan learning and review progress

Achievement and standards

71. Achievement are good on sign language courses. In 2005-06, the success rates on British Sign Language (BSL) level 1 and level 2 courses were 65 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively. They have improved significantly since 2004-05 and are above the national benchmarks for these qualifications. In 2005-06, the overall retention rate was 85 per cent. Progression is good for learners on sign language courses. In 2005-06, 135 learners out of a total of 280 progressed to a higher level course. Many learners progress to employment and to further education and training courses with other providers.

72. Learners' attainment of listening and receptive skills in spoken and sign language is good and many learners on language courses develop confidence in speaking. They are confident enough to use the language they are learning to ask questions, give information and express ideas. Most achieve the aim of being able to use the target language for a variety of purposes, such as communicating with friends and family members, and travelling abroad. They value the intellectual stimulation and enjoyment gained through attending courses at City Lit. Learners on sign language and lip-reading courses are able to cope better with hearing loss and to contribute more actively in society.

73. Success rates are satisfactory on accredited modern foreign language courses, which account for a small proportion of the total languages provision. In 2005-06, 177 learners were enrolled on courses leading to a qualification. The overall success rate for A level courses was satisfactory at 68 per cent, but the overall success rate for the 106 learners on other accredited courses was poor at 49 per cent. City Lit has identified the poor success rates on other accredited courses in its most recent self-assessment report and has started to take action to deal with them.

The quality of provision

74. There is much good teaching and learning. Tutors use the foreign language particularly well in many classes and employ a wide range of strategies to reinforce and extend learning. They use the foreign language to give instructions to learners and during feedback sessions. In sign language and lip-reading classes, learners develop their skills very effectively. They acquire good hand shapes and lip patterns and develop their fluency in all aspects of communication. The use of ILT is particularly good in some learning sessions. More than 90 per cent of the teaching staff have a subject-related qualification and most tutors are very experienced. Staff in deaf education manage a wide range of learners' needs well. Many staff in both curriculum areas are renowned nationally and internationally for their expertise.

75. The range of language provision is extensive, and learners travel considerable distances to attend courses. The languages offered include a number that are less commonly taught, such as Dutch, Russian, Greek and Japanese. Courses are offered at seven levels. Business language training services are provided for 12 employers across London. Staff in deaf education have particularly good links with a number of employers and other partners. The number of learners on sign language and lip-reading courses has increased significantly in the past three years. City Lit responds well to demand for new language courses and recruits a significant number of new learners to programmes each year.

76. Support for learners is satisfactory. In modern foreign and classical languages, tutors provide effective individual support for learners. The arrangements for advice and guidance are appropriate. The well-resourced learning centre has a good selection of learning resources for languages. Most tutors are aware of the arrangements to support learners with additional needs. Staff in deaf education support a considerable number of learners with hearing difficulties in further and higher education colleges across London.

77. Insufficient use is made of identified needs to plan and review learners' progress. Inspectors identified this weakness in most of the non-accredited language and lip-reading courses. Some tutors carry out initial assessment well, but too many rely solely on

learners' statements of self-evaluation. Many of the statements are insufficiently detailed and do not provide an accurate record of learners' strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of a course. Tutors are unable to identify learners' progress accurately or to meet the individual needs of all learners, particularly in large classes where learners have a wide range of abilities.

Leadership and management

78. Partnership working is good, particularly with employers and community associations. Tutors are managed well. Communications are good and many tutors share good practice informally. Tutors take advantage of the many opportunities to attend subject-specific and general staff training events. City Lit offers an initial teacher-training course specifically for language tutors.

