

INSPECTION REPORT

Rutland LEA

04 February 2005



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 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
- **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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

Rutland LEA

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	4
Overall judgement	4
Grades	4
Key findings	6
What learners like about Rutland LEA	11
What learners think Rutland LEA could improve	11
Key challenges for Rutland LEA	12

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	16
Equality of opportunity	18
Quality assurance	19
Business administration, management & professional	21
Information & communications technology	24
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	27
Visual & performing arts & media	30
English, languages & communications	33
Foundation programmes	36

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Rutland LEA (the LEA) provides adult and community learning through the education, youth and culture department of Rutland County Council (the county council). The service is known as the Rutland Adult Learning Service (RALS). Adult and community learning takes place in three main venues at Casterton Community College near Stamford, Uppingham Community College, and the Vale of Catmose Community College in Oakham. Considerable use is made of other community venues such as schools and libraries. RALS offers accredited and non-accredited programmes for adult learners in science and mathematics, land-based programmes, construction, business administration management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer services and transportation, hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care, visual and performing arts, humanities, English and modern foreign languages, and foundation programmes including family learning. Inspectors did not observe some of the areas of learning as there were not enough sessions taking place. At the time of the inspection 2,371 learners were enrolled on adult and community learning courses. In 2003-04, there were 4,180 enrolments. Unemployment in Rutland was at 0.4 per cent in December 2004, compared with the national average of 2.1 per cent. The 2001 census return shows that 1.9 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups compared with the national average of 8.7 per cent.

2. The county council was established as a unitary authority following local authority reorganisation in 1997. Rutland is the smallest county in England, and its county council is the smallest mainland unitary authority. Before 1997, Rutland was a district within Leicestershire. Until August 2004, three schools with community college status, and a further education college, had direct contracts with the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for accredited and further education programmes. There is now a single contract between the LSC and the LEA. A learning and skills officer within the LEA, who reports to the director of education, youth and culture, is responsible for RALS. The strategic management of RALS is the responsibility of the adult learning executive that consists of the director of education, youth and culture, the three community college principals and two county councillors. A senior managers group includes the learning and skills officer and three senior managers who are responsible for the operational management of RALS. As well as undertaking a local management role in one of the three community colleges, the senior managers are responsible for quality assurance and curriculum, equality and participation and marketing and development.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

3. Courses are provided at the three community colleges, at Ministry of Defence (MoD) establishments and in the workplace. Most of the provision is at level 1 and level 2, and

RUTLAND LEA

most courses are accredited. A significant number of the 135 current enrolments are for courses in bookkeeping, and accounts and computerised accounting. At present, enrolments on these courses represent over 60 per cent of learners. National vocational qualification (NVQs) in administration at levels 3 and 4 are provided, mainly for public-sector employees, and there is a small provision of management NVQs at levels 4 and 5. NVQs for teaching assistants at levels 2 and 3 have recently been introduced. A non-accredited short course for those considering starting a business is offered on a regular basis. Learners can attend during the day and in the evening. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses in business and economics are made available on a fast-track basis to forces personnel through a link with the Royal Air Force. Approximately three-quarters of the learners are women.

Information & communications technology

4. At the time of inspection there were 571 enrolments on ICT courses. In 2003-04 there were 937 enrolments on 123 courses. Most of the courses are accredited basic and intermediate computer literacy classes with a small number of classes offering higher level qualifications. Courses range in duration from 10 to 30 weeks. Non-accredited courses include short introductory sessions and longer courses for beginners on programmes covering such subjects as word processing, introduction to the internet and digital photography. Courses are provided at eight venues across the county. Thirteen part-time tutors are employed in ICT. A part-time information and learning technology (ILT) resources co-ordinator was appointed in 2004 and an ICT curriculum co-ordinator has recently been appointed.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. At the time of inspection, there were 195 learners on courses in hospitality, sport and fitness. Courses are provided at eight venues including community colleges, schools, guide huts and a sports centre. Courses include yoga, bridge, Pilates, keep fit, aquafit, archery and badminton. Hospitality courses such as wine appreciation and food hygiene were not running at the time of inspection. Most courses are non-accredited. Pool life-guarding, wines and spirits, and food hygiene programmes are accredited. Most courses enrol on a termly basis and last for an average of 10 weeks. These courses are offered during the morning, afternoon and evening. Provision is also available at weekends. In 2003-04 there were 1,227 enrolments. From September 2004 to February 2005 there were 644 enrolments. Eighty-four per cent of learners are women. Less than 1 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Learners who have declared a disability account for 1 per cent of learners. Twelve part-time tutors teach on these courses, for between one and 11 hours a week. A newly appointed team leader oversees the curriculum area in conjunction with three centre co-ordinators.

