

REINSPECTION REPORT

Sandwell Adult Education Service Reinspection

08 October 2004



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. 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 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 over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Sandwell Adult Education Service (SAES) provides adult and community education services in Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. It is funded by the Black Country Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It is part of the lifelong learning, libraries and culture department of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
2. SAES offers courses at 70 venues in six main areas of learning. Over 70 per cent of learners are in information and communications technology (ICT), and visual and performing arts and media which were not reinspected in depth during this reinspection as they were found to be satisfactory at the previous inspection. Standards have been at least maintained in these areas.
3. SAES's strategic aim is to work with partner organisations to provide opportunities for adult learning to all the communities it serves. It has identified ICT and family learning as particular areas for growth. It considers that these two areas provide opportunities to attract new adult learners with low skill levels into learning. At the same time, it continues to offer opportunities for general leisure and academic learning in sport, art and languages. Since the previous inspection, it has significantly reduced the number of foundation courses offered, as its partners are concentrating more on this area.
4. As at the previous inspection, the service is managed by an adult education manager. He is now supported by five curriculum managers, a quality and marketing manager, and an equal opportunities and resource manager. There are six centre managers, two area development managers, a quality assurance officer, a data systems manager and an information, advice and guidance manager. SAES has also created eight new lead tutor positions. There are 126 part-time tutors, two classroom assistants, two administrators and a technician.
5. The Sandwell area has suffered from considerable industrial decline in recent years. SAES operates in many areas with significant levels of deprivation. In 2000, a survey by the local partnership for learning estimated that between 20 and 40 per cent of the adult population had difficulties with literacy, numeracy or language. In August 2004 the unemployment rate was 4.2 per cent, compared with 2.2 per cent nationally. According to the 2001 census, 20.3 per cent of Sandwell's population is from minority ethnic groups, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. From September 2003 until the time of the reinspection, there have been 1,150 enrolments on sport and leisure courses. At the time of the reinspection, there were 233

learners. Just over 80 per cent of the learners are women, 27 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 7 per cent have a disability. There are 45 non-accredited and four accredited sport and leisure courses including yoga, aerobics, football, fitness training, badminton, swimming and national pool lifeguard training. Most courses recruit on a termly basis and last for an average of 10 weeks. Approximately 30 per cent of courses are provided during the day and 70 per cent in the evening or at weekends. They are provided in 14 venues, including adult learning centres, local schools and community and local learning centres. There are 21 part-time tutors who work between one and 12 hours a week. They are managed by a curriculum manager who is responsible for co-ordinating and managing the curriculum.

English, languages & communications

7. From September 2003 until the time of the reinspection, there have been 492 enrolments on language courses. At the time of the reinspection there were 180 learners. Just over 50 per cent of learners are women, 38 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and just under 5 per cent have a disability.

8. Sixteen courses are offered, including British Sign Language (BSL), French, Hindi, Punjabi and Spanish. Progression routes are available in BSL, Punjabi and Spanish. There are accredited courses in BSL and Punjabi. Just over 20 per cent of learners are on accredited courses. Classes are held at 11 locations during the day, evenings and at weekends. Classes are mainly taught in blocks of two hours and last from five to 37 weeks. There is a curriculum manager and 10 part-time tutors.

Foundation programmes

9. Between September 2003 and the time of the reinspection, there have been 856 enrolments on foundation programmes. Since the previous inspection, many unsuccessful programmes have ceased, particularly where SAES's partners offer similar programmes. There are currently 80 learners. There are now nine courses, all of which are accredited. Six courses take place during the day and three during the evening. SAES provides literacy and numeracy programmes for learners at entry levels 1, 2 and 3 as well as levels 1 and 2, and a programme of initial and diagnostic assessment for adults with learning difficulties. Courses run for 11 weeks for between two, and two and a half hours a week. Just over 40 per cent of learners are on numeracy courses, 30 per cent of learners are on literacy courses and 30 per cent are enrolled on the initial and diagnostic assessment programme. Seventy per cent of learners are women, 26 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 16 per cent have a disability.

10. The literacy and numeracy programmes all take place at one SAES community venue in a ward where literacy and numeracy skills have been identified as well below the national average. The accommodation and facilities are adapted to meet the needs of people with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a crèche on these premises. Six classes are offered during the day and three in the evening.