79. The arrangements for observing teaching and learning are appropriate, and there is effective action-planning to improve the quality of teaching. However, too few tutors are observed each year. Observers do not always monitor in sufficient detail processes to recognise and record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses. Internal verification on accredited courses is satisfactory. The effectiveness of target-setting is not monitored sufficiently and managers do not always use data well to evaluate the performance of different courses or to plan improvements. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process. The most recent self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths in the provision, but not the weakness in planning and reviewing learners' progress.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		4
Adult and community learning	863	4

80. City Lit offers preparation for life and work courses in a number of curriculum areas. The skills for life department runs discrete literacy and numeracy courses and programmes of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). At the time of the inspection, 372 learners were enrolled on discrete courses in this curriculum area. A number of departments at City Lit also run programmes which integrate skills for life with different vocational subjects. At the time of the inspection, 205 learners were taking part in these courses. A further 105 learners were enrolled on general certificate of education (GCSE) courses in mathematics and English in the faculty of humanities and languages. In addition, 181 learners were taking part in discrete literacy and numeracy courses for learners with hearing difficulties. Most courses take place at City Lit. Links have been developed with public sector employers and private companies to deliver literacy and numeracy qualifications in the workplace. Classes take place during the daytime and evenings, for between two and five hours each week. The skills for life area also offers study skills and dyslexia support to almost 100 learners across the curriculum.

Strengths

- wide range of skills for life provision
- good study support

Weaknesses

- poor success rates on accredited courses
- unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient planning to meet individual needs
- inadequate action to monitor and improve the provision

Achievement and standards

81. Learners on preparation for life and work courses develop satisfactory skills. Most learners are well motivated and work enthusiastically in lessons. They gain confidence in acquiring new skills. Some learners in ESOL classes follow discussions well but others are not able to read independently or to understand text adequately.

82. Success rates are poor on accredited courses. In 2005-06, the success rates on discrete literacy and numeracy courses were 47 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively. The success rate on ESOL programmes was 37 per cent. On courses where skills for life is integrated with vocational subjects, the success rate was 50 per cent for the national literacy test in 2005-06. Success rates are very poor for learners with hearing difficulties on accredited literacy courses. In 2005-06, the success rate was 17 per cent. Success rates on GCSE mathematics and English are satisfactory at 65 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively, in 2005-06. Retention rates are generally satisfactory. However, attendance rates in 2006-07 have been poor so far. From September to December 2006, the overall

attendance rate on discrete language, literacy and numeracy courses was 59 per cent.

The quality of provision

83. City Lit offers a wide range of skills for life courses and has substantially increased its provision since the previous inspection. The choice of levels in discrete literacy and numeracy courses and ESOL provision is good. Programme planning is flexible and courses take place at various times during the day and in the evenings. Learners can choose from a varied range of subjects in the discrete provision, for example, spelling, building confidence in speaking skills, and maths for the terrified. Tutors trained in BSL teach a range of literacy courses for learners with hearing difficulties. City Lit has made good progress in developing a range of courses that offer learners the opportunity to improve their literacy, numeracy or language skills in the context of other subjects such as music and drama. There is good partnership working with employers and community organisations to offer skills for life provision in a variety of work settings.

84. Study support for learners is good. Staff provide good support for learners with dyslexia and for those who need to improve their study skills to meet the demands of their programme. Referral arrangements are clear and are planned well. Staff provide thorough diagnostic assessment and very effective individual support for learners with dyslexia. Tutors have good specialist knowledge and have been trained well. Their understanding of the courses on which learners are enrolled is good. Dyslexic learners are trained to use voice recognition software. The study skills team offers well-planned support for learners who need additional support with skills such as note taking and essay writing. Individual support is planned well to meet learners' specific needs. Good strategies have been developed to reduce the need for learners to attend study skills support. For example, curriculum areas are given advice on what criteria to use when recruiting learners to courses. The study skills team provides group training for study skills on some courses and helps in the development of materials for independent study, which are available on the intranet. Many learners comment that they would not be able to complete their courses without the good dyslexia and study skills support. However, City Lit does not carry out sufficient analysis of the effect of this support on retention and success rates.