Visual & performing arts & media

6. There are currently 232 visual, performing arts and media learners on 25 courses. Twelve of these courses are accredited. Courses take place during the day and in the evening and learners attend part time. Courses range from one-day taster workshops to courses lasting up to 30 weeks. A range of accredited courses is offered at levels 1 and 2 in arts, crafts and music, and a range of non-accredited courses in arts and crafts. Most classes are located at the three main community college venues in Uppingham, Oakham and Casterton. Other classes are held in small community centres, often in rural locations. There is a centre co-ordinator at each of the three main sites, and there is a newly-appointed curriculum leader for the arts provision. Most tutors are employed on a part-time basis.

English, languages & communications

7. At the time of inspection there were 16 courses running comprising two GCSE English classes, one in creative writing, and 14 in modern foreign languages including French, Italian, Spanish and Russian. Accreditation is available on 10 programmes and includes GCSE Spanish, GCSE and AS level Italian and Open College Network (OCN) credits at levels 1 and 2 in Spanish. Seven courses run during the day and 10 in the evening, at all three local community colleges. Five courses are offered as part of the Pathways to Learning programme, including GCSE English, Spanish and creative writing. This provision provides learners with a package of enhanced support which includes guidance interviews, individual support and subsidised transport and childcare. At the time of inspection there were 222 learners, of whom 147 were enrolled on accredited programmes and 75 on non-accredited courses.

Foundation programmes

8. The foundation provision includes literacy, numeracy, family literacy and numeracy, wider family learning and one craft course for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Three community colleges serve as the venues for literacy and numeracy workshops along with an MoD barracks. Courses run in the daytime and evening. A series of intensive literacy and numeracy courses are held for army personnel. One short numeracy course is based on gardening skills. Flexible workshops preparing learners for GCSE English and mathematics serve as a progression route. A small team of tutors provides an individual outreach service for learners unable to access a centre.

9. There are currently two six-week courses for parents and children taking place in primary schools. There is a family computer course and a drop-in session for writing and reminiscences on the theme of war. RALS organised a family learning weekend in October 2004.

10. In 2004-05, 121 learners have enrolled on foundation programmes. Fifty per cent of learners are men, 3 per cent from minority ethnic groups, and 7 per cent consider themselves to have a learning disability. Sixty-seven learners are on accredited courses. In 2003-04 there were 186 learners, 47 per cent of whom were men, less than 1 per cent were from minority ethnic groups and 13 per cent considered themselves to have a learning disability.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	40
Number of learner interviews	284
Number of staff interviews	121
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	50
Number of partner/external agency interviews	8

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

11. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the LEA's leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Its approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory, whereas its arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Provision is satisfactory in business administration, management and professional, ICT, visual and performing arts and media, and English, languages and communications. Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and foundation programmes are unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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		3
Quality assurance		4

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Business administration</i>		
- Adult and community learning	42	3
<i>Management</i>		
- Adult and community learning	3	3
<i>Accounting and economics</i>		
- Adult and community learning	90	3

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	571	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	195	4
Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	121	3
Crafts - Adult and community learning	111	3
English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
English - Adult and community learning	29	3
Languages - Adult and community learning	193	3
Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	98	4
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	10	4
Family learning - Adult and community learning	13	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

12. **The standard of learners' work is good in business administration, management and professional, and in visual and performing arts.** In business, pass rates on bookkeeping and accounting courses are high. Portfolios for NVQ assessment are well structured and presented with an appropriate range of evidence. In visual arts, learners produce highly accomplished craftwork. RALS personnel on intensive literacy and numeracy courses achieve well.

