

REINSPECTION REPORT

Surrey LEA Reinspection

26 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

Surrey LEA Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Grades	2
About the reinspection	4

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	7
Equality of opportunity	9
Quality improvement	10
Leisure, travel and tourism	13
Arts, media and publishing	16
Languages, literature and culture	25

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Surrey County Council is contracted by Surrey Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning services in Surrey. The county's adult and community learning service (the service) owns 12 adult learning centres and rents about 100 venues such as schools, libraries, village and community halls, and youth centres. The provision of learning in two boroughs is subcontracted to East Surrey College.

2. In 2001, the census for Surrey recorded that 27 per cent of the population had a degree or diploma (level 4/5) qualification, compared with 22 per cent in the Southeast. The proportion of the Surrey population from minority ethnic groups is 5 per cent, compared with 9 per cent for England. The proportion of the service's learners from minority ethnic backgrounds in 2005-06 was 4.6 per cent, and 20 per cent of learners were aged over 65 compared with 16 per cent of Surrey's population as a whole. The number of learners with disclosed disabilities was 645 in 2005-06. The number of enrolments for the service in 2005-06 was 39,000, compared with 47,000 at the previous inspection.

3. Since the previous inspection, Surrey County Council has carried out an extensive review of its structures. The service forms part of the libraries and culture division of the services for communities directorate. The focus of the provision continues to be on non-accredited learning, with a small amount of family learning and a few accredited courses. The service is in the early stages of developing its first steps provision to widen participation, and with the LSC it is in the process of tendering to contract out the provision. The final outcome of the 'externalisation' was not known at the reinspection.

4. The senior staff structure has not changed since the previous inspection and three area managers and a service support manager assists the head of service. However, a team of curriculum leaders is now responsible for areas of learning. In each of the adult learning centres there is a centre manager and a small administrative team. There are 747 part-time tutors.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Reinspection Grade 3

5. At the previous inspection, leadership and management, quality assurance and equality of opportunity were judged inadequate. Provision in preparation for life and work was good, and family learning satisfactory. Leisure, travel and tourism, arts, media and publishing, and languages, literature and culture were all inadequate. At the reinspection, inspectors were unable to judge the provision for family learning as the volume of activity was too low. Leisure, travel and tourism and arts, media and publishing, and languages, literature and culture were all satisfactory, as were leadership and management and quality improvement. Equality of opportunity was inadequate. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is now satisfactory.**

6. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The process was inclusive, with a clear timetable for completion. The

self-assessment report was self-critical and evaluative. The judgements made matched those of the inspectors in much of the provision.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.

Good progress has been made in dealing with the key weaknesses identified by the previous inspection, and all the areas of learning are now satisfactory. Teaching and learning has improved across the provision. However, the data collection, although improved, is not sufficiently robust for inspectors to make secure judgements about achievements.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Leisure, travel and tourism			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Sport, leisure and recreation		4	
Adult and community learning	4,034	4	

Arts, media and publishing			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Dance		4	
Adult and community learning	1,419	4	
Music		4	
Adult and community learning	424	4	
Fine arts		4	
Adult and community learning	2,473	4	
Crafts		4	
Adult and community learning	3,248	4	

Languages, literature and culture			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Language, literature and culture of the British Isles			
Adult and community learning	277	4	
Other languages, literature and culture			
Adult and community learning	2,161	4	

Preparation for life and work			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	775	2 2	

Family learning			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	65	3 3	

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Leisure, travel and tourism			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	1,632	3 3	

Arts, media and publishing			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Dance</i> Adult and community learning	608	3 3	
<i>Music</i> Adult and community learning	274	3 3	
<i>Fine arts</i> Adult and community learning	1,476	3 3	
<i>Crafts</i> Adult and community learning	1,741	3 3	

Languages, literature and culture		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		3
Adult and community learning	1,737	3

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

8. The inspection took place between May 2006 and January 2007. The areas of learning reinspected were leisure, travel and tourism, arts media and publishing and languages, literature and culture.

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	55
Number of learners interviewed	185
Number of staff interviewed	96
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	58
Number of visits	3

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of change
- good actions to improve the quality of provision
- good progress in improving arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of targets to manage performance and raise standards
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity
- incomplete formal recording and assessment of learners' progress and achievement

Leisure, travel and tourism

Sport, leisure and recreation

Strengths

- good development of skills and fitness
- good monitoring of, and feedback on, learners' performance in class to promote learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient assessment and monitoring of personal learning goals

Arts, media and publishing

Dance

Strengths

- good social and personal gains for learners
- good rates of participation in stimulating enrichment activities
- very effective implementation of quality improvement strategies

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' creative, stylistic and interpretive skills
- poor accommodation at some centres
- insufficiently defined progression routes for learners

Music

Strengths

- good action to improve attendance rates
- good action to bring about quality improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently individualised learning goals
- insufficient focus on the value of different musical cultures

Fine arts

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good personal and social gains for learners
- much good teaching

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of learning plans to record learners' progress
- insufficient attention to the needs of the learners in the promotion of courses
- insufficient focus on cultural diversity within the curriculum

Crafts

Strengths

- good development of practical craft skills

SURREY LEA REINSPECTION

- much good teaching that stimulates and challenges learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently well-established processes for assessment and monitoring of learning
- insufficiently well-established aspects of operational management

Languages, literature and culture

Other languages, literature and culture

Strengths

- good planning of teaching and learning
- good range of modern foreign language courses
- effective management actions to bring about improvements

Weaknesses

- high course cancellation rates
- insufficient specialist resources to enhance learning

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good management of change
- good actions to improve the quality of provision
- good progress in improving arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of targets to manage performance and raise standards
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity
- incomplete formal recording and assessment of learners' progress and achievement

9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the service has managed change very effectively. Not only has it successfully dealt with the challenges of improving a previously inadequate service, it has managed this process during a particularly difficult period of transition within Surrey County Council. The major restructuring of the council has included moving the service into the libraries and culture division. At the same time, a new strategy has been implemented based on contracting the service out to external organisations. The outcomes of this 'externalisation' project are yet to be finalised, although it is clear that there will be a reduction in services, staff and buildings. Staff have been well supported during this period. They value the open management style and continue to work hard to raise standards. Managers have set realistic objectives, based on consolidation and in line with key priorities identified in the post-inspection action plan. The objectives reflect the need to make the service more accountable and efficient, and to provide better value for money, and they include managing an increase in course fees and a reduction in the number of adult learning centres. A considerable cultural shift has taken place across the service. Staff now have a better understanding of their position in the council and of the need to align the service more closely to LSC and national priorities.