85. Teaching is unsatisfactory. Tutors develop good working relationships with most learners and create friendly and supportive environments in many classes. However, a significant amount of teaching is unsatisfactory. In the weaker learning sessions, the range of teaching strategies is poor. Learning objectives are not defined in sufficient detail in lesson plans and are not explained clearly to learners. Some classes are not sufficiently challenging for learners, while other learners struggle to keep up and to complete tasks. Tutors do not use question and answer techniques sufficiently to develop and check learning. They do not place sufficient priority on the development of learners' speaking skills in ESOL classes. In discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning sessions, the use of resources is often poor. Tutors rely too much on paper-based teaching resources, which do not always reflect the needs and interests of learners. City Lit has made a significant investment in ILT, but many tutors do not have enough confidence or knowledge to use it as part of their teaching strategies. Tutors are being supported through specialist advisers and a training programme to improve the use of ILT.

86. There is insufficient planning to meet individual needs on preparation for life and work courses. Initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills is

satisfactory, but the results are poorly used. Too many learners work towards inappropriate accreditation goals. For example, many learners on ESOL courses work towards national awards in adult literacy rather than ESOL qualifications. Targets in individual learning plans do not reflect the priorities identified during initial assessments. Target-setting is not sufficiently detailed. Timescales for meeting targets are often unclear, and learning goals are described in ways that are difficult for learners to understand. Insufficient reference is made to the accreditation aims of the course. Arrangements to evaluate learners' progress are inadequate. However, feedback on GCSE coursework is thorough and detailed.

Leadership and management

87. Actions to monitor and improve the provision are inadequate. Senior managers are committed to improving the skills for life provision, and the overall strategic plan contains an appropriate analysis of the curriculum area, but the actions identified in the plan have not yet had sufficient effect on the quality of the provision. The plan does not identify clearly how success rates will be improved or how an understanding of skills for life will be promoted. Important quality improvement processes, such as the observation of teaching and learning, are ineffective. Insufficient use is made of management information to bring about improvements. For example, important data on attendance rates and progression is not analysed carefully enough to identify actions to improve performance.

88. Tutors are not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. The most recent self-assessment report does not identify important weaknesses in the provision, particularly the poor success rates and the unsatisfactory teaching. The grade given by inspectors for the area of learning was lower than that given by City Lit. The development plan is not sufficiently thorough.

Family learning**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		3
Adult and community learning	390	3

89. City Lit's family learning provision is subcontracted from the Corporation of London and the two London Borough Councils of Camden and Tower Hamlets. City Lit is contracted to provide family literacy, language and numeracy programmes and wider family learning courses, which are aimed at people new to learning and those from disadvantaged groups in local communities. Wider family learning courses include talk and play, here we grow, keeping up with the children, crafts, and computer courses. City Lit also runs an ESOL family learning programme at entry levels 1 and 2 and accredited childcare courses at levels 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, 390 learners were enrolled on family learning courses. Fifty per cent of the learners are from a minority ethnic background. Courses are run in partnership with schools, children's centres, community centres and libraries, most of which are located in disadvantaged communities across London. Most courses take place during the daytime for between two and three hours a week for five or 10 weeks. Some longer accredited courses run for five hours a week for up to 34 weeks. A programme area manager is responsible for the family learning provision, supported by two full-time programme heads and a number of co-ordinators who manage the crèches. Classes are taught by 13 part-time tutors, assisted by creche workers who provide childcare support.

Adult and community learning*Strengths*

- very good attainment of personal and social skills
- good teaching and learning on language, literacy, numeracy and childcare courses to develop parenting skills
- very effective partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on meeting learners' individual needs
- insufficiently established quality improvement processes

Achievement and standards

90. Learners on family learning programmes develop very good personal and social skills. Parents develop a good awareness of their own educational potential. Most learners have low levels of prior achievement and the programmes raise their aspirations. Their self-esteem improves and they are more confident about gaining employment and studying for qualifications. Parents have a greater understanding of their children's work at school and their role in educating their children. Many learners who previously felt alienated from education are now involved in school book clubs and voluntary work. Many parents progress to further family learning courses, voluntary and paid employment, and higher level courses in other subject areas.