13. Some programmes are effective in helping learners to become more self-confident and independent. **In ICT, the retention rates are high** and learners improve their self-confidence while using computer applications. **In sport and leisure, learners achieve good social and health benefits.** They gain significant health improvements and maintain levels of fitness. Learners develop better co-ordination of movement, balance and timing. **In some advanced modern foreign language classes, the more able learners display good standards of both written and oral skills.** Some language learners report increased confidence when using their language skills for practical purposes in their personal lives.

14. **Pass rates are low on some courses.** In ICT, on basic computer literacy courses, the pass rate is 38 per cent. Where learners are new to computing it may take them up to two years to achieve the full qualification. In English and modern foreign languages, pass rates on many GCSE and AS level courses are low.

Quality of education and training

15. Of the lessons observed, 54 per cent were judged to be good or better. Seven per cent of the lessons were unsatisfactory.

16. The better lessons are well planned and include a variety of appropriate learning activities to engage learners and provide opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and skills. Activities are interesting and challenging. **In ICT, many tutors make effective use of local issues to enliven lessons.** In visual and performing arts, learners who return to the same classes for many years are given progressively more demanding projects to tackle. **On foundation programmes, learners receive particularly good individual tuition.**

17. In poorer lessons, tutors use a narrow range of teaching strategies. **In sport and leisure, and modern foreign languages, tutors do not use appropriate teaching methods to accommodate preferred learning styles.**

18. Resources are satisfactory in most areas of learning. In visual and performing arts,

there are good resources for learners in jewellery and pottery. In modern foreign languages, tutors are very well qualified and experienced. **However, there is insufficient use of ILT in ICT.** In other areas, many tutors do not hold teaching qualifications.

19. **The arrangements for the initial assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are unsatisfactory in most areas of learning.** For example, on foundation programmes learners are set inadequate learning targets.

20. **The range of provision in some areas is good.** In business, the service has been responsive to requests from public-sector organisations for the provision of NVQs in administration and management. **In ICT, a good range of courses is provided across the county** in a range of venues, including community colleges, schools, libraries and MoD establishments. **In foundation there are good arrangements to support learners in rural communities.**

21. Support for learners is satisfactory overall. **In business, tutors provide good support for learners.** In most areas there is no initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs.

Leadership and management

22. **The process of restructuring adult and community learning has been well managed.** RALS has implemented effectively a new organisational structure with new systems and lines of communication. Significant progress has taken place to rationalise and unify the work of the colleges and the council and to centralise key functions such as data, quality assurance and resource management.

23. **Communications are good.** RALS has good internal communication and links with local community networks. Management of communication at an operational level is particularly good. Most staff feel valued and supported.

24. **Effective actions to engage groups of under-represented learners have been implemented by RALS.** These have successfully engaged groups of hard-to-reach learners across the county. These include people who have been referred by health professionals, potential learners who feel vulnerable or who lack confidence, and parents of young children.

25. **RALS's approach to strategic and curriculum planning is weak.** RALS does not have a strategic plan to implement the council's vision for adult and community learning. Staff have a poor understanding of the vision and plans for the future development of the adult and community learning provision.

26. **Curriculum planning and management is inadequate in all areas of learning.** This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Staff within the areas of learning do not plan and review their programmes consistently. Curriculum leaders have been appointed recently but it is too early to judge the likely impact of this on provision overall.

RUTLAND LEA

27. **RALS makes poor use of data to aid decision-making and planning.** Reports and target-setting on retention and achievement are generated for contract compliance although these are not effectively monitored. There is insufficient use and analysis of data for quality assurance purposes.

28. **The strategy for meeting the literacy and numeracy needs of learners is inadequate.** Learners on all programmes do not have access to effective initial assessment arrangements to identify additional learning support requirements.

29. **The policies for equality of opportunity are inappropriate.** Each of the three community colleges has adapted its own equal opportunities policy to deal with the needs of adult learners. RALS, which has direct responsibility for the provision, does not have a policy relating to equality of opportunity in the adult learning service. There is no clear policy or strategy for widening participation.

30. **RALS's quality assurance framework is incomplete.** Only a few policies and procedures have been written and there is insufficient focus on key aspects of the learning process. RALS has no effective procedure for monitoring the effectiveness of many of the quality assurance procedures. Observations of teaching and learning are not effective in providing staff with appropriately detailed follow-up actions for improvement.