10. Good actions have been taken to improve the quality of provision, including that subcontracted to East Surrey College. Staff have become more self-critical and recognised the need to raise standards. Provision in the areas of learning that were unsatisfactory has improved, and is now satisfactory. Learners develop good skills, and teaching and learning has significantly improved. However inspectors were unable to confirm that high standards had been maintained in all aspects of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

11. Curriculum management has significantly improved and is satisfactory in all areas of learning. The service has outlined a curriculum strategy and reorganised the service to provide a stronger focus on the curriculum. The creation of curriculum manager and assistant manager posts has shifted the service from a predominantly geographical focus. Tutors are now better supported, feel less isolated and appreciate the expertise of

managers. Communication has improved and includes regular area of learning newsletters. The line management of part-time tutors has improved and centre managers are now more able to concentrate on running centres. Better systems for risk assessments have been implemented. However in most areas of learning, there are inconsistencies in the recording of progress and achievement. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report. The ability of the service to plan and develop the curriculum is severely constrained by the current context of change and uncertainty. This has also affected the development of projects to widen participation. The inspection team were unable to judge the quality of family learning, as there has been insufficient activity in this area over the past year.

12. The management of the contract with East Surrey College has improved. The responsibilities of the two organisations are clear, and better communication between the college and adult service supports quality improvement. The integration of the adult and community learning contract into the college's management structure has led to a more coherent programme with clear opportunities for progression.

13. Staff development and training are satisfactory. The service's handbook, which outlines the training programme, has been improved and provides useful information about a wide range of training activities. Individual needs are identified through an annual appraisal system and regular individual support meetings. The service now holds an up-to-date record of tutors' qualifications. Tutors' rate of attendance at staff training events and curriculum area meetings remains low. However, curriculum leaders provide very good individual support for tutors, and use newsletters to inform them of new developments. Managers do not collect summary statistics to help monitor the take-up of training. Although the service produces an annual plan, this is not yet sufficiently linked to service priorities.

14. The service uses a wide range of generally suitable accommodation that provides satisfactory learning environments in most areas. There are sufficient suitably qualified and appropriately experienced staff, including support and administrative staff. However, the service does not ensure that all equipment supplied by tutors is appropriately tested as part of the health and safety procedures.

15. The analysis and use of data has improved since the previous inspection and is generally satisfactory. At monthly curriculum meetings, managers use a wide range of useful reports to analyse performance and review service targets. The use of data to explore attendance patterns and set clear attendance targets has significantly improved attendance across all areas of learning. However inspectors were not able to make judgements about rates of achievement. Data for the autumn term 2006 is unreliable. Although the process for recognising and recording progress and achievement is in place, records were not completed accurately. The recording form has been revised to ensure accurate completion of learning outcomes. Inspectors used local data to make judgements about rates of retention.

16. Since the previous inspection, the service has developed an overall strategy for skills for life. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Training has been carried out to support staff's awareness of learners' additional needs, and staff refer learners for appropriate support. The strategy does not include progression of learners from family learning programmes or support for staff to

gain skills for life teaching qualifications, and the service does not have an operational plan to support its further development in these areas.

17. Managers make too little use of targets to manage performance and raise standards. Although performance management in general is satisfactory, personal and team targets are not sufficiently challenging. The overall targets set for the service are not clearly and systematically broken down into individual curriculum areas and individual staff.

18. Course cancellation rates continue to be high and although a target cancellation rate is set for the service, this has not been broken down to reflect the context of different areas of learning in different geographical areas. It is not possible to identify appropriate support to help staff achieve their targets. Action plans do not include sufficiently specific targets with clear, defined timescales, or measures to judge their effect. Appraisals are not used systematically to set or monitor specific targets which are clearly linked to key performance indicators.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

19. The service has satisfactory arrangements to support learners with disabilities on mainstream programmes. The tutors are encouraged to identify learners with disabilities who did not make their support needs known at registration. Adaptive equipment and communication aids are available, and while few learners on mainstream programmes are directly supported by the service, staff work sensitively with those who are. However, a few learners on discrete provision have not had their needs adequately identified.

20. The service's marketing and publicity materials are satisfactory. The main prospectuses include images that reflect different cultural backgrounds and make clear statements about the support available for people with additional needs. They are available in variety of alternative formats, including Braille. However, individual course leaflets present Eurocentric images, the main prospectuses do not have a minicom facility included with the main contact numbers, and disabled parking is not routinely signposted. The learner charter has recently been revised to reflect Surrey County Council's policy and sets out clearly the expectations of staff and learners. A copy is displayed in all centres. The arrangements for responding to complaints are satisfactory. Learners are alerted to the arrangements and complaints are monitored. All staff who work with vulnerable adults have Criminal Records Bureau checks.

21. Activity to widen participation was a strength at the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Although links with other agencies and community groups have been maintained, there have been fewer significant projects attracting large numbers of disadvantaged learners over the past year, and the volume of activity in family learning has decreased. The participation rate by people from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly below that for Surrey as a whole. The widening participation target for people from minority ethnic backgrounds has been exceeded as a result of work with community groups, and eight Chinese learners were enrolled on a project in the autumn term. The service is in the early stages of developing its work with disadvantaged groups.