Family learning

11. From September 2003 until the time of the reinspection, there have been 739 adult enrolments on family learning programmes. At the time of the reinspection there were 50 learners. Just over 80 per cent of learners are women: over 30 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and just under 5 per cent have a disability. In 2003-04 there were 43 courses in 29 locations, including drama, beauty therapy, nail art, swimming, ICT, art, aromatherapy, paediatric first aid, music, storytelling, Arabic, Punjabi and Urdu. There are also family learning weekends and weeks with a variety of physical activities and arts and crafts to attract new learners. Courses and taster sessions are held in community centres, voluntary organisations and libraries, as well as on SAES's own premises. Most courses are run in partnership with other providers. Family literacy, language and numeracy courses for parents with children at school are subcontracted to a local college. These courses are accredited. There is a full-time curriculum manager. All tutors are employed sessionally.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	14
Number of inspection days	74
Number of learner interviews	245
Number of staff interviews	102
Number of subcontractor interviews	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	77
Number of partner/external agency interviews	14
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

12. The ALI's previous inspection identified that provision in ICT and visual and performing arts and media were satisfactory. Training in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel and English, languages and communications were unsatisfactory, and training in foundation programmes was very weak. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity were unsatisfactory, and quality assurance was very weak. At the end of the reinspection process, standards in ICT and visual and performing arts and media had been maintained. Training in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, English, languages and communications and foundation programmes are all satisfactory. Family learning was inspected for the first time and is satisfactory. Leadership and management is satisfactory and equality of opportunity is good. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

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GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	5

Information & communications technology	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4

Visual & performing arts & media	3

English, languages & communications	4

Foundation programmes	5

Grades awarded at reinspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

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English, languages & communications	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Family learning	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

13. **Learners on sport and leisure training courses develop good skills to enhance their lifestyles.** They maintain and improve their mobility and strength which helps them in their daily activities.

14. **There is outstanding achievement in Punjabi language courses,** and pass rates in BSL are improving.

15. **Learners on family learning programmes produce a good standard of work.** Parents learn good techniques to help their children with school work.

16. Achievement rates in foundation programmes are satisfactory. Learners gain considerable self-esteem and confidence.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	5	6	8	2	1	0	22
English, languages & communications	0	1	7	7	2	0	0	17
Foundation programmes	0	3	3	3	2	0	0	11
Family learning	0	3	4	4	2	0	0	13
Total	0	12	20	22	8	1	0	63

17. **There are useful partnerships with other organisations** in all areas of the curriculum. In sport, these partnerships are used to expand the range of courses and to provide opportunities for all sections of the community to participate in physical activities. In languages, they are used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the foundation area, they are used to ensure that community needs for literacy, numeracy and language courses are fully met. In family learning they are used to provide and promote learning opportunities for new adult learners and their children.

18. **In all areas of the curriculum, teaching and learning has improved significantly.** In those areas reinspected, 37 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory or worse at the previous inspection, compared with 14 per cent at the reinspection. In sport, some tutors are multi-lingual and give instruction in more than one language. In languages, most tutors make good use of the target language and encourage learners to practise it outside class, although in some classes there is too much use of translation. In the foundation area, most teaching is well planned and tutors use a good range of different styles. In family learning classes, there is good use of a variety of interesting projects to engage adults and children.

19. The resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory in all areas of the curriculum. All tutors have access to photocopiers, books and handouts. Good use is made of ICT equipment, particularly in the foundation area. Most teaching takes place in comfortable, well-lit rooms, although some rooms used for teaching languages have been designed for other purposes and are not appropriate. There is much new sports equipment, such as hand weights, resistance bands and a rowing machine. However, some of the changing room facilities used for sports classes are poor, with dirty toilets and unreliable showers.

20. **In sports, the planning and monitoring of individual learning is ineffective.** Learners are not given sufficient guidance to meet their individual learning goals, particularly if they enrol for the same or similar classes several times in succession.

21. **In languages, learners are not set sufficient targets.** Learners do not receive adequate pre-course information about the level of different courses. Some learners do not enjoy working in classes where there is a wide range of prior knowledge of the language.

22. **In the foundation area, there is insufficient monitoring of learners' progress and achievement.** Short-term goals are not sufficiently explained and agreed. Some learners are not given enough guidance on the small steps they need to make towards their long-term aims.

23. **In family learning, there is a shortage of specialist teachers.** The start of some classes and projects has been delayed.

Leadership and management

24. **SAES has a particularly clear strategic plan** which is designed to provide opportunities for learning to all adults in the community. It works well with partners to provide a comprehensive range of courses in all geographical areas. It makes good use of community venues such as libraries, centres used by minority ethnic groups and schools.

25. **Since the previous inspection, SAES has taken decisive action to improve the range of training and education it offers.** Many small and unsuccessful courses which attracted too few learners have been withdrawn.

26. **There has been a significant investment in new equipment,** particularly on computers and software. This equipment is used effectively in ICT and also in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in foundation programmes. It is well used to help learners who need support with literacy, numeracy and language.

27. **SAES takes particularly effective action to widen participation.** It caters effectively for the special interests of many minority ethnic groups and works well to promote racial harmony. Good childcare facilities are available at most of the main centres and there is a particularly effective scheme to provide nursery places at one centre.