31. The self-assessment report is an accurate evaluation of the provision. Most of the grades in the report are in line with the judgements of inspectors, but some are lower than those given by inspectors.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- well-managed restructuring process
- good communications
- effective actions to engage under-represented learners

Weaknesses

- weak strategic and curriculum planning
- poor use of data for planning and decision-making
- inadequate strategy for literacy and numeracy
- inappropriate policies for equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance framework

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management, accounting and economics

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good support for learners by tutors

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment
- unsatisfactory curriculum co-ordination

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- good range of courses provided across the county

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on computer literacy and business technology courses
- inadequate provision of ILT resources
- ineffective use of initial assessment to produce individual learning plans

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good social and health benefits for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate range of teaching methods
- inadequate use of assessment to plan learning and monitor progress
- weak curriculum management

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts and crafts

Strengths

- highly accomplished craft work
- particularly effective and challenging projects in arts and craft courses
- good equipment and accommodation for jewellery and pottery classes

Weaknesses

- inadequate curriculum planning
- poor management information

English, languages & communications

English and languages

Strengths

- high level of learners' engagement and participation
- highly effective use of the foreign language by tutors
- very well-qualified and experienced tutors

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCSE and AS level courses
- insufficient use of specialist resources to support learning
- insufficient attention to individual learners' needs

Foundation programmes

Literacy and numeracy, independent living and leisure skills, and family learning

Strengths

- good achievement on intensive literacy and numeracy courses
- good support for learners in rural communities
- particularly good individual tuition

Weaknesses

- inadequate setting of learning targets
- inadequately qualified staff for literacy and numeracy teaching
- ineffective arrangements for family learning
- inadequate strategic planning for skills for life

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT RUTLAND LEA:

- acquiring new skills and gaining confidence
- working with another group of people
- 'doing things you wouldn't normally do'
- the learning environments
- the local venues close to home
- the support available on the Pathway programme
- good advice when choosing courses
- the support and encouragement received

WHAT LEARNERS THINK RUTLAND LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the repetition of paperwork
- the provision of classes at other times of the week and year
- course information before enrolment
- time waiting for the tutor to help
- the use of computers in learning

KEY CHALLENGES FOR RUTLAND LEA:

- increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better
- develop the use of ILT in lessons
- establish effective arrangements for the initial assessment of learners
- ensure that learners' progress is carefully monitored
- improve the provision in sport and leisure and on foundation programmes
- improve strategic planning
- secure effective arrangements for curriculum planning and co-ordination
- ensure effective skills for life provision and literacy and numeracy support
- develop an effective management information system
- develop the quality assurance arrangements
- complete the successful restructuring of RALS

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.

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 INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- well-managed restructuring process
- good communications
- effective actions to engage under-represented learners

Weaknesses

- weak strategic and curriculum planning
- poor use of data for planning and decision-making
- inadequate strategy for literacy and numeracy
- inappropriate policies for equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance framework

32. Following a service review in 2003-04, RALS has sought to improve the effectiveness of its provision by moving from devolved funding and autonomy of local community colleges to a more centralised and streamlined structure. This includes an executive board, known as the adult learning executive, with representation from the colleges, the council and elected members of cabinet. A senior management team of three people with local and service-wide responsibilities attend the executive board meetings along with the head of service who is also the county council's learning and skills officer. The new structure includes a centralised data manager and a team of four recently appointed curriculum leaders.

33. The process of restructuring adult and community learning has been well managed. RALS has implemented effectively a new organisational structure with new systems and lines of communication. Significant progress has taken place to rationalise and unify the work of the colleges and the council and to centralise key functions such as data, quality assurance and resource management. RALS has taken particular care to engage the commitment of staff. Considerable changes to working practices are taking place at all levels of the organisation. Effective use is made of internal and external expertise. Staff at executive and senior management level are active representatives at associated internal planning groups and external strategic and partnership groups to support networking and involvement in strategy and policy. RALS holds frequent meetings, awaydays and additional training days to support the change process. Planned changes in the restructuring are well managed to cause least disruption to staff and learners and they have been completed on time. RALS has effective structures in place to monitor cost effectiveness and financial accountability.