22. The service's response to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is satisfactory. The service no longer uses many centres that were unsuitable for adaptation, and currently only two of its main centres are not fully compliant. In these cases, adjustments are made to accommodate learners in areas of the buildings that are

accessible. The service has a Disability Discrimination Act action plan, and a few small centres have yet to be audited. The service has a disability statement that makes clear what services can be provided.

23. As at the previous inspection, equality and diversity are not explicitly promoted through the curriculum in order to encourage racial harmony. Progress has been made. Tutor guidelines and training focusing on differentiation are beginning to affect the overall quality of teaching and learning. The first equality and diversity newsletter has been distributed to tutors. However, schemes of work do not explicitly promote equality and diversity. Much of the visual and performing arts work, with the exception of some dance styles, reflects white, middle-class culture. Tutors rarely draw on perspectives from different cultures.

24. The service has been slow to implement its equality and diversity policies. This was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. Surrey County Council was very late in meeting the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The council has recently appointed an officer to develop its policies and practice, and the equality and diversity policy has been revised. However, data on people from minority ethnic groups has not yet been gathered and analysed although this has been a public sector duty since 2001. Surrey County Council's policy on bullying and harassment applies to staff, but not to service users. The council has developed its disability equality strategy in a timely fashion. East Surrey College has appropriate policies and collects the required data. The service has prepared an equality and diversity plan that reflects the main aims of the council policy. The plan is monitored monthly, and an equalities group reviews progress. The service collects headline data on equality and diversity, but does not set targets in individual areas of learning, does not analyse achievement data sufficiently, and does not have equality and diversity impact measures for adult and community learning work.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

25. Arrangements for quality improvement were unsatisfactory at the previous inspection. They are now satisfactory. The post-inspection action-planning process has been effective in raising standards and the quality of provision has improved in the six curriculum areas that were unsatisfactory at the previous inspection.

26. A senior manager has responsibility for quality improvement across the service and is now assisted by an assistant curriculum manager. Changes made to curriculum management after the previous inspection have strengthened quality monitoring and improved the availability of specialist support for tutors. Curriculum managers meet monthly and have been effective in closely monitoring the implementation of the post-inspection action plan. The service has revised and extended its quality improvement framework. Its policies and procedures for quality improvement are now more closely aligned to the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework. All tutors are issued with a comprehensive handbook which clearly sets out their responsibilities and explains the quality monitoring procedures. Some of the revised and new procedures have not been in place long enough to assess their effect on the quality of the provision.

27. Good progress has been made in improving the service's scheme for the observation of teaching and learning, and the amount of inadequate teaching has significantly reduced since the previous inspection. Comprehensive guidelines for the scheme are issued to all tutors. A schedule has been implemented to ensure all tutors are observed within two

years, with priority given to new tutors and to sessions where concerns have been identified. Observations are carried out by subject specialists who have been given additional training. In paired observations conducted during the inspection, the findings of internal observers were broadly in line with those of inspectors. Observers gave feedback to tutors sensitively, and this led to productive professional discussion. Records of observations show clear identification of strengths and weaknesses and in most cases good identification of points for further development. Action plans are agreed between the observer and the tutor after every observation. In some cases timescales are not given for the completion of actions, or actions are not followed up. Observations are subject to a sound moderation process. An overall observation grade profile is maintained on a database and analysed by managers.

28. The service supports tutors whose observed sessions are unsatisfactory. A new tutor mentoring scheme has been introduced in 2006-07. Twenty-two tutor mentors are providing effective peer support and have facilitated the sharing of good practice. In addition to the service newsletter, curriculum areas have developed curriculum-specific newsletters and e-mail groups, improving the sharing of information about quality improvement.

29. Satisfactory progress has been made in standardising the course documents used by tutors. A course record book was introduced at the start of 2006-07, following consultation with tutors through a series of focus groups. It includes an induction checklist, gives guidance on each stage of the process for recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning, and provides an exemplar scheme of work and lesson plan. The monitoring of tutors' use of the documents has been improved through a programme of informal class visits.

30. The service has satisfactory arrangements to monitor the quality of the work subcontracted to East Surrey College. The service regularly receives reports on learner recruitment and the college's observation grades for its adult and community learning provision. Quality improvement is discussed at meetings attended by service representatives and the college's senior and operational managers. The adult and community learning provision is subject to the college's quality improvement procedures, and tutors are given the college's course documents. The college has recently integrated the adult and community learning provision with its mainstream provision. Adult and community learning tutors have benefited from improved access to the specialist expertise of college managers and from opportunities for professional development.

31. The procedure for risk assessment, which was a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Most tutors now complete subject-specific risk assessments of learning tasks. In crafts, there is inconsistency in the way some learning activities are evaluated by tutors.

32. New attendance management procedures were introduced in April 2006. Attendance has improved in a number of curriculum areas and is now satisfactory.

33. Arrangements to collect feedback from learners are satisfactory. Learner surveys are conducted every term and managers respond appropriately to issues raised by individual learners. A complaints/comment book is held at each of Surrey County Council's adult learning centres. The procedure for course evaluation has been revised and is now

satisfactory. Tutors' completion rate for evaluations improved in the first term of 2006 but remains low.

34. The formal recording of learners' progress and achievement is insufficiently established. The service has introduced an individual learner record form and this is being used effectively in some courses, such as modern foreign languages. However, in other cases tutors and their learners are unclear about the relevance of the process and the form is not being completed. Where learners' individual learning aims have been identified and recorded, they are not always clearly defined, or are not measurable, or are insufficiently challenging. In some cases learners' progress is not being measured against learning aims. The individual learner record does not enable tutors to distinguish clearly between different levels of performance when completing a summative evaluation. The service is aware of this and has revised the form for future use.