28. **Some quality assurance practices are still weak.** In particular, the observations of teaching have not prevented some unsatisfactory teaching.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- particularly well-developed strategic planning to benefit the community
- decisive management action to improve provision
- particularly effective actions to widen participation

Weaknesses

- some weak quality assurance arrangements

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- effective application of skills to enhance lifestyles
- successful partnerships to expand the curriculum

Weaknesses

- ineffective planning and monitoring of individual learning
- inadequate use of lesson observations to improve teaching and learning

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- outstanding retention and achievement in Punjabi
- supportive partnerships to improve teaching, learning and resources

Weaknesses

- some poor attainment in BSL
- insufficient target-setting
- insufficient training for inexperienced tutors

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- very effective partnerships to meet community needs and improve quality of teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of achievement and progress

Family learning

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- very effective partnerships to attract new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient specialist staff with skills in adult teaching

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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	
Provider	Provider	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
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher / trainer	Tutor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	Mentor	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
Learning goals	Main learning goals	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.
	Secondary learning goals	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
Personal and learning skills	Personal and learning skills	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
Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome	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.
Subject-based programme	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.
Issue-based programme	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.
Outreach provision	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.
Neighbourhood-based work	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.
Community regeneration	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.

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Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Community capacity building	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.
Active citizenship	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.

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- particularly well-developed strategic planning to benefit the community
- decisive management action to improve provision
- particularly effective actions to widen participation

Weaknesses

- some weak quality assurance arrangements

29. There is a particularly well-developed strategic plan to benefit the community. Strategic planning is a strength in SAES's most recent self-assessment report and was also identified during the previous inspection. Since then, the planning process has been further improved to meet the changing needs of the local community and national initiatives. The strategy is comprehensive and fully demonstrates SAES's commitment to lifelong learning. A wide range of local, regional and national sources of information is used in the planning process, including consultation with learners. In early 2004, SAES established an adult learning board with its partners. The board includes wide representation from the LSC, the local authority, local colleges and the voluntary sector. It co-ordinates the strategic provision of adult education to ensure that progression opportunities are available, and that courses reflect the needs of the wider community and provide an appropriate geographical and subject range. Particular care is taken to manage resources effectively to benefit learners and to avoid duplication of effort by different providers.

30. SAES's strategic plan is updated annually. For 2004-05, it clearly identifies the priorities for the service. These priorities are incorporated into clear service objectives and detailed operational plans. SAES has many long-standing partnerships and continues to form new links to benefit learners. These include links with local schools to provide courses in areas with little tradition of adult education and with many libraries to provide an increased range of venues for learning in the community. There is a particularly co-operative partnership with a local college to co-ordinate the delivery of literacy, numeracy and language training. There are also joint initiatives with museums to provide art and craft courses.

31. Following the previous inspection, senior managers of SAES took decisive action to improve the service. Every course was evaluated to determine whether it should be retained. Managers reviewed enrolment, retention and achievement rates for each course and assessed the suitability of venues, resources and staffing. In the weakest area

of learning, the number of courses was reduced considerably to leave a core of courses that are relevant to the local community. Insufficient sharing of good practice was also identified as a key weakness during the previous inspection. To rectify this, SAES has introduced a termly newsletter, a fortnightly information sheet, a family learning website, and an ICT tutor e-group to rectify this weakness. There are new ICT workshops which are used effectively to share information across the curriculum areas. Staff induction now includes time for colleagues to work with each other to discuss ideas which can be used to improve courses.

32. At the previous inspection, resources were unsatisfactorily for many courses. SAES has invested significantly to rectify this weakness. Curriculum managers, lead tutors, a full-time guidance worker and a quality and improvement officer have been recruited. Staff are encouraged to take up development opportunities including working towards qualifications and attending external events. Budgets have been devolved to curriculum and centre managers who are now able to purchase appropriate resources for their courses and centres. There are new computers at all centres, with much improved internet access using broadband, and specialist equipment to allow users with disabilities to make full use of the facilities. Learning materials have been purchased to support new ICT courses.

33. The use of data is satisfactory. SAES has a well-established and comprehensive computerised management information system. A good range of useful reports is produced regularly, and managers are able to request bespoke reports when required. Managers and senior officers use these reports as an aid to planning, setting and monitoring targets. However, many tutors are unaware of the amount and usefulness of data that can be provided.

34. SAES has a satisfactory approach to providing literacy, numeracy and language support. It has expanded its partnership arrangements to include many new organisations with expertise in literacy, language and numeracy. Internally, there is close liaison between the ICT and family learning and foundation areas of learning. A pilot programme has taken place in ICT to link literacy, numeracy and language to the core curriculum. This has made good use of new ICT equipment and software to develop ICT learners' literacy, language and numeracy skills. Initial assessment for literacy and numeracy needs is offered to all ICT learners and when needs are identified, learners are provided with specialist support.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