34. Communications are good. RALS has good internal communication and links with local community networks. Management of communication at an operational level is

particularly good. Meetings at all levels of the organisation are regular, well attended with formal agendas, clear actions, deadlines and identified individual responsibility. In most instances, senior managers are responsive to the needs of tutors, learning centre co-ordinators, and support and administrative staff. Staff now meet on a more regular basis. The staff handbook, staff pack and newsletter are well presented and useful sources of information. Many part-time tutors now meet as a team with new curriculum leaders. Regular, monthly reports including finance and performance are monitored and assessed by the adult learning executive. RALS has very good communication links with a range of local community networks including a childcare partnership, the library service and St George's Barracks. This networking enables staff to provide bespoke programmes for targeted learner groups.

35. RALS has a newly developed procedure for appraisals linked to observations of teaching and learning. Formal appraisals have been inconsistently carried out in the past. Clear guidelines are now in place. A good range of development opportunities are on offer through RALS with funding and financial support available on request. All new staff are required to meet nationally agreed standards within two years of appointment. Targets for professional qualifications for all staff across RALS have not been met. Staff training is not linked to strategic objectives.

36. RALS's approach to strategic and curriculum planning is weak. RALS does not have a strategic plan to implement the council's vision for adult and community learning. The strategic summary for 2004 is currently being revised. This outlines some of the priorities for development, but how these will be achieved is not described. Staff have a poor understanding of the vision and plans for the development of the adult and community learning provision. They do not know how RALS will develop and what will be their particular role in supporting the new developments. Action-planning is weak. Action plans do not sufficiently focus on, or link to, the development and improvement of adult and community learning.

37. Curriculum planning and management is inadequate in all areas of learning, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Staff within the areas of learning do not plan and review their programmes consistently. Specialist expertise and local knowledge is not always used effectively. There is no rationale for the development of appropriate courses, and resources are not managed effectively to support teaching and learning. Some programmes are overstaffed, and many classes are very small. Curriculum leaders have been appointed recently but it is too early to judge the likely impact of this on provision overall. Staff are not clear about the exact responsibilities of the learning centre co-ordinators and the new curriculum leaders. Most staff are unaware of the role and function of the adult learning executive.

38. RALS makes poor use of data to help with decision-making and planning. Data does not match on a number of documents. During the inspection, data for 2002-03 and 2003-04 was inconsistent and inaccurate. The provider has recently established a framework to provide more accurate and consistently reliable information, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Reports and target-setting on retention and achievement are generated for contract compliance, although these are not effectively monitored. At

RUTLAND LEA

present the service produces a narrow range of reports with insufficient detail to inform strategic direction or curriculum planning and improvement. RALS has undergone significant changes in this area and data from three independent colleges is now merged in one unified system. All learning centre administrative staff have now received training in data entry with a view to achieving greater reliability. There is insufficient use and analysis of data for quality assurance purposes.

39. The strategy for meeting learners' literacy and numeracy needs is inadequate. Learners on all programmes do not have access to effective initial assessment arrangements to identify additional learning support requirements. Some learners have additional learning needs that are not being tackled. Since restructuring a number of meetings have taken place in response to the skills for life agenda, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, but work on the strategy is still in progress.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

40. Effective actions to engage groups of under-represented learners have been implemented by RALS. Although the minority ethnic population within the county is small, RALS has commissioned research into the reasons for low participation rates by learners from these groups. Recommendations in line with this research have been implemented. More significantly, effective actions have been taken to engage groups of hard-to-reach learners across the county. These include people who have been referred by health professionals, potential learners who feel vulnerable or who have poor self-confidence, and parents of young children. European Social Fund money has enabled provision to be made for partners of service personnel to take steps towards employment.

41. Arrangements for staff induction and development are satisfactory. During induction staff receive guidance on teaching adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Training in equality of opportunity and related issues forms part of the annual staff conference, which is well attended. Good training in disability issues forms a part of the annual staff development programme. However, this is not well attended.

