

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Warrington LEA**

**27 January 2003**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## 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 training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people 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.

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 judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

Warrington LEA is the local education authority for Warrington Borough Council, which became a unitary authority in April 1998. It subcontracts its general adult and community learning provision to a further education college and a sixth-form college. It also supports family learning and some learning programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. In October 2002, there were 2,303 learners enrolled on learning programmes in nine areas of learning. Five areas of learning were inspected, comprising hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, foundation programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, and family learning.

### Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The provision is good in visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, foundation programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, and family learning. Hospitality, sport and leisure is satisfactory. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

### GRADES

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

Areas of learning	Grade
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Visual & performing arts & media	2
English, languages & communications	2
Foundation programmes	2

### KEY STRENGTHS

- clear strategic objectives and direction
- effective measures to widen participation for under-represented groups
- good retention rates
- good teaching and learning

WARRINGTON LEA

**KEY WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate monitoring of subcontractors
- inadequate resources in some learning centres
- inadequate initial assessment

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of eight inspectors spent a total of 40 days at Warrington Local Education Authority (LEA) during January 2003. They interviewed 349 learners, carried out 85 interviews with tutors, college staff, senior council staff and one elected member of the council, and visited 32 adult and community learning sites. Inspectors observed and graded 45 learning sessions with 468 learners and examined a range of documents, including learners' work, curriculum paperwork, promotional literature, policies, development plans, progress reviews, minutes and notes of meetings, and adult learning plans. They also referred to Warrington Borough Council's second self-assessment report and development plan, produced in December 2002.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4	3	5	4	0	0	0	16
Visual & performing arts & media	0	5	8	3	0	0	0	16
English, languages & communications	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
Foundation programmes	0	0	3	4	1	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>per cent</b>	73.33%		24.44%		2.22%			

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Warrington Borough Council became a unitary authority in April 1998. Within Warrington Borough Council, a senior cabinet member is responsible for the education, culture and lifelong-learning portfolio. A senior council officer within the education department is responsible for the development of an adult learning plan, which is approved by the council. The current plan contributed to the development of the LEA's post-14 learning plan, which was produced in December 2002. Within the local education department, lifelong learning is managed by the Warrington lifelong learning service. The lifelong learning team of five staff is based at one of the council's offices in Warrington. The council is a member of the Warrington learning partnership, which is chaired by the chief executive of the council. Adult and community learning provision is funded by Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with additional support from the LEA and other funding bodies.

3. In 2001-02, 6,590 learners made 17,945 enrolments. The main areas of adult and community learning in 2001-02 comprised hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts, and English, languages and communications. In addition, there are family learning programmes and learning programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. In 2001-02, 75 per cent of learners were women, and 30 per cent were over 60 years of age. Most courses provided by the subcontractors are non-accredited.

4. Warrington has a population of 191,000 and is situated close to main rail and road routes between Manchester and Liverpool. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic groups is 1.3 per cent, which is below the national average of 6.2 per cent. Warrington has an unemployment rate of 2.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.1 per cent. However, there are six wards in Warrington, largely within the urban centre, which are among the poorest 20 per cent of wards in the country.

## **Adult and Community Learning**

5. There is good teaching and learning, with some high standards of practical work in visual arts and media, and some effective innovative courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Retention rates and learners' attainment of individual learning goals are good. The learners' progression to additional learning in visual and performing arts and media, and in family learning, is also good.
6. Learning resources are good in family learning and learning programmes for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, some of the accommodation is inadequate and there are insufficient resources in hospitality, sport and leisure, visual and performing arts and media, and English and modern languages.
7. There is insufficient use of initial assessment. Initial assessment is often based on learners' own self-assessment and on informal discussion with tutors, and courses are not always planned sufficiently to meet individual needs. In sport and fitness learning programmes there is inadequate formal screening of learners' health before they start their course.
8. Curriculum planning is insufficient in some areas of learning. Some courses are repeatedly oversubscribed and new learners are unable to access this learning. Professional development is effective for tutors in visual and performing arts and media, and family learning, but good practice between providers is not shared adequately.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