91. Retention rates are satisfactory. In 2005-06, the retention rates on accredited and non-accredited courses were 68 per cent and 90 per cent, respectively. The success rate on accredited courses was 68 per cent in 2005-06. Retention and success rates have been falling for the past three years.

The quality of provision

92. Teaching and learning are good on language, literacy, numeracy and childcare courses. These represented just over 70 per cent of the provision in 2005-06. Good teaching supports the development of learners' parenting skills. Tutors use stimulating and creative resources to develop parents' play and conversation with their children. Learners are motivated well and participate enthusiastically in classes. Tutors use relevant topics to stimulate learners' interest, such as the development of young children's communication and reading skills. Support workers participate particularly well in learning sessions, and are involved in the planning of learners' activities. Tutors at one community centre in an area of multiple deprivation create an exciting learning environment for parents to understand the importance of reading with their children. Staff telephone learners on the first morning of courses to ensure they attend. Learners are encouraged to improve their attendance and punctuality as part of their social and personal development.

93. Partnerships to widen participation are very effective. Managers at the three councils who subcontract family learning courses to the provider comment that staff at City Lit are flexible and responsive. Family learning staff work well with head teachers to promote parents' involvement in schools. Relationships with staff in libraries and children's centres are productive. Parents' attendance has increased at events arranged for children in a number of libraries where family learning courses have taken place. Programmes are planned carefully to run in communities where learners' prior educational achievements are poor and where there are high unemployment rates. Partnership working is particularly successful in recruiting parents who have children with poor attendance rates at school. Family learning staff work well with community development workers, hostels for refugees, and a wide range of community organisations to refer learners to courses. Almost 60 per cent of the learners in 2005-06 were from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of men enrolled on family learning courses increased from 8 per cent in 2004-05 to 11 per cent in 2005-06.

94. Support for learners is satisfactory. Many learning centres offer crèche facilities, which enable parents with young children to attend classes. City Lit employs a manager to run the crèche provision and to monitor the quality of childcare. However, the crèche facilities at one learning centre are located in the classroom, and the noise is distracting and intrusive for learners. Support workers participate in classes to ensure that individual learners and groups receive good support. Most learners are offered guidance on progression routes, but it is not routinely included in all tutors' schemes of work. Family learning staff organise a range of visits to enrich the curriculum and to support parents' social and educational development.

95. There is insufficient focus on meeting learners' individual needs on family learning courses. The results of initial assessment are not always used to plan learning sessions, particularly for learners on ESOL family learning programmes. Individual learning plans do not always include sufficiently detailed targets. Lesson planning does not incorporate strategies to meet learners' individual needs, particularly on accredited courses. In ESOL

classes, all learners use the same resources but some are unable to read the worksheets. Tutors do not use a sufficient range of resources to ensure that all learners' needs are met. On ESOL courses, the learning is not contextualised to meet the needs of learners who want to be more confident in helping their children at school and in dealing with family issues.

Leadership and management

96. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and take part in regular team meetings. They are supported well by approachable managers. Full-time staff have an annual appraisal and observations of teaching and learning are used effectively to appraise part-time tutors' performance. The identification of tutors' staff development needs is good. Part-time tutors meet each term to share good practice. Staff have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. However, resources used in learning sessions do not always promote cultural diversity. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that City Lit meets the requirements of legislation to protect children from abuse.

97. Quality improvement processes are insufficiently established. The judgements made through observations of teaching and learning are not always sufficiently detailed to support the grades given. Some important weaknesses are not identified through the observation process, such as the insufficient focus on meeting learners' individual needs. Staff do not make enough use of data to monitor performance and assist curriculum planning. Trends in retention rates, success rates and progression are not routinely analysed in team meetings or course reviews. Success rates on accredited courses have declined from 85 per cent in 2003-04 to 68 per cent in 2005-06, and retention rates from 100 per cent to 83 per cent over the same period of time. The self-assessment process and most recent self-assessment report do not identify separate strengths and weaknesses for the family learning provision.