42. The use of data in relation to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. RALS is aware of participation rates by area of learning. For example, the self-assessment report identifies low participation by men in humanities. Enrolment targets for men across the provision have been increased and met. RALS's management information system is now being used to enable managers to analyse retention and achievement data by area of learning in terms of age, gender, disability or ethnicity.

43. Each of the three community colleges has a disability statement and most areas are accessible to wheelchair users. One of the senior managers has a responsibility for equality and participation across RALS.

44. Learners are aware of the complaints procedure. However, the procedures more closely reflect the previous management arrangements. There are few recorded

complaints. The self-assessment report identifies learner support as an area for development. A learner support policy has been introduced very recently. It is too early to judge its effectiveness. RALS has achieved a national award for the quality of advice and guidance it gives to potential and actual learners.

45. The policies for equality of opportunity are inappropriate. Each of the three community colleges has adapted its own equal opportunities policy to meet the needs of adult learners. They have updated the policies to reflect the requirements of the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001. However, these policies are monitored by the colleges' governing bodies even though they now have no direct responsibility for the governance of adult and community learning. RALS, which has direct responsibility for the provision, does not have a policy relating to equality of opportunity in RALS. It has identified this issue in its self-assessment report and plans to rectify it. Although some effective actions have been implemented to widen participation among learners, and the priority given to this area of work is reflected in RALS's mission statement, there is as yet no clear policy or strategy for widening participation.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

46. There is satisfactory use of feedback from learners to improve the provision. Learner feedback is collected after induction, at the half-way point in the course if it is 24 weeks or over, and at the last session. This is collated, analysed and evaluated in the tutor course review and returned to the quality manager for use in preparing the self-assessment report. Many tutors use the tutor review to develop their own working practice. Staff discuss these reports and any actions for improvements at meetings with their line manager.

47. The internal and external verification processes for accredited programmes are satisfactory. External verifiers' reports are acted on as necessary. Standardisation meetings for accredited training programmes are regular and provide an effective forum for sharing practice.

48. RALS's quality assurance framework is incomplete. Much work has been carried out during restructuring by the new quality assurance manager in order to develop a comprehensive quality assurance strategy and plan. It is relatively new and not yet established. The framework covers policies and procedures for a wide range of activities including self-assessment, staff development, health and safety, observation of teaching and learning, and schemes of work. However, only a small number of policies and procedures have been written and there is insufficient focus on key aspects of the learning process.

49. RALS has no effective procedure for monitoring the effectiveness of many of the quality assurance procedures. Audits of compliance with procedures are not carried out in non-accredited programmes. There are inconsistencies in records and documents. Many learner and staff records were unsigned or incomplete. Internal verification of non-accredited provision is a recent development with the inclusion of observations of sessions.

50. Observations of teaching and learning are not effective in providing staff with appropriately detailed follow-up actions for improvement. Approximately two-thirds of staff have been observed over the past two years, but the process is not yet fully established as a quality assurance process and there is not enough systematic sharing of good practice. New paperwork is complex and does not focus sufficiently on attainment or the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. In some areas of learning, observations are carried out by observers who are not subject specialists and are not able to provide subject-specific advice and support.

51. The self-assessment report for 2003-04 is the first produced by RALS. Not all staff contributed to the report which was approved by the adult learning executive in November 2004. Staff were invited to review the paperwork for the new system in June 2004. Guidelines and timescale for the self-assessment cycle are detailed, thorough and well written. The report is an honest and self-critical evaluation of the provision. Most of the grades in the report are in line with the judgements of inspectors, with some lower than those given during inspection. However, inspectors highlighted a number of strengths and weakness that the provider had not identified. Insufficient focus is placed on the quality of teaching and learning in the areas of learning in both the self-assessment report and in the development plan. The development plan is not a working document and most staff are unaware of its contents. Actions are general and do not relate specifically to curriculum improvement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration - Adult and community learning	42	3
Management - Adult and community learning	3	3
Accounting and economics - Adult and community learning	90	3

Business administration, management, accounting and economics

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good support for learners by tutors

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment
- unsatisfactory curriculum co-ordination

Achievement and standards

52. The standard of learners' work is good. Pass rates on bookkeeping and accounting courses have improved and are high. In 2003-04, 94 per cent of those who took the examinations passed. The pass rate in 2002-03 for these courses was 77 per cent. Portfolios for NVQ assessment are well structured and presented with an appropriate range of evidence. Learners maintain well-ordered work files and demonstrate a good approach to work and a consistent standard of work throughout the course. Learners on computerised accounting courses are confident in the use of the accounting software. Learners develop good work-related skills through effective group working in lessons and they make useful contributions to class discussions. Learners work productively on tasks set and are mutually supportive. Attendance is good. In the lessons observed, 81 per cent of the learners attended.