35. As at the previous inspection, SAES takes particularly effective action to widen participation. The most recent self-assessment report also recognised this as a strength. There are now significantly more centres and courses which are attracting under-represented groups through links with the Hindu community, a women's network, Bangladeshi and Yemeni community groups and a support group for parents of deaf children. Many mixed groups help to promote racial harmony in a diverse community. Strong and developing partnerships with community centres, libraries and other providers are being used to plan innovative courses such as a family history course based

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on the Tipton town trail and BSL courses for Asian parents of deaf children. An art class originally designed for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities has been extended, with their agreement, to include the carers who accompany them. SAES is effective at removing barriers to learning through flexible provision in libraries, more short courses and taster courses, appropriate adaptive technology in ICT rooms and improved transport for learners with restricted mobility. The main centres are fully accessible to wheelchair users, and SAES has upgraded most centres to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 through the installation of lifts and ramps, new toilets, automatic doors, hearing loops, and information in Braille. The need for individual learning aids is well planned. For example, specialist software for a learner with a progressive degenerative illness was provided at an early stage so that he could become familiar with it before his illness made this too difficult. At the same time, staff built up expertise in its use for the benefit of other learners.

36. ICT has been particularly well used to attract new learners and to identify other learning needs, such as in literacy, numeracy or language. When this takes place, support is built into the programme in a format to suit the learner to encourage them to stay in learning. Learners on new courses are encouraged to use additional support agencies, such as clubs for children with a hearing impairment. More learners are now getting additional financial support after receiving better advice and guidance. Tutors have a good understanding of progression opportunities within SAES or with its partners. Effective specialist advice and guidance is also readily available for learners who wish to discuss their progression opportunities in more depth.

37. Management of equal opportunities was ineffective at the previous inspection, but it is now satisfactory following several improvements. SAES has produced its own equal opportunities policy to supplement and interpret the local authority's policy. It is easy to read and is available in large font, Braille, audio and community languages on request. New learner handbooks and charters which clearly set out learners' rights and responsibilities have also been produced and widely circulated. A new manager has been appointed to oversee the implementation of the equal opportunities policy and a steering group has also been set up. The group includes wide representation from learners, tutors and partner organisations. SAES has organised an intensive programme of staff development to prepare for the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. There is an informative CD-ROM containing much useful material on diversity, and a series of exercises to further enhance and test the staff's understanding of equality of opportunity, diversity and relevant legislation. Part-time staff are paid for completing the exercises and only a few have yet to do so. Learners' awareness of equal opportunities is also much improved. Termly newsletters and fortnightly information sheets regularly feature equal opportunities to reinforce awareness and understanding.

38. Childcare facilities and arrangements have considerably improved since the previous inspection, when they were a weakness. Five of the six main centres now have a crèche. Other centres draw on an outside group to provide mobile crèche facilities in a range of locations. In one centre, SAES has good arrangements with a local nursery which allows parents to share places on a rota basis so that different learners can use the same place at different times of the day.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

39. Since the previous inspection, SAES has produced written procedures which describe most aspects of course delivery and support. SAES has appointed a quality improvement officer and introduced an auditing system. This system provides satisfactory assurance that tutors have the correct paperwork for each learner and each course. There are also satisfactory procedures for self-assessment. The most recent self-assessment report was completed in April 2004. It took full account of the views of tutors and learners and the results of lesson observations which had taken place up to that time. The report recognised most of the strengths identified by inspectors, but did not recognise that some of the weaknesses in teaching have still to be overcome on all courses. Once managers are aware of particular weaknesses, they take remedial action. For example, at some locations they acted swiftly to respond to learners' requests for improved refreshment facilities.

40. Despite this progress, some aspects of the quality assurance are still weak. The observations of teaching concentrate too closely on the completion of paperwork, which is also identified by the audit system. There is insufficient analysis of the level of learning, the standard of learners' work or the effectiveness of teaching. Similarly, there are only rare comments about promoting equality of opportunity during lessons. There are too few follow-up actions to correct the remaining examples of unsatisfactory teaching in the curriculum areas. There are inadequate arrangements to monitor the progress of individual tutors after weaknesses have been identified during an observation. In some cases the written feedback to tutors is confusing. For example, in one case a lesson was graded as less than satisfactory, but the comment to the tutor was that the lesson was good.

41. Although the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced significantly since the previous inspection, from 37 per cent to 14 per cent in the areas subject to reinspection, the quality assurance procedures have not dealt with the causes of the remaining ineffective practices. For example, they have not rectified over-use of translation in some languages classes, some poor facilities in sports and too much emphasis on group rather than individual goals in some foundation classes. SAES has recognised that further training in observation is required, but this has not yet been arranged.