35. The process of self-assessment is appropriately consultative and involves input from centre managers as well as teaching staff. The report for 2005-06 is comprehensive in its coverage of the provision. For the most part the report is evaluative and presents a well-evidenced commentary, but it does not give a sufficiently clear indication of key judgements. The findings in the self-assessment report closely correspond to the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspection team.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i> Adult and community learning	1,632	3 3

36. There are 1,632 learners enrolled on 165 non-accredited courses. This is 25 per cent fewer than in 2005-06. Courses are offered in yoga, tai chi, bridge, Pilates and gentle exercise and fitness. Most courses are for mixed-ability groups, although some are offered specifically for beginners, improvers and older adults. Courses are offered during the mornings, afternoons, and evenings in over 50 venues, including community centres, adult learning centres and village halls. Sessions are one to two hours in duration and courses run for 10-week periods. There are 67 part-time tutors managed by a curriculum manager.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Strengths

- good development of skills and fitness
- good monitoring of, and feedback on, learners' performance in class to promote learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient assessment and monitoring of personal learning goals

Achievement and standards

37. Learners, many of whom are over 50 years of age, maintain and develop fitness skills well. They show good balance, co-ordination and muscular stamina in a range of sessions. In yoga sessions, learners in their 60s and 70s show high levels of fitness for their age. Poses improve during sessions and learners develop flexibility and balance. Learners in tai chi show good control of breathing that enables them to relax effectively. The performance of step sequences in keep fit sessions was well co-ordinated, and in time to music. Learners in bridge sessions worked well together and showed good understanding of bid making.

38. Attendance at the observed sessions was satisfactory. This was a weakness at the previous inspection.

The quality of provision

39. Monitoring of, and feedback on, learners' performance are good, and are much improved from the previous inspection. Tutors in all sessions observe learners effectively, and correct their performance. Yoga tutors spend time with each learner and correct their posture and body alignment. Tutors encourage learners to work safely and effectively within their own capabilities.

40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better sessions learning objectives are shared with learners at the start of the session. Tutors use a good range of teaching methods to engage the learners and promote learning. They make good use of partner and group work, and they use questioning effectively to check progress and encourage independent learning. The handouts are satisfactory, and learners make good use of them outside the sessions. Learners with additional needs are effectively integrated with class activities and tutors adapt activities appropriately. In the weaker sessions there is insufficient use of alternative exercises to meet individual learners' needs. Tutors do not always give sufficient feedback to learners about how they can improve their performance.

41. Session planning is satisfactory and schemes of work outlining session objectives and learning are used well. Most tutors make good use of the service handbook. Satisfactory individual learning plans are now in place for learners. The assessment of learners has improved since the previous inspection. Learning plans are widely used and identify group learning goals. Tutors measure learners' progress at mid and end points in the course in relation to group learning goals. Initial assessment of exercise status is satisfactory. Learners are asked to indicate how many hours a week they spend in different kinds of exercise including walking, swimming and keep fit activities. Not all learners complete the assessment and few teachers use the information formally in planning.

42. Learning resources are satisfactory and there are appropriate exercise mats, belts and blocks in yoga, weights and music-playing equipment in fitness sessions, and cards in bridge.

43. The range of provision is satisfactory. There are sessions at different levels including beginners and improvers. The service does not routinely analyse learners' progression. The geographical spread of provision is satisfactory with sessions taking place at a range of venues across the county.

44. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners are advised to seek medical guidance when they have a problem.

45. Few personal learning goals are identified on individual learning plans. Goals are rarely specific or measurable, and if they are identified, there is little measurement of progress towards them, or of achievement. This aspect of the provision remains incomplete.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management were identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. The new management structure is effective and managers' responsibilities now span the whole county and area of learning. Tutors are well supported by the curriculum manager with individual visits, attendance at training events and improved communication.

47. Accommodation is satisfactory although two centres have inadequate access for people with restricted mobility. Risk assessments are in place and health and safety requirements that were a weakness at the previous inspection are now satisfactory.

48. Equality and diversity are not actively promoted, although learners with disabilities are well supported. The area of learning does not have a satisfactory strategy for reaching disadvantaged communities, although there are examples of targeted provision for pregnant women, and for learners over 50 years of age.

49. Quality monitoring of the provision has improved and is now satisfactory. The service's observations of teaching and learning accurately identify many of the strengths and weaknesses seen by inspectors. However grades are not always accurate and a number of sessions are ungraded. Tutors receive adequate feedback when observed, and complete action plans to deal with weaknesses. Staff qualifications are satisfactory and tutors' qualifications are checked during the observation of teaching and learning.

50. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It identifies many of the same areas for improvement as the reinspection including the strategy for the curriculum and target-setting.

Arts, media and publishing**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Dance Adult and community learning	608	3 3
Music Adult and community learning	274	3 3
Fine arts Adult and community learning	1,476	3 3
Crafts Adult and community learning	1,741	3 3

51. There are 608 learners on 42 dance courses. This compares with just over 1,000 learners at the same time last year. Thirty classes take place on weekday evenings. Dance courses offered include ballet, ballroom and Latin American dancing, Middle Eastern dancing, flamenco, jazz, jive, line dancing, salsa, tap dancing and Scottish country dancing. Courses are offered at beginner and improver levels and run for 10 or 20 weeks throughout the year. Courses are held at a range of venues across the county in adult learning centres, village halls and schools. A small amount of the provision is subcontracted to East Surrey College. The courses are taught by 20 part-time tutors, who are managed by a newly appointed assistant curriculum leader.