9. Adult and community learning provision is subcontracted to a college of further education and a sixth form college. Family learning takes place in partnership with the same two providers with informal activities through other council departments. Adult and community learning, family learning, and learning programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, are managed by the LEA's lifelong learning team which comprises five staff, including the family learning officer. The officer for lifelong learning reports to the assistant director for strategic management and planning, who in turn reports to the strategic director of education and lifelong learning. The council has an equal opportunities policy, and a community strategy for social inclusion, developed through a local strategic partnership. There is a post-14 learning plan, which includes lifelong learning. The assistant director for strategic management is responsible for the development of an adult learning plan and the self-assessment report. The lifelong learning team produced its second self-assessment report in December 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- clear strategic objectives and direction
- effective local partnership arrangements
- effective measures to widen participation from under-represented groups

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity
- inadequate monitoring of subcontractors
- insufficient target-setting for subcontractors

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice
- more appropriate equal opportunities policy
- more inclusive disabilities statement

10. The post-14 learning plan for 2003-2006 has clear strategic objectives and direction for widening the participation of learners from under-represented groups, and developing adult and community learning. There has been thorough research and consultation with many local organisations and voluntary groups. There is a clear bidding process to identify and support local initiatives to promote social inclusion. Communication of these objectives to council staff is effective. The lifelong learning team fully understands the LEA's commitment to education and lifelong learning, and the priority given by the LEA to its development.

11. There are effective local partnership arrangements with a wide range of local community partners. These provide effective support for its main strategic aims for adult and community learning. For example, the partnerships have worked very effectively to improve capacity and to provide additional educational opportunities for local adult learners. In addition, the partnerships have collaborated successfully to gain additional funds to support local initiatives in adult and community learning, such as family learning. There are also excellent working relationships between the subcontracting partners and the LEA, and there is good practice in teaching and learning within individual providers. However, there are few opportunities for staff to improve teaching and learning by sharing this good practice among the subcontractors.

## Equality of opportunity

## Contributory grade 3

12. Measures to widen participation from under-represented groups and improve learning programmes are given priority within the LEA's post-14 learning plan. For example, entry-level learning programmes for adults are provided in local areas with high levels of social deprivation. One learning programme is based in a school for children with special needs and provides good support for parents in terms of their own development and understanding of their children's needs.

13. Learning programmes are promoted well through a range of activities during Warrington's annual adult learners' week. Award ceremonies are held regularly for those who have completed family learning and other programmes. In addition, stories written by learners are published in a book for learners to be used with their own children and by other parents.

14. The LEA's widening participation fund is used effectively to increase access to adult and community learning. Through the fund, voluntary and community groups have access to grants to support projects and to promote social inclusion and increase capacity. For example, projects have included individual support for adults with basic skills needs and mobile childcare facilities to allow more adults to attend learning programmes. Further measures to support access to adult and community learning include concessionary fees and guidance workers based at the subcontractors' sites.

15. Both subcontractors have rectified access problems at their main sites for learners with restricted mobility, in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001. However, some outreach venues used for adult and community learning have inadequate access.

16. The monitoring of equality of opportunity is insufficient. Contracts for subcontractors clearly specify data returns for gender, ethnicity, disability and ward of residence. However, this information is not submitted to the LEA, although the information is readily accessible through the colleges' management information systems. There is insufficient information available to monitor the success of provision in respect of equality of opportunity.

17. The subcontracted colleges have satisfactory policies for equality of opportunity and clear disabilities statements. Procedures for making complaints are also clearly communicated to learners. However, the equal opportunities policy used by the lifelong learning team focuses on schools and is inappropriate for adult learners. The disabilities statement issued by the lifelong learning team is incomplete. Although subcontractors' promotional literature contains a clear disability statement, not all publications contain an equal opportunities statement. Student handbooks from both colleges are written in accessible language, but the images used by one college in its handbook and other publications do not adequately reflect the full range of learners targeted.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 4**

18. The quality assurance arrangements within the subcontractors are systematic and well established. There is good use of learner feedback. However, Warrington LEA does not have sufficient quality assurance procedures to ensure that the subcontractors' quality assurance systems are effective. There is too much reliance on the subcontractors' quality assurance systems and their data.

19. The subcontractors systematically collect learners' feedback through questionnaires and student meetings. However, the LEA does not adequately analyse the feedback data received from both subcontractors. The development plan states that in January 2003 it is planned to introduce monitoring visits every term to each provider. It also states that a system will be introduced to identify and take appropriate action regarding specific courses in which problems have been identified.