42. The quality assurance arrangements are not used to set effective targets for improvement across all aspects of the service. They concentrate too closely on monitoring compliance with procedures and are not an effective tool for analysing quality and achieving continuous improvements to all courses on offer.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	233	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- effective application of skills to enhance lifestyles
- successful partnerships to expand the curriculum

Weaknesses

- ineffective planning and monitoring of individual learning
- inadequate use of lesson observations to improve teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

43. There is effective application of skills to enhance learners' lifestyles. For example, breathing techniques in yoga and tai chi are used effectively to aid concentration and relaxation, and some learners report improvements to their asthmatic conditions. Learners develop a good sense of well-being and many demonstrate fitness and skill levels that are very good for their age. Learners improve and maintain their mobility and strength which helps them in their everyday activities. Skills of learners in class are satisfactory or better. For example, in yoga, poses and balances are well performed and some dynamic breathing activities are accomplished particularly well. In aerobics, learners perform step sequences well and are able to co-ordinate their movements to music. Attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection and were satisfactory in all classes observed during the reinspection. The achievement rate on the national pool lifeguard course was 100 per cent at the time of the previous inspection. When the reinspection took place, some learners were still awaiting final results, but results so far are satisfactory.

44. SAES's most recent self-assessment report identified enhancements to learners' lifestyles as a strength in this curriculum area. It continued to claim excellent achievement rates in the lifeguard qualification as a strength, although full data could not be provided to substantiate this claim.

Quality of education and training

45. There are successful partnerships to expand the curriculum. At the previous

inspection there was insufficient targeting of courses at under-represented groups. This has been rectified by the development of partnerships with a Hindu centre, an Asian women's group, a lone parents group and through links with weekly health assessment days at a health centre. Since the previous inspection, taster sessions have been held and new classes have been offered where the tasters were successful. The range of classes is now wide and includes aerobics, football, yoga, gentle exercise, golf and badminton. Provision has been extended geographically across the area. There are progression opportunities in yoga and separate specific provision for men and women. A useful extended schools initiative allows school sixth form students to participate in the accredited sports coaching provision.

46. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors give clear demonstrations and instructions that facilitate learning. Learners develop a greater understanding of why they are exercising and how this improves their lives. Tutors use a variety of teaching methods which are relevant to learners' needs. Some are multi-lingual and give instruction in more than one language. They are effective at correcting poor exercise techniques and explain the correct techniques clearly.

47. Resources in most locations are now satisfactory. Most staff are suitably qualified and experienced, although some still do not have a teaching qualification. At the previous inspection, development opportunities were not offered to many staff, but opportunities are now open to all staff, including training in generic issues such as equality of opportunity, which many have attended. Since the previous inspection there has also been significant investment in new equipment to improve teaching resources which were previously unsatisfactory. For example, new hand weights, resistance bands, floor mats and a rowing machine have been purchased. Crèche facilities have been increased at some venues for particular classes, such as ladies' keep fit. However, some rooms are still overcrowded or cluttered. At one centre, the toilets were dirty and at another, the showers were not working. These remaining shortcomings detract from the quality of teaching. SAES's most recent self-assessment report identified the shortcomings in some of the accommodation, although the impact on teaching and learning was underestimated.

48. Support, information and guidance are satisfactory. Pre-course advice and guidance information leaflets are satisfactory. Marketing information has improved and more learners are accessing concessionary fees and hardship funds.

49. Planning and monitoring of individual learning is still ineffective. Some physical activity readiness questionnaires are not completed before programmes start and the information gathered is not used effectively to plan individual teaching. Learners now identify targets in their personal learning plans but these are not sufficiently linked to the group targets set by the tutor. There is insufficient monitoring of learners' progress, particularly for learners who enrol on the same programme each year. Lesson plans do not sufficiently differentiate activities for different learners and the objectives are still hard to measure. There is little initial assessment of literacy and language skills for accredited classes.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management of this curriculum area has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. A curriculum manager has been appointed. Communication is good. Staff are well informed and good practice is appropriately shared through fortnightly newsletters, centre meetings, e-mail, and generic and curriculum staff training events. Tutors have regular individual discussions with the curriculum manager. An informative, service-wide staff handbook and a specific sport and health staff handbook are provided for all staff. Arrangements for staff training and development are satisfactory. Many tutors have attended generic and curriculum specialist staff training events. At the previous inspection the curriculum was traditional and narrow. It has now been expanded and staff training has been used effectively to develop it further. For example, three staff have been supported to gain qualifications to enable the development of new courses in fitball, the community sports leader award and football leadership. Risk assessments are carried out by centre managers, sometimes in conjunction with tutors, on the accommodation and the type of activity it is used for. Targets are set for enrolment, retention, achievement and success. A variety of reports are produced to measure performance against the targets and are included in the development plan, but they are not always specific enough to ensure improvements.

51. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Staff training includes recent legislation and promotional materials comply with relevant legislative requirements. Data is collected on age, gender, ethnicity and disability and is analysed on a regular basis across the curriculum area.