52. Two hundred and seventy-four learners attend 20 music courses at six venues. The provision has been reduced since the previous inspection. Sessions last for between 45 minutes and two hours, are six to 20 weeks in duration and take place in the daytime and evenings. All courses are non-accredited, although there are opportunities for learners to take nationally accredited graded examinations. One manager for art and music is directly responsible for 12 part-time music tutors.

53. There are 1,476 learners are enrolled on 125 non-accredited courses in fine art. The subjects include drawing and painting, Chinese brush painting, oils and acrylics, watercolour, life and portrait, sculpture and art appreciation/history. Seventy-seven per cent of these learners are women. The courses take place throughout the county in 17 venues, which include adult centres, church halls, and primary and secondary schools. Courses are scheduled to run morning, afternoon, twilight and evening. The typical length of the courses is 10 weeks. There are 46 part-time tutors and the area of learning is managed by a full-time curriculum manager who is a subject specialist.

54. There are 1,741 learners on 172 craft courses. None of the provision is accredited. The service provides courses in 17 crafts at 21 different venues across the county. The range includes embroidery, garment making, jewellery making and silversmithing, lace-making, pottery, stained glass, upholstery and soft furnishing and woodwork. Seven sessions are subcontracted to East Surrey College. The programme is managed by a curriculum manager and taught by 58 part-time tutors.

Dance

Strengths

- good social and personal gains for learners
- good rates of participation in stimulating enrichment activities
- very effective implementation of quality improvement strategies

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' creative, stylistic and interpretive skills
- poor accommodation at some centres
- insufficiently defined progression routes for learners

Achievement and standards

55. Many learners achieve good social and personal gains as a result of attending dance courses, including significantly increased confidence, enriched social engagement and demonstrable improvements in physical and mental health and fitness.

56. Learners achieve satisfactory standards of technical skills and knowledge. They are generally able to dance a good range of routines and sequences with an appropriate level of accuracy. They understand specialist language and terminology and respond well to rehearsal directions. Rhythmic accuracy and response to musical accompaniment are generally good. Attendance and retention rates have significantly improved, and are now satisfactory at 87 per cent and 89 per cent respectively. Punctuality is generally good. Some learners progress from beginner to improver and advanced courses and most achieve their intended learning goals. However, some learners dance with poor body posture and many lack sufficient stylistic awareness of the chosen dance form.

The quality of provision

57. Many learners participate in and value a good range of stimulating enrichment activities including regular social dancing and performance events, many of which are organised by tutors. In one lesson observed, learners were able to learn new routines in preparation for social dancing at a specialist dance venue. One tutor regularly organises trips to the West End of London for learners to see a wide range of musicals. Other sessions perform at local charity events and festivals.

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners are enthusiastic and work hard during learning sessions. In many sessions, learners make good progress in extending and reinforcing their repertoire of dance routines and sequences, committing a good range of dances to memory. In the best sessions, learners further their understanding of choreography, expression and phrasing, and perform routines to each other. Tutors' specialist skills and knowledge are appropriate for the range of courses taught. Tutors demonstrate their skills well, giving learners clear instructions and generally effective individual support during sessions. The planning of learning is satisfactory and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Poor posture is not always corrected and some sessions do not include sufficient warm-up or cool-down activities.

59. Significant recent improvements have been made in the monitoring and recording of

learners' progress, and this is now satisfactory. Tutors routinely use newly devised and useful course record books to plan their work, and many record ongoing progress on useful monitoring sheets. Group learning objectives identified on individual learning plans are generally well conceived, covering the development of both technical skills and subject knowledge. However, many individual learning plans do not contain enough course-related individual targets. There is insufficient moderation of the assessment of learners' progress, and some assessment decisions are not critical enough.

60. Guidance and support are satisfactory. An improved process of initial assessment includes a pre-exercise checklist to identify learners' health status, and the initial assessment of learners' ability against the intended group learning goals for their course. However, there is little indication in tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans as to how this information is being used to plan differentiated learning activities.

61. In many sessions, learners' creative, stylistic and interpretive skills are insufficiently well developed. Much teaching focuses on improving technique and learning routines, with insufficient attention to the stylistic attributes of the dance form, or the expressive or communicative aspects of movement and gesture. In some sessions, the most able learners are insufficiently challenged by the level of the dance routines and the expectations of tutors, and too much time is spent reviewing previously learnt material for the benefit of new learners.

62. Some dance accommodation is poor. In the sessions observed, rooms without mirrors, with poor acoustics, and in some cases with slippery or dirty floors had a negative effect on learners' progress and achievement. In some cases learners were unable to move sufficiently quickly, in others learners were unable to self-correct poor posture.

63. Progression routes for learners are insufficiently well defined. Many sessions include learners with a wide range of previous experience. In some instances, learners remain in the same class for a number of years, and other learners find the transition from one course level to another too difficult to achieve. Publicity information does not contain enough guidance on what learners should expect to achieve on completion of a course. In the current academic year, 22 per cent of advertised courses have been cancelled. The range of programmes offered is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management have improved significantly since the previous inspection. An assistant curriculum leader has recently been appointed to manage the area. A good range of quality improvement strategies have recently been implemented across the area, and are beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Staff receive helpful individual support to plan learning and improve the monitoring of learners' progress. A comprehensive schedule for the observation of teaching and learning is being implemented. Grading is generally accurate and feedback to staff is useful and valued. Staff also appreciate new opportunities to share good practice, such as a tutor mentoring scheme. Helpful exemplar schemes of work and lesson plans have been circulated and followed up with individual tutor guidance. Appropriate course risk assessment records are completed routinely.

65. The dance forms represented in the provision reflect an appropriately diverse range of styles and cultures, although the area does not have a strategy to show how it will

systematically promote equality and diversity.