20. Subcontractors produce an annual performance report, which is formally reviewed by the LEA. However, these reports do not provide sufficient information on all aspects of the contract, such as information regarding participation by learners in particular areas, and the percentage of learners attaining their learning goals. Meetings to review subcontractors' performance against their contracts are insufficiently challenging and do not adequately deal with all contractual items.

21. The LEA has no adequate system to monitor the health and safety arrangements of subcontractors and does not routinely monitor whether risk assessments have been carried out. Although lesson observations are carried out systematically by the subcontractors, there is no routine monitoring or internal moderation of the lesson observations by the LEA.

22. Contracts with subcontractors contain numerical targets for enrolments and guided learning hours. However, there are no clear targets for retention and achievement rates, or for the number of new and re-enrolling learners. Data are not collected routinely on learners' progression towards their learning goals and are not used adequately to identify long-term trends or to measure the impact of any improvements. The development plan states that the LEA intends to create a new system for the collection, monitoring and use of data.

23. The LEA's lifelong learning team produced its second self-assessment report in December 2002. LEA staff and subcontractors, members of the Warrington learning partnership and partners in the voluntary and community sector, contributed to the production of the report, but learners were not consulted. The self-assessment report helped to develop the clear strategic objectives and operational targets for adult and community learning, set out in the LEA's post-14 learning plan, which was produced in December 2002. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found by the inspectors. The inspectors gave the same grades for most areas of learning as the self-assessment report, but gave lower grades for leadership and management and quality assurance.

WARRINGTON LEA

### **Good Practice**

*Consideration is given to multicultural issues in a family learning literacy class. The adults designed a worksheet for the children to complete during a visit to the local museum. The focus for the children was to recognise specific images in Asian jewellery and clothes.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

### Grade 3

24. There are 31 sports, fitness and hospitality courses provided under subcontracting arrangement with a further education college and a sixth-form college. Courses are provided at 15 community venues in the borough, including college sites, primary schools, community centres, secondary schools and church halls. All courses are co-ordinated by the contracted partner institutions, which offer taster sessions and open days to attract new learners. All courses are non-accredited and last for eight, 10 or 12 weeks, running consecutively throughout the year. Sessions are held throughout the week and at different times of day, with most courses scheduled during the evenings. Some courses enable learners to progress from beginner to intermediate and advanced levels. There are 22 tutors, all of whom are employed on part-time contracts and work up to 10 hours each week. All courses are advertised throughout the borough in the adult learning prospectus, newspapers and leaflets. During 2001-02, there were 2,322 learners on sports, fitness and hospitality courses. Learners are predominantly women of all ages. Some learners are from minority ethnic groups.

#### STRENGTHS

- good attainment of individual learning goals
- good retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- good range of evening courses

#### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate training resources and facilities in some learning centres
- inadequate initial assessment
- inconsistent monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient curriculum planning

#### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice

25. The attainment of individual learning goals is good. Learners are aware of the benefits of their classes and effectively apply their learning to everyday life, for example, by reducing stress through exercise. In one cake decoration class some learners have used their skills to start their own business in decorating cakes. Although progress and

## WARRINGTON LEA

achievement in most classes is not measured and recorded formally, tutors give effective individual, informal feedback. Learners demonstrate good achievement and development of skills. Retention rates are good at 95 per cent for 2001-02.

26. Teaching and learning are good. In 75 per cent of the lessons observed, teaching was good or better, and in 25 per cent it was excellent. Tutors are appropriately experienced and vocationally well qualified. Most lessons have schemes of work and lessons are planned effectively. For example, in one cookery class the tutor prepared a variety of recipes to ensure that repeat learners did not duplicate work. Classroom management is effective and tutors use a variety of teaching styles to meet learners' needs. In yoga classes, tutors make good use of music, lighting and their voice skills. Particular attention is paid to individual needs and learners' personal goals. Clear aims and objectives are set and achieved in lessons. Learners show a keen interest in learning, participate fully in lessons and are very supportive of each other. In most cases, learners demonstrate good development of skills.