52. There are satisfactory arrangements for the internal verification of accredited courses. There are now adequate procedures to collect learner feedback, and end-of-course reviews now take place. Since the previous inspection, more observations of teaching have taken place. However, the results are still not adequately used to improve all aspects of teaching and learning. They are not sufficiently used to improve remaining weaknesses in particular aspects of the curriculum or aspects of teaching. For example, there has been insufficient action to improve goal setting for individual learners, to improve lesson planning or to monitor individual progress more effectively. Follow-up observations of tutors with identified development needs rarely take place.

English, languages & communications**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	180	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- outstanding retention and achievement in Punjabi
- supportive partnerships to improve teaching, learning and resources

Weaknesses

- some poor attainment in BSL
- insufficient target-setting
- insufficient training for inexperienced tutors

Achievement and standards

53. There is outstanding retention and achievement in Punjabi. None of the learners have left the course early in the past year and the examination pass rate is 100 per cent. One learner scored full marks for AS level Punjabi in June 2004. Enrolments have increased by 65 per cent this term and there is already demand for places on the course next year. SAES's most recent self-assessment report was produced before these results were available and it did not claim a specific strength in this area.

54. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory in most other areas of the curriculum. Most learners demonstrate appropriate skills in their chosen language and work at a satisfactory level for their learning aims. The pass rates in BSL examinations have improved from 34 per cent at the time of the previous inspection to 42 per cent in 2003-04. However, there is still some low attainment in BSL, particularly for learners on level 2 courses. Learners' range of vocabulary is too narrow, they are not fluent and do not use expression sufficiently to identify precise meaning. SAES has identified this shortcoming and in September 2004 it introduced a five-week pre-BSL taster course to help prepare learners for the full course. However, this has not yet had a significant impact. BSL learners are still slow to mix with the deaf community outside class.

Quality of education and training

55. Since the previous inspection, SAES has developed supportive partnerships with specialist language training organisations to improve teaching, learning and resources. These partnerships provide links into regional and national networks which SAES is now using effectively. For example, one partner is providing specific BSL tutor training,

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professional support for deaf tutors and an extensive resource bank for tutors and learners. In a recent initiative, another partner is providing additional observations of teaching and learning to identify the specific developmental needs of modern language tutors. SAES responds well to the language needs of local communities and provides courses in community and foreign languages in carefully chosen venues which are well known to potential learners.

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most sessions are well-planned on standard forms. Tutors carry out their lessons in a supportive and purposeful manner. They employ humour to create a relaxed atmosphere which encourages learning. As at the previous inspection, some lessons are good or very good. Tutors make frequent, effective use of the target language and a range of activities to suit different learning styles. For example, one tutor used the refreshment break to insist that beginners order their drinks in the target language and another encouraged more advanced learners to use mime to demonstrate verbs of action. However, in some lessons there is still overuse of English and a reliance on translation in conversation classes. In these lessons some tutors do not adequately exploit the materials and equipment available and the pace is slow. Most learners are enthusiastic about their classes and work hard at the tasks they are set, but some struggle when there is not enough work on essential vocabulary.

57. Most of the rooms used for classes are bright, warm, comfortable and well-equipped. SAES now provides a suitable range of teaching resources and the staff have a satisfactory knowledge of their subject. They have access to photocopiers and the materials they provide are generally at an appropriate level for the class. ICT facilities are also available at most centres, although no use was made of these in the lessons observed. There is still some unsuitable accommodation, including a science laboratory and a school where the furniture is inappropriate for adults.

58. There is satisfactory support for learners from their tutors. There are new induction procedures and learners are now more aware of support funds available to them. This has attracted more non-traditional learners onto courses.

59. There is still insufficient target-setting on most courses. This weakness was partially identified in SAES's most recent self-assessment report. Learners are often unaware of overall course aims and few are working towards individual or group targets. They do not receive adequate pre-course information about the level of the course and there is insufficient initial assessment of their existing skills on enrolment. Some learners are unhappy about working in classes where there is a wide range of knowledge of the language. On accredited courses some learners do not realise the level of commitment needed in advance, and leave early.

Leadership and management

60. Curriculum management has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. A language specialist has recently been appointed as curriculum manager.

Tutors are now able to access professional support and request and order new teaching resources. At the previous inspection, there were no formal meetings within this curriculum area and communication between tutors and managers was poor. Communications have improved; there are more regular meetings, frequent newsletters and more effective use of e-mail. Previously there were too many small classes, some with as few as three regular attendees, which prevented effective practice of the language. This weakness has been resolved and class sizes are now satisfactory.

61. Greater attention is now given to quality assurance. New learning plans have been introduced and the frequency of observation of teaching has increased. However, observations are still not fully used to improve all teaching. The grades given to sessions during observations are very close to those given by inspectors, but some comments give confusing messages to tutors. For example, although one lesson was graded as unsatisfactory, the comment to the tutor was that the lesson was good.