53. Retention and pass rates across the provision are satisfactory. In 2002-03, 77 per cent of those who enrolled on accredited programmes completed the course and 77 per cent of those completed gained the qualification. In 2003-04, these figures were 79 per cent and 76 per cent respectively.

Quality of education and training

54. Tutors provide good support for learners. Very effective individual support is provided in lessons. Tutors monitor the progress of learners well, and sensitively clarify points to help build their confidence. Learners value this support and encouragement. Lessons are well organised and constitute a productive learning environment. Learners also contact tutors out of class time to assist with their learning.

55. Most teaching is satisfactory or good. The better lessons are well planned and include a variety of appropriate learning activities to engage learners and provide opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and skills. Activities are interesting and demanding. Useful tasks are set, including small group work where learners can share their experience of employment to help in completing work for assessment. Feedback to the larger group helps learners to develop their communication skills as well as enabling all learners to gain from the experiences of others. In the satisfactory lessons, some poor planning does not meet the needs of individual learners. Tutors use a narrow range of teaching strategies and there is not enough use of visual aids to enhance learning. In some lessons there is insufficient checking of learning and tutors do not provide enough opportunities for learners to actively participate in their learning. ICT is not used to enhance learning.

56. Resources are satisfactory. There is some good accommodation dedicated to adult use that provides a good adult learning environment. At one of the community colleges, three rooms are set aside for adult use, two of which are teaching rooms and are well equipped with computers. A small room provides a refreshment facility as well as a computer with internet access for learners to use in their own time. Another of the colleges has a similar facility. Some of the classroom accommodation used in the community colleges and at other locations is less good. Staff are competent in their subjects, but many do not have teaching qualifications.

57. Assessment and monitoring of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners on NVQ programmes are supported and assessed in the workplace. Assessment is well planned with good guidance to ensure that appropriate opportunities for assessment are identified. A comprehensive and well-recorded system of internal verification is in place. The standard of written feedback to learners on assessed work is not consistent. NVQ learners receive detailed feedback with helpful comments and suggestions for improvement. Feedback on accounting courses is less detailed. Not enough homework is set. Where tasks are to be completed at home, the work is reviewed in the next lesson but individual work is not always marked.

58. A good range of programmes is provided and the provider has responded well to requests from public sector organisations for provision of NVQs in administration and management. An LEA focus for the provision has been to work with small businesses and some learners have been recruited who are sponsored by their employers. Additional European funding has been obtained to offer a course specifically for women returners.

59. Initial assessment of learners is inadequate. No formal assessment of skills for life

takes place at the start of a programme and it is unclear how support is provided where a need is identified. There is no encouragement for learners who do not have qualifications in English or mathematics at level 2 to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. All learners are asked to complete a questionnaire at induction to identify their preferred style of learning. However, this information is not used by tutors in lesson planning.

Leadership and management

60. Curriculum co-ordination is unsatisfactory. Similar courses are offered at different learning centres, but the co-ordination of this provision is ineffective. Performance is not analysed and course data is not used to contribute to curriculum planning. Not enough use is made of market information to ensure that the curriculum offer is appropriate. Enrolment on courses is low. There is a lack of clarity concerning the new role of curriculum leader. The curriculum leader supports tutors but is not their line manager. Sharing of good practice across learning centres is ineffective. Schemes of work are prepared by tutors individually and there is no standard practice in their presentation or content. The new structure of curriculum leadership has yet to make an impact.