27. The range of evening courses is good. Course information is satisfactory, with adequate initial course information provided in the subcontractors' promotional literature. Course fact sheets are clear and available to all learners and are available online in one of the learning centres. There are good levels of re-enrolment on many courses, but progress is slow in some areas and does not always meet learners' needs. For some adult learners on sport and fitness learning programmes, their personal objectives are skill acquisition and fitness maintenance rather than progression. Where progression is available, this is not always communicated sufficiently to the learners.

28. In most of the lessons observed by the inspectors, the facilities, equipment and learning resources are inadequate. For example, in some cases car parks are poorly lit, signposting is poor and equipment inadequate. There were too many learners in one badminton lesson to enable them to learn new skills effectively. There is insufficient equipment and many tutors provide their own resources, such as badminton rackets, music, and utensils. Access for those with mobility difficulties is satisfactory in most of the learning centres.

29. Initial assessment is inadequate. It is based on learners' own self-assessment and informal discussions with tutors. For example, there is no formal systematic assessment of learners' health before they start their learning programmes. While medical issues on sports courses are routinely assessed before learners start their learning programme, this assessment is informal and is not recorded. However, there is good and frequent informal reference to health and safety during sessions, and tutors check for health problems at the start of each session and adjust activities according to learners' needs.

30. Monitoring of learners' progress is inconsistent. Some tutors create their own systems but others do not monitor learners' progress adequately. Individual learning plans are used ineffectively and learners are not adequately informed of their progress.

31. There is insufficient co-ordination of the course curriculum. Although the range of

evening courses is good, many of them are attended by repeat learners. Most of the provision is in the evenings. Continuity of learning programmes throughout the year is inadequate and there are not enough arrangements for sharing good practice among tutors. There are insufficient subject area meetings, and staff are unable to share knowledge, experience and practices. Course reviews are inadequate to meet the needs of the local authority. Action plans are weak, with no targets set for retention and achievement.

32. Learners state that the courses meet their individual needs and aspirations. They have good working relationships with the tutors. Many learners use the courses as a way to meet new people and make friends, as well as to gain new skills and knowledge.

## Visual & performing arts & media

## Grade 2

33. At the time of inspection, there are 59 visual and performing arts and media classes in 27 subjects at various levels. Courses are provided at 15 locations in Warrington. Currently there are 2,957 enrolments. This area of learning is the largest within Warrington LEA's adult and community learning provision, and represents approximately 45 per cent of the total. Courses are offered from beginner to advanced level and are provided by two subcontractors. Approximately half of the courses lead to a recognised qualification. There is a wide range of provision in art and crafts, including watercolour painting, drawing and painting, ceramics, calligraphy, silk painting, soft furnishing, embroidery, and computing. There are also classes in salsa, ballroom and Arabic dancing. Sessions generally last for two hours and the courses last eight, 10 or 12 weeks, up to a maximum of 30 weeks. One subcontractor provides taster courses lasting five weeks, while the other provides smaller courses in a venue in the centre of Warrington. Many learners choose to follow some classes sequentially, and the curriculum is often planned on a 30-week cycle.

### STRENGTHS

- good practical work
- significant progress in learning and personal development
- good attendance and retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- good professional development for staff

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient provision and maintenance of equipment
- inadequate initial assessment

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more consistent recording of learners' progress
- better access in some venues
- better planning of the curriculum to meet the needs of new learners

34. Practical work in most subject areas is good and learners achieve a good standard of technical ability in a wide range of subject areas, such as watercolour painting, calligraphy and a number of creative crafts. For example, in the embroidery class there are carefully worked pieces under construction, from very detailed and richly coloured pictorial scenes to larger examples using quilting techniques. In one computer graphics

course, learners are highly competent and produce good computer-generated images. Learners develop a good range of key practical skills, techniques and processes, which they apply confidently, using a wide range of materials.

35. The level of learners' progress and personal development is good. Learners work well and use their new skills confidently. Many learners achieve other benefits from the classes. For example, one learner progressed to a full-time degree course and a career in art and design. Many of the tutors have progressed from part-time adult and community education courses on to higher levels of study and then teaching.

36. Attendance and retention rates are good, at 93 per cent and 95 per cent respectively. However, courses in popular subject areas fill quickly, and new learners are sometimes unable to access the provision. The average class size is approximately 13 learners and, although in some subject classes the number of learners is higher, tutors work effectively to provide good learning experiences for all learners.