62. Some tutors are inexperienced and a few still do not have subject and/or teaching qualifications. They are insufficiently trained in language teaching techniques and classroom management. Individual weaknesses highlighted through internal observation have yet to be adequately resolved. There are too few follow-up procedures to ensure that new tutors receive sufficient ongoing training for successful continuous improvement of the training programmes offered to learners.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	80	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- very effective partnerships to meet community needs and improve quality of teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of achievement and progress

Achievement and standards

63. Achievement of learning objectives is satisfactory. Most learners who took the national numeracy tests in 2003-04 passed them, but final data is not yet available. Since the previous inspection, the length of foundation courses has been reduced to encourage better attendance. Attendance rates during the reinspection were good. Learners receive useful feedback from tutors on their work with recommendations for additional work and areas to improve. Many learners have little previous experience of formal training or education. Their confidence and self-esteem increases considerably through participating in learning and making progress. Learners become more able to assess their own abilities and to judge their own strengths and weaknesses.

64. Management data and information concentrates on achievement of level 1 and 2 literacy and numeracy national tests and this information is used during the review of the curriculum area. Most learners are at entry levels 1 to 3 and there are insufficient opportunities for learners to gain formal recognition for achievement at these levels.

Quality of education and training

65. There are very effective partnerships to meet community needs and improve teaching and learning. SAES works very effectively with its partners to ensure that literacy and numeracy learning opportunities meet community needs and are managed co-operatively. Since the previous inspection there has been greater emphasis on collaborating with partners to provide a cohesive range of courses, building on each partner's strengths. For instance, SAES recognised that a local college was better equipped to provide for learners who speak English as an additional language and arranged for its learners to be transferred to the college. Similarly, SAES has allowed its community-based venues to be used by the college to serve the needs of under-represented community groups. SAES's own implementation plan for the service and the

foundation curriculum are clearly linked and demonstrate how SAES contributes to the wider strategic aims.

66. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Courses and venues where there was widespread poor teaching have been withdrawn, although there is still some unsatisfactory teaching. Most lesson planning is thorough and clearly identifies anticipated learning outcomes, a range of learning activities and differentiation strategies to deal with differing learning styles and abilities. Good opportunities for individual and small group learning are provided and individual support is given to all learners. Tutors develop a supportive atmosphere and a constructive open working relationship with learners. In the remaining unsatisfactory sessions, individually set work does not relate to the level that has been identified at initial assessment, or to the targets in the individual learning plans. These sessions do not provide sufficient challenge for some learners.

67. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. Classroom accommodation for foundation courses is good with spacious and well-furnished rooms. Attractive posters and examples of learners' work are displayed on walls. There has been significant investment in resources since the previous inspection and there is now an appropriate range of resources at the main centre. Learners make good use of new ICT equipment and specialist software to access the internet and to practise literacy and numeracy test papers. A good range of appropriate books and learning aids is available for group and individual learning. There are sufficient teaching staff and learning assistants to meet the demands of most of the classes, however, in some classes of mixed-ability learners there are too few opportunities for individual support. Many of the unqualified staff at the previous inspection no longer teach foundation courses and there has been a comprehensive programme of staff training to improve the skills of those remaining.

68. There are satisfactory arrangements to assess learners' skills and needs. Completed individual learning plans show clear links to initial and diagnostic assessment, although some individual learning plans have not yet been fully completed for this term. Learners complete learning records at the end of each session and these encourage them to reflect on their improvement and what they have learnt.

69. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Arrangements for information and guidance are clear and learners are aware of how to use the service. Transport is arranged for learners with additional learning needs. Additional support is also provided in the classroom through a classroom assistant. Easily accessible childcare is available at the main centre. There are effective arrangements to identify individual learners' needs for additional support. Good adapted technology is available and learners with learning disabilities are provided with specifically designed and adapted accommodation and equipment.

70. There is insufficient monitoring of learners' achievement and progress. Some learners do not have short-term targets and their progress is not sufficiently monitored. Some personal learning plans do not contain sufficiently specific or measurable goals for individual learners to demonstrate their improvements and achievements. They

concentrate too much on the requirements of the course rather than the individual learner. For example, some learners at entry levels 2 and 3 are working towards the level 1 qualification, but the small steps needed to reach this level are not planned in sufficient detail. Progress is not monitored regularly enough to ensure that timely progress is made by all learners, and that they fully understand what they have achieved and what remains to be done. SAES recognised short-term target-setting and progress monitoring as a weaknesses in the most recent self-assessment report, but has not yet taken effective action to remedy the situation for all learners.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management of the curriculum area is now satisfactory. Staff development has been given a high priority and all staff are now being trained to level 4 in a literacy or numeracy specialism. All staff receive regular performance reviews and appraisals. There has been significant investment in staff training and SAES has worked well with a local specialist agency to ensure that staff training and development is in line with national strategies and initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy teaching. There is a programme of joint training and awareness-raising activities with partners which promotes sharing of good practice, and opportunities for networking and collaboration. Staff have been trained in equal opportunities and disability awareness, and understand the application of the equal opportunities policy, as well as recent legislation about disability. Learners' views are now used to review the curriculum.