66. Quality improvement is satisfactory. The curriculum area has made good progress in dealing with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The self-assessment report for this curriculum area is generally accurate. Staff and learners value course evaluation and learner surveys as leading to improvements. However, improvement targets in quality improvement action plans are not always sufficiently measurable. The effect of improvement strategies on the quality of teaching, learning and achievement is not always sufficiently evaluated.

Music

Strengths

- good action to improve attendance rates
- good action to bring about quality improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently individualised learning goals
- insufficient focus on the value of different musical cultures

Achievement and standards

67. Attendance on music courses is good, having been a weakness at the previous inspection. Learners are punctual and during the inspection the attendance rate was 93 per cent. Retention rates, a weakness at the previous inspection, have similarly improved and stood at 87 per cent for 2005-06, an increase of 20 per cent. The service's figures indicate that in-year retention for 2006-07 is similar to that for 2005-06.

68. Learners' work is generally satisfactory, and some is good. Most learners demonstrate musical ability at the level expected for the class they are attending. Learners are progressing well against their prior attainment and achievement. Particularly good levels of group work were demonstrated in a singing class where learners are challenged and produce clear singular melodic lines which contribute to a good performance of a harmonic piece.

The quality of provision

69. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best sessions tutors carefully check learners' prepared performance work and background knowledge. They provide good support in developing learners' confidence when performing music. Learners are set challenging tasks that are communicated effectively. A challenging repertoire is provided and set for different abilities. Tutors focus well on specific areas of improvement for each learner. They provide useful constructive criticism and are good at selecting and spotting specific technical weaknesses or strengths in learners' musical performance and knowledge. Learners purposefully practise set music pieces in between sessions. They are clear on the aspects they need to improve and what they do well. In the less effective sessions, tutors do not provide a sufficient range of activities. Some learners are kept waiting while others receive individual coaching. Some activities go on too long without variation. Where resources are scarce, or individual tuition is given, insufficient strategies are used to include learners who are waiting for their turn. Some learners are insufficiently involved in contributing comment to the performance of an individual.

70. The match of courses to learners' prior attainment and experience is satisfactory, and satisfactory advice and guidance are provided. Induction takes place routinely and helps new learners settle onto courses well. Specialist support is available for learners who request it.

71. Learning goals are insufficiently individualised. Much progress has been made since the previous inspection in tackling poor monitoring of learners' progress and skills development. A new system for recording and monitoring progress and achievement is being implemented by tutors. However, tutors pay insufficient attention to setting personal learning goals for learners. Many learning plans contain identical learning goals for music. It is not clear how the learning goals are achieved and checked. Tutors do not match the outcomes of individual learning goals to achievement rates sufficiently systematically.

Leadership and management

72. Good action has been taken to improve attendance rates. Challenging attendance targets of 85 per cent were met for 2005-06. Attendance figures for 2006-07 indicate this rate has been maintained. Tutors promote attendance and punctuality and know where their learners are when they do not attend. Managers carefully monitor in-year performance and take decisive action to resolve sessions with poor attendance.

73. Good action has been taken to improve the quality of provision. The system for observation of teaching and learning is good. Managers now systematically visit sessions, support tutors and feed back to them well. Observation records reflect the grades given for sessions. Managers have successfully resolved three of the four key weaknesses at the previous inspection, and partially resolved the other.

74. Curriculum management was judged poor at the previous inspection but is now satisfactory. A specialist curriculum manager has direct responsibility for music and art. Communication and specific support for tutors has improved. Better systems have been implemented for risk assessing sessions and checking course activities and documents. Part-time tutors are managed more effectively. Accommodation is now satisfactory. Tutors are suitably qualified and experienced in teaching music. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The report contains useful information and sufficient critical comment, but no key judgements. The report links satisfactorily to the post-inspection action plan. There is no reliable achievement data available.

75. Insufficient attention is paid to the value of different musical cultures in sessions. Although learners with disabilities are supported satisfactorily, other aspects of equality and diversity are not adequately planned or promoted. Where cultural reference is made, insufficient attention is paid to its purpose or connection to Western music. Little discussion takes place about the importance of technical aspects of music and their historical cultural evolution.

Fine arts

Strengths

- good standards of work

- good personal and social gains for learners
- much good teaching

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of learning plans to record learners' progress
- insufficient attention to the needs of the learners in the promotion of courses
- insufficient focus on cultural diversity within the curriculum

Achievement and standards

76. Learners achieve a good standard of work in most sessions. They work with enthusiasm, and develop new skills. Learners are able to complete challenging and complex tasks to a good standard in a short time. In most sessions, learners keep portfolios of completed work and sketchbooks of ideas to use as a reference tool to explore and develop ideas. Learners are confident and articulate and enjoy class critiques. They have a good appreciation of the standards of the work they are producing and the progress they are making. Progression can be seen in the portfolios and in the photographic evidence learners are encouraged to keep.

77. All sessions start punctually and learners' attendance rate is good at 87 per cent, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. The retention rate is 93 per cent.

78. Learners make good personal and social gains and increase their confidence and self-esteem. They are aware and appreciative of the therapeutic benefits of attending the sessions. Learners visit galleries, exhibitions and local gardens. For a number of learners this was the first time they had experienced such activities in the company of other like-minded people. Tutors have organised exhibitions of learners' work in private galleries. Many learners sold work as a result. In one class, learners aim to sell enough work throughout the year to pay for class fees and materials. Some learners accept commissions. All the centres visited at the time of the inspection were exhibiting learners' work.

The quality of provision

79. There is much good teaching. Sessions are well structured and carefully planned to accommodate mixed-ability groups. However, in one class the more experienced learners were working on secondary materials and were not being challenged. Tutors design programmes sequentially to build the skills and knowledge learners need to achieve a good standard. Highly skilled tutors demonstrate techniques well and follow this with sensitive individual advice and guidance during sessions. Tutors provide comprehensive and clear handouts and bring their own reference books to illustrate ideas. In most sessions, tutors check learners understand techniques and processes well. Learners are actively encouraged to explore and develop their own creative ideas

80. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory for most of the courses. However, the classrooms visited had no storage available and too few electronic resources.