37. Lessons are well planned, with clear aims and objectives, and focus on meeting learners' needs at the appropriate level. Lesson plans link schemes of work which show effective routes for progression and development. Tutors set tasks that are both demanding and motivating. For example, in one watercolour class, learners are encouraged to set up their own still life groups, to discuss their ideas and to carry out work they would not usually do.

38. Tutors are specialists in their subject areas and most of them use effectively a variety of teaching methods according to learners' needs. For example, in two community centres tutors established a good social group, where learners from a wide range of backgrounds acquired new skills, and successfully created a challenging learning environment for older learners. Learners are generally well informed about what is expected of them and how they can progress. Many learners work on individual projects negotiated with their tutors, who provide a good range of learning activities.

39. Both subcontractors provide their staff with good professional development opportunities. For example, one subcontractor provides them with full access to training, including free tuition on any adult and community learning programme.

40. In some training venues, there is insufficient equipment, which is inadequately maintained. For example, some of the photocopiers at outreach venues produce poor-quality copies, which are barely readable and particularly unsuitable for older learners with poorer eyesight. At another site, learners had small monitor screens on computer graphics courses and printing facilities were poor.

41. Initial assessment of learners is inadequate. Many tutors do not formally record learners' prior attainment. Tutors assess learners informally as their courses progress. Most teaching is carried out according to learners' different needs and abilities. However, there are not enough individual learning plans. Adequate learning targets are not set. A system introduced recently to formally monitor learners' progression is not

## WARRINGTON LEA

yet used fully or effectively by all tutors.

42. Access to some of the rooms in some of the venues is unsatisfactory for learners with restricted mobility. There are insufficient childcare facilities in most of the venues. Some venues do not have sufficient learning resources.

43. The curriculum is not planned effectively to meet the needs of new learners. Access is poor for new learners on some popular courses, where existing learners are able to re-enrol in advance.

44. Learners enjoy their courses and speak highly of the tutors. Many of the older learners spoke with enthusiasm about the way their learning had not only helped them to develop new skills and interests, but had also improved the quality of their lives. Several learners spoke of how their learning had altered their visual awareness and perceptions, which they were then able to apply in their everyday lives. For many learners, attending classes had become an important and valued benefit to their social lives, as well as helping them to maintain their physical and mental agility.

**English, languages & communications****Grade 2**

45. Modern foreign language courses are currently provided in Spanish, French, German and Italian, all of which are advanced level or are mixed-ability workshops. Two-hour courses are available during the day and in the evening. Learners can enrol every eight weeks, up to a maximum of 24 weeks each year. All learners complete an induction. There are no beginners' courses. There are 115 learners, 44 of whom are men. There are some learners from minority ethnic groups. The courses are attended mainly by older learners. There are also two creative writing courses, with 15 learners. All of the courses are non-accredited, and most provision is taught by part-time tutors. Learners often learn about courses by personal recommendation and some have been attending for more than one year.

**STRENGTHS**

- good teaching and learning
- well-designed courses to meet learners' needs
- good retention rate on language courses

**WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate initial assessment
- inadequate teaching resources in community venues

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better monitoring of learners' progress

46. Teaching and learning is good. Teaching is planned well, with detailed lesson plans and schemes of work which closely reflect the diverse needs of the learners. In mixed-ability language workshops, differentiated learning is thoroughly established in the planned language activities. In lesson plans for creative writing, tutors clearly outline the detailed steps in learning. The content of lessons in both languages and creative writing is negotiated with the learners to meet their personal goals. For example, there is a clear focus on grammatical accuracy and topics relating to the life and culture of the country studied. Schemes of work for creative writing courses cover a wide variety of genres, such as short stories, article writing, poetry and autobiographical writing. The tutors are well qualified and have good working relationships with learners. In languages, tutors are either native speakers or modern languages graduates. Creative writing tutors are published writers.

47. All of the courses are well designed and focus on meeting the learners' needs. For

example, in language classes there is extensive use of the target language which effectively challenges and consolidates learners' language competence and builds confidence. Homework is well established in all lesson plans and tutors set relevant homework tasks, which are closely related to the coursework. Learners' written work is marked thoroughly and tutors provide constructive feedback, both orally and in writing. In creative writing, the tutor gives detailed, encouraging feedback on the learners' writing projects, inspiring them to produce writing of a high standard.