72. Where courses have been withdrawn, SAES assessed the impact on local learners using data on town and ward needs for literacy and numeracy programmes, and has liaised effectively with partner organisations to avoid shortfalls in provision. In some cases, such as the withdrawal of a poor course for learners with disabilities, partners have arranged alternative provision in the same location.

73. SAES's most recent self-assessment report was produced in April 2004, before many of the managerial changes affecting this area of learning had been fully implemented. All existing staff were involved in the process. However, the curriculum has since been extensively changed and many of the findings of the self-assessment report are no longer relevant.

Family learning**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	50	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- very effective partnerships to attract new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient specialist staff with skills in adult teaching

Achievement and standards

74. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners on the family literacy programmes produce good work in books and games which they devise for their children. Learners on a family art project use a wide variety of media to develop soft sculptures of great originality. On family literacy courses, learners increase their confidence and are supported to help their children with school work. They learn good techniques for reading to them and productive ways of playing at home. Their children's performance at school improves. Parents gain enough confidence to enrol on other new learning opportunities such as computer courses, to act in a play or watch an arts programme on television for the first time. Volunteers running community play sessions develop ways of involving parents better with their children. However, information on such achievements is not fully collected or collated. Retention rates are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

75. SAES works very effectively with lifelong learning partners to reach new learners. The service has close contacts with the health authority, Connexions, individual schools, the local college, arts organisations and organisations representing minority ethnic groups. Joint planning takes place with the community and family learning forum and a good range of innovative programmes has been devised in consultation with learners to meet their needs and interests. Growth in wider family learning courses has exceeded targets by 50 per cent.

76. Teaching is satisfactory overall and much is good or very good. In the best sessions, specialist terms are introduced gradually to ensure learners can understand and use them. Lessons make good use of learners' existing knowledge and experience and they are given time to share their knowledge with others. A wide variety of stimulating,

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practical activities is used to engage learners' interest. For example, one group of learners on a family literacy course planned a treasure hunt based on a well-known children's book and then ran and evaluated the hunt with their children. Learners are lively and interested and work hard during lessons. Many have strong views which they enjoy discussing.

77. Recording and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Initial assessment is used well on longer family literacy and numeracy courses. Simple, unthreatening ways to record what learners already know and can do are used on shorter courses and wider family learning courses. Tutors give much positive feedback to learners about their work. Achievements on family literacy and numeracy programmes are recorded informally, but are frequently not entered in the management information system. When learners' work meets accreditation criteria, additional feedback is not always given. In one session, learners using upper case or inappropriate font in instructions for games were not alerted to how difficult these are for children to read. Records of progress are seldom kept for wider family learning courses.

78. Support for learners is satisfactory. There are good celebrations of learners' achievements. In one school, learners on a soft sculpture project were presented with mugs decorated with illustrations of their own family's design. Certificates are awarded even for very short courses. Learners often value these as the first certificate they have ever received. One group received a national award for their work in designing and making ballgowns. There is good use of childcare to enable learners to participate. However, pre-course information is not always available. Once enrolled, learners do not always receive a course plan. They do not generally have sufficient information about what they might move on to next. Many tutors do not have a list of support agencies for learners.

79. There are insufficient staff with specialist skills and experience in teaching adults. Some tutors are skilled and experienced in teaching young people and hold appropriate qualifications, but are less familiar with teaching adults. Some schoolteachers working on family learning projects do not always have the skills to manage combined groups of adults and children effectively. The adult learners do not always have enough quiet time to work on tasks at their own pace, in their own style, or to discuss the activity with other adults without intervention from the tutor. The start of some new projects or extension to existing programmes have been delayed as there is a shortage of readily available specialists to teach them. There is a waiting list for some of these activities. For example, a popular project planned to run in partnership with an early years organisation has been postponed as specific tutors are unavailable.

Leadership and management

80. Leadership and management of family learning programmes is satisfactory. There is a clear strategy for family learning and a well-constructed three-year development plan. The management of subcontracted work is satisfactory. Regular meetings take place and detailed reports are received from subcontractors. The curriculum manager works

effectively to develop and support partners in recruiting new learners and to respond to requests for provision.

81. Promotion and management of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Equality and diversity are central to the structure of the programme which is well targeted to attract vulnerable groups and hard to reach learners. Projects such as family history for Sikh elders attract learners from minority ethnic groups.

82. Learners complete courses evaluation forms which are used effectively to plan improvements and developments during the year. Good practice in lesson planning and specialist materials for most courses are usually shared effectively. The most recent self-assessment report did not contain a full report on family learning as many courses were relatively new at the time the report was compiled. It contains very few judgements, although SAES awarded itself an over-optimistic grade. The development plan has not yet been updated to show progress towards targets or changed responsibilities for staff. Data on new learners' progress is not readily available and there are insufficient procedures to monitor progression outside the current year.