81. There is a satisfactory range of art courses throughout the county, taking place during the daytime, twilight and evening to meet learners' needs. Progression is available from beginners to improvers and advanced courses. There is anecdotal evidence of learners

moving on to college or joining an arts society.

82. The service does not pay sufficient attention to the needs of the learners when promoting courses. The general distribution of course information is satisfactory, but the information is limited. For additional information learners are directed to the online site. Classrooms all advertise the online address, but this notice does not have a telephone number to use as an alternative and many learners do not have internet access. Individual centres have sometimes given out inaccurate information, resulting in learners enrolling on the wrong course and some learners purchasing incorrect materials.

83. The use of personal learning plans is not well established and there is little formal monitoring of individual learning goals during sessions. The learning plans contain no information for the individual but use a list of tasks to be completed by all the learners attending the session. This does not provide information about the journey travelled by the individual learner. Most learners do not understand the process. Tutors' rate of attendance on training courses is low. However, tutors are better informed than at the previous inspection, with newsletters and increased distribution of e-mails and minutes of meetings.

Leadership and management

84. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are satisfactory and tutors feel less isolated than they have done previously. Subject-specific tutor meetings and the mentoring of tutors enhances opportunities for training and support. Tutors' qualifications and risk assessments are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate.

85. Observations of teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. They are now carried out by subject specialists who give tutors supportive feedback. The tutors find the process productive and the grades awarded by the service are broadly in line with the findings at inspection.

86. Equality and diversity are not promoted explicitly. The curriculum does not focus sufficiently on cultural diversity. There are few opportunities to explore the rich source of materials from other cultures. Tutors' files show no planning to celebrate cultural diversity. Sessions are based on Western culture and learners are not introduced to other cultural perspectives. There is no strategy in place to improve this.

Crafts

Strengths

- good development of practical craft skills
- much good teaching that stimulates and challenges learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently well-established processes for assessment and monitoring of learning
- insufficiently well-established aspects of operational management

Achievement and standards

87. Learners develop good practical craft skills. Much work is of a high technical

standard, sometimes using complex techniques and challenging materials. Beginners quickly make good progress in skills and confidence. In the best sessions, imaginative creative development is clearly evident and learners develop initial design work to produce individual and exploratory pieces from a range of starting points. Some learners exhibit and sell work and plan develop their craft to provide an income. In some sessions learners maintain working notebooks that form a very useful record of learning.

88. Attendance is good. During the week of the inspection, attendance was 86 per cent. The retention rate is good at nearly 95 per cent.

The quality of provision

89. Much of the teaching is good and provides stimulation and challenge for learners. Most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better, a significant improvement on the previous inspection when teaching and learning were judged poor. Most teaching is well planned and structured. Tutors use a good balance of full-class and individual teaching. Good demonstrations are clearly informed by context and relevant aspects of health and safety. Almost all sessions show clearly differentiated activities that develop basic techniques for beginners and extend the skills and scale of work for advanced learners. In the best sessions, teaching is informed by initial assessment and individual creative development, and design work is actively promoted. Some tutors support teaching and learning with well-produced handouts and other supporting materials. Resources are generally adequate. The common factor in weaker sessions is insufficiently detailed planning and record-keeping.

90. The range of courses is satisfactory. Provision is predominantly in textiles and ceramics, but many other crafts are available. Sessions are provided throughout the day and evening. Some specialist one-day Saturday courses and an annual weekend summer school are also available. Some tutors provide enrichment for their courses through group projects or visits to see exhibitions by professional crafts-people. A good link with a lace-making group in Northern Ireland leads to exchange of patterns and news. There is an annual joint exhibition of embroidery and upholstery with a local college. A few learners have progressed to qualification courses, but there are no planned progression routes.

91. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners value the in-class support they receive from tutors. Individual support for learners with physical support needs is given sensitively in class by support assistants. Some specialist adaptive equipment is available for learners with manual dexterity disabilities and visual impairment. Course information is satisfactory. Some tutors occasionally provide other related information, for example, about forthcoming exhibitions. Information about support for literacy and numeracy is widely displayed.

92. Processes for the assessment and monitoring of learning are insufficiently well established. The quality of assessment and record-keeping varies widely. In the very best sessions detailed records are kept, but in most sessions, documents are incomplete and individual targets are vague or non-existent. In some classes, learners are asked to set individual targets on the first session, before they know what they want to do. Most records do not clearly link the skills developed through activities with identified learning outcomes. Few tutors identify learners' knowledge of health and safety among the learning outcomes, although it is clearly specified in course content and delivery. Some

tutors do not fully understand the purpose of assessment or progress monitoring. Training has been offered, but only a minority of tutors attended.

Leadership and management

93. The service has made many improvements to leadership and management since the previous inspection. Management support for the programme area is much stronger, communications are significantly improved, and isolated tutors are better supported. Many standardised documents such as course record books have been introduced. More frequent observations of teaching and learning, informal class visits and mentoring arrangements provide a supportive and developmental framework to improve teaching and learning. Subject-specific health and safety risk assessments are in place in all active sessions. The collection and use of data has improved. Subcontracted provision seen during the inspection is of comparable quality to that seen in direct delivery courses and is subject to the college's quality procedures. Most accommodation is satisfactory and some is good, but a minority is too small for the number of learners.

94. Key judgements in the self-assessment report are very similar to those made by inspectors. However, the text of the report is generally descriptive rather than evaluative. The action plan links clearly to self-assessment and actions are prioritised. Judgements are clearly supported by evidence, including data, but there is not enough use of data to set improvement targets.

95. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory in responding to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. All but one of the adult learning centres visited was fully accessible to learners with disabilities. Some tutors refer to other craft skills and images from other cultures in the content of their courses and some learners incorporate these into their work. However, there is little evidence of widening participation in crafts and no priority curriculum funding for targeted provision. The provision recruits a very traditional profile of learners and there is no clear strategy to widen this.

96. Aspects of operational management are insufficiently well established. Data about achievement is not reliable. The service provides a range of meetings and training opportunities but only 20-25 per cent of tutors regularly attend meetings or training. Historical inequity in the allocation of resources to different centres remains unresolved. In some sessions all equipment is provided, while in others tutors provide their own tools and equipment and purchase consumables to sell to learners. There is no budget allocation for the area. A number of minor health and safety concerns were noted, including the services' failure to test the safety of equipment brought in by tutors. Take up of health and safety training by tutors is poor. Involvement and information sharing with East Surrey College at curriculum level is poor. No data from the college was available to inspectors.

Languages, literature and culture**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		3
Adult and community learning	1,737	3

97. There are 1,737 learners are enrolled on 187 non-accredited courses. Courses in French, Spanish and Italian are available at up to six levels. Other languages include Arabic, Chinese, German, Greek, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish and Russian. Most run for one-and-a-half hours once a week and last for 10 or 20 weeks. They take place in approximately 25 venues across the county, including schools, libraries, community centres, church halls and the service's own centres. A significant number of courses are run by East Surrey College. Courses are taught by 63 part-time tutors who are managed by a full-time curriculum leader and two part-time assistant curriculum leaders.

Other languages, literature and culture***Strengths***

- good planning of teaching and learning
- good range of modern foreign language courses
- effective management actions to bring about improvements

Weaknesses

- high course cancellation rates
- insufficient specialist resources to enhance learning

Achievement and standards

98. Learners' linguistic attainment levels are generally satisfactory and correspond with the expected levels for the courses. In most courses, learners progress at a similar rate in listening, speaking, reading and writing, although pronunciation is less well developed in some courses.

99. Tutors have made a good start with negotiating and recording individual learners' personal and course objectives, and progress can be seen on individual records. However, the capturing of this information is not sufficiently well developed to provide aggregated achievement data for the area of learning. The data on achievements is not yet reliable.

100. At the previous inspection, retention and attendance rates were poor. Retention has improved from 82 per cent in autumn 2005 to 88 per cent in autumn 2006 and is now satisfactory. Attendance at the sessions observed during the inspection was satisfactory at 81 per cent. The provider's attendance data shows an improvement from 78 per cent in autumn 2005 to 89 per cent in autumn 2006.

The quality of provision

101. Tutors have a good understanding of their learners' needs and the planning reflects this. Tutors use the learner record and the results of initial and continuous assessment to plan sessions, and also take into account learners' needs and aspirations. Tutors and learners negotiate changes in course objectives when appropriate, and accommodate personal objectives whenever practicable.

102. At the previous inspection there was too much inadequate teaching and a major factor was excessive use of English during sessions. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory. All sessions observed during the inspection were satisfactory or better, and most tutors and learners use the target language appropriately in class. In the better sessions there is good use of the target language, but in some weaker sessions, both tutors and learners still use English too much.

103. The range of modern foreign language courses is good, both in terms of the number of languages available and the number of levels. Six levels are available for each of the three most popular languages, French, Spanish and Italian, and there are good progression routes in these languages. This was a strength at the previous inspection. The provider encourages the continuation of less frequently taught languages by running them with smaller group sizes.

104. Tutors respond appropriately to learners with additional learning needs. They adopt strategies to help them integrate into the group, while also satisfactorily planning for differentiation in teaching sessions. For example, a learner with mild learning difficulties progressed to the next level language class with the assistance of another learner who had volunteered to act as a 'learning buddy'.

105. Pre-course information is satisfactory. However, the course information in the brochure is not sufficiently detailed, and many learners, particularly new learners, need to find out more. They can now do this through the internet. Advice and guidance about progression for learners already on courses, and negotiation of learning goals after initial assessment are good.

106. There are too few specialist resources to enhance learning. The use of resources such as whiteboards, audiovisual aids, realia and games is satisfactory, but most of these are provided by the tutors themselves. There is little use of information and learning technology. Centres have a laptop computer that tutors may sign out, but not all are aware of this. One tutor has taught sessions in one of the council's libraries, while it is closed to the public, so that learners can access foreign language websites and information, using networked computers, as well as being shown the resource support available through the library service. However there is very little modern technology such as interactive whiteboards in the centres, or equipment to produce digital-quality sound or to record sound and play it back. This limits the opportunity for learners to listen to themselves, and to simulate the atmosphere and culture of the countries where the languages are spoken.

Leadership and management

107. Curriculum managers have taken effective action to improve the area of learning. At the previous inspection curriculum management was inadequate. Since then the full-time

curriculum manager, supported by two fractional assistants, has an effective scheme for the observation of teaching and learning. During the autumn term 2006, 22 tutors were observed. The provider's observation findings are similar to those of inspectors, and the grades awarded largely match the strengths and weaknesses identified. The management team provides good support for tutors. They carry out informal visits to sessions in addition to formal observations, and have introduced a mentoring scheme to provide additional support by experienced tutors. Communication with tutors is much improved. The management team has set up e-groups to aid peer communication for tutors, and also communicates through newsletters, curriculum area meetings and training sessions. The training has included particular sessions on inclusivity and differentiation. Teaching staff are experienced and either have, or are working towards, appropriate teaching qualifications.

108. Course evaluation reports containing feedback from tutors and learners are used satisfactorily in the area of learning self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is sufficiently self-critical and accurate.

109. Course cancellation rates are high. For the past two years approximately 25 per cent of the language courses offered have not run due to low enrolment numbers and the loss of some tutors before the start date of a number of courses.