48. The retention rate for learners on language courses is good. For 2001-02, the retention rate was 93 per cent and all language classes observed had good rates of attendance. In the language classes, attainment is also good and learners demonstrate good comprehension and oral skills. Most are able to communicate effectively and use a range of vocabulary confidently. For example, last year one learner won the highest award of achievement for an advanced-level examination in French, which was celebrated in the national press. In the creative writing class, the standard of writing projects is good and male and female learners perform equally well. Learners carry out classroom activities effectively.

49. Curriculum management and co-ordination are satisfactory. Tutors have regular access to staff development programmes and most tutors have benefited from the training. There are team meetings each term and regular formal and informal communication. All tutors on adult and community learning courses are systematically observed as part of subcontractor quality assurance. However, planning and evaluation of the curriculum do not refer sufficiently to learners' feedback. For example, many of the learners interviewed would prefer year-long courses, but so far only short courses up to a maximum of 24 weeks are offered.

50. Tutors use a variety of aids and methods to produce a stimulating learning environment. For example, in one language lesson, the tutor effectively used a wide variety of authentic materials and audio-visual aids to increase learner motivation, add enjoyment, and extend and sharpen learners' knowledge of vocabulary and idioms around the selected topic of the French countryside. A reading of a poem, followed by a song and a video recording, led to a productive discussion on the changes taking place in the countryside. In a creative writing lesson, the tutor provided information and materials from a wide range of different sources to support the development and creative needs of learners.

51. Initial assessment is inadequate and target-setting of individual learners' goals is poor. Learners' progress is assessed informally during the lessons or through homework assignments. For example, language tutors assess their learners' language competence through oral activities. There is some formal assessment, which involves the evaluation of the language skills by grading and a brief comment, but learners' progress records are not sufficiently detailed. Not all tutors share these records with the learners.

52. Teaching resources in the community venues are inadequate. For example, the range of language resources available to the learners attending outreach centres is very

limited. Although there are some resources at the provider's main site, they are not effective in meeting the needs of tutors using outreach centres. Most tutors provide their own teaching resources.

53. Learners give a wide range of different personal reasons for wishing to develop their language skills and indicate a high level of satisfaction. Learners are generally very positive about the teaching they receive and the content of their courses. They enjoy their courses and have very good working relationships with their tutors and colleagues. Learners appreciate the lively atmosphere and strong sense of motivation generated in lessons. However, some expressed concern at the lack of resources. Many learners have been attending courses over a period of two or more years and have progressed to different levels.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

54. Foundation programmes comprise family learning programmes and learning programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Most learners are on family learning courses, which are provided by two local colleges at six schools. Family literacy classes comprise nine- or 14-week courses. Four schools offer the 14-week course, attended by 37 learners and 37 children. The children are in reception and year one and are following the foundation and key stage 1 curriculum. The courses mirror the activities that the children take part in during school English lessons. Family numeracy courses are taught at two other schools. There are 33 adult learners, most of whom are women. Some learners are from minority ethnic groups. Some of the adults and children have disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Both of the learning programmes are accredited. There are also shorter versions of these courses available at three schools. The courses use the basic skills agency framework and focus on numeracy. A further course is provided at another school, which is designed to attract more adults into family learning and aims to improve adult numeracy skills through craft activities. There are also other specialised short-course family learning projects, such as family sport and family learning weekends.

55. Learning programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities take place at a local subcontracted further education college. The main learning programme, skills for working life, is full-time provision for learners who want to study a vocational option to pre-national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 1, with a view to moving on to other college courses. Adults can gain external qualifications during this course, such as a basic food hygiene qualification and a vocational access certificate. There are 27 learners on this course. A further leisure and educational activities programme is provided and aims to provide opportunities for adults to develop social networks and improve self-esteem. This learning programme also focuses on improving learners' self-confidence and encouraging better use of their leisure time. Referral on to this learning programme is by social services. An external award is used to accredit learners' achievements.

**STRENGTHS**

- excellent retention and achievement rate on one of the foundation programmes
- effective innovative courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good progression on to other courses
- effective continuous professional development for family learning tutors
- good learning resources
- wide variety of family learning activities

**WEAKNESSES**

- declining achievement rate in the basic food hygiene qualification
- weak lesson-planning
- inadequate learners' progress reviews
- insufficient use of initial assessment

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better reproduction of some photocopied learning materials
- better sharing of good practice on lesson-planning

56. The retention and achievement rates for the adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent on the skills for working life course, where learners work towards achieving the vocational access certificate. All of the learners have been retained on the course and all have achieved the desired qualification.

57. There are effective innovative courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A training cafe provides an effective training resource that prepares learners for real work situations. The facility has modern equipment with good health and safety standards. Tutors produce good learning materials for the learners. For learners with poor reading skills, the induction information includes clear illustrations. Learners gain and practise valuable new skills in this venue in customer service, health and safety, and catering. In addition, learners are regarded by staff and students at the college as contributing effectively to the running of the college services. All learners are encouraged to take the basic food hygiene qualification, which provides the key knowledge required to gain jobs in catering.

58. There is good progression by learners. Learners progress on to other college courses, such as catering courses. Additional venues within the subcontracting college provide an effective place of work. For example, there is a college shop and an office which give real work experience in office skills and retailing. Learners are encouraged to carry out voluntary work. For example, the learners arrange film shows in the college to raise money for the local hospice. They also work on a project to tidy and maintain the local cemetery.

59. Continuous professional development is effective for family learning tutors. For example, there are regional workshops for family learning tutors and family learning officers assist in national family learning conferences. Basic skills seminars are run to promote keeping up with children courses and there are seminars to encourage schools to work with fathers and male carers. In addition, Warrington LEA hosts the northwest family learning forum and organises a family learning roadshow during adult learners'

week.

60. Learning resources are good. They are up to date and at the appropriate levels of the national curriculum. During the family learning sessions adults produce good, professional learning materials, which become reliable tools and assist parents in teaching their children.

61. There is a wide variety of family learning activities, which include classes for parents to help their children with literacy and numeracy. Learning programmes are designed effectively for the school environment. Warrington LEA also runs other effective learning programmes, for example, a workshop that takes the form of a mathematics lesson to explain the new strategies used to teach children's mathematics. Two schools provide a good range of family sports activities, which include exercises for parents and children that develop effective teamwork and good communication skills. Additional short courses are provided in four schools, which include basic computing and stress management.

62. Retention rates have declined over the past three years in the basic food hygiene certificate at the subcontracted college. Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities require this qualification to improve their likelihood of employment in the catering industry.

63. Lesson plans are weak and do not take into account learners' individual needs. For example, in classes for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learners are of mixed ability and require different learning programmes. Some learners are working towards an NVQ at level 1 in retailing but others have more specific social and behavioural needs. However, assessment methods are insufficiently varied and plans to evaluate learning are inadequate.

64. Learners' progress reviews are inadequate. Tutors are required to carry out progress reviews at the end of each term. These reviews were not carried out for some learners, and their progress was not evaluated. Where learners in family learning classes have been attending classes for 11 weeks, there have been no formal progress reviews.

65. While initial assessment of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is detailed, the information collected is not subsequently available to tutors in a useable format. Individual learning plans contain insufficient information from initial assessments. For adults on family learning courses, there is insufficient initial assessment to complete individual learning plans effectively. The information recorded is often inadequate.

66. Many learners have progressed to work or other educational programmes. For example, one learner from a numeracy class gained a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in mathematics. Another learner completed a classroom assistant course at a college of further education and now also works in a school. Other learners are attending additional local adult and community learning classes. Learners have a

better understanding of their children's needs and how to support them with work at school. They have gained new personal skills in mathematics and/or English. Learners gain a better understanding of the national curriculum and the alternative play activities to use at home to support their children's learning.

#### **Good Practice**

*Adults attending family learning classes are given learning resources to use at home, including card, crayons, sticky shapes, paper, rulers, erasers and pens. These materials help parents make learning materials for their children to use at home.*

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Provider</b>	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Learner</b>	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
<b>Teacher / trainer</b>	<b>Tutor</b>  <b>Mentor</b>	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.  Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
<b>Learning goals</b>	<b>Main learning goals</b>  <b>Secondary learning goals</b>	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.  These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
<b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b>	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
<b>Subject-based programme</b>	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
<b>Issue-based programme</b>	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
<b>Outreach provision</b>	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
<b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
<b>Community regeneration</b>	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.

<b>Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning</b>	
<b>Community capacity building</b>	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
<b>Active citizenship</b>	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.