61. Quality assurance of NVQ programmes is thorough with a well-recorded internal verification process. Quality assurance processes across the area of learning are not used effectively. Learner surveys, completed by all learners, indicate a high level of satisfaction with the learning experience. The learner record survey and the learner survey forms are used to collect comments from tutors and learners about course organisation and delivery. In some cases they are not fully completed and the information is not systematically analysed to identify actions for improvement. The self-assessment report, although accurate in most of its judgements, does not give enough emphasis to teaching and learning. Equality of opportunity is tackled comprehensively in the information made available to learners about facilities and support available to them at learning centres. Access is good at all venues and many courses are available at different times and locations to suit individual learners. There is no specific promotion of equal opportunities within the curriculum. Learners are not routinely assessed to identify literacy and numeracy development needs and no current learners are receiving support to develop these skills.

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	571	3

Using IT

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- good range of courses provided across the county

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on computer literacy and business technology courses
- inadequate provision of ILT resources
- ineffective use of initial assessment to produce individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

62. Retention rates are high. In 2003-04, most classes had very high retention rates, with some having 100 per cent retention. In 2004-05, accredited provision has 88 per cent retention and non-accredited 82 per cent. Overall retention is 87 per cent. Achievement data for previous years is not sufficiently reliable to be able to make valid comparisons.

63. Learners on programmes quickly develop good confidence in the use of computers. They perform a range of useful tasks from letter writing to e-mailing photographs and using the internet. Learners' self-confidence improves and they are able to use spreadsheets and publishing software effectively to produce leaflets to promote services at work or in the community. For many learners, being able to use a computer for tasks such as e-mailing, leaflet design, improving work skills, and keeping up with the children are significant personal achievements.

64. Achievements on accredited courses have fallen from 2002-03 to 2004-05, particularly on computer literacy and business technology courses where the pass rate is 38 per cent. Some learners have some unit achievements. Where learners are new to computing it can take them up to two years to achieve the full qualification. On examination-based qualifications in information technology (IT), 75 per cent of learners are achieving their qualifications.

Quality of education and training

65. Teaching and learning are good. Many tutors make effective use of humour and local issues to illustrate learning. A good range of teaching methods is used. During workshops, effective individual coaching helps learners to understand the subject. Most learners make at least the progress expected at this stage in their programme and some learners make significant progress. Some learners demonstrate achievement of high level skills in the use of digital imaging and in leaflet design of information needed for their workplace.

66. There is a good range of courses. Classes are provided across the county in a range of venues including community colleges, schools, libraries and MoD establishments. The range of courses offered in ICT is extensive and includes short introductory courses, accredited qualifications and specialist applications such as digital photography. Many learners progress to more advanced courses. Many learners are now taking their third course and tutors maintain records of their learning and achievements. Once learners have attended a course and achieved their initial goals, many are prepared to travel further across the county to progress to a higher course. Taster courses have been provided for specialist groups. These courses in particular have been supported by the use of laptops which are taken to locations across the county.

67. The assessment and monitoring of learners' work are satisfactory. Most tutors keep records on learners' achievements. One tutor has developed a web-based system to record programme content and learner progress which can be accessed by both learners and tutors.

68. The provision of ILT resources is inadequate. No ILT resources were used in lessons throughout the inspection. In some lessons, tutors demonstrated activities on one computer to a whole class. Learners used paper-based resources to support most of their activities. One digital imaging class had only one laptop computer for the tutor to demonstrate applications and no digital projector. Another digital imaging class had 26 computers available, but there was no digital projector in order to demonstrate to the whole group. A proposed inventory of the available IT resources has not been produced. Computer equipment in most learning centres is up to date, with printers and some scanners available. There are standardised learning resources for accredited provision, but most tutors on digital imaging courses are designing and delivering their own programmes. Most staff are well qualified with degrees or level 4 qualifications in computing, and most hold appropriate teaching qualifications. Some staff have attended development sessions for the implementation of e-learning.

69. Initial assessment is not used effectively to produce individual learning plans. Literacy and numeracy needs are not routinely assessed, and there is no evidence of any support being provided. During induction, learners are not adequately assessed for their level of competence in the use of computers. Questions are asked about their knowledge and skill on computers, but there are no computer-based assessments. The learning styles questionnaire is used to identify the individual's preferred learning style,

but the results are not acted upon.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Learning centre co-ordinators identify local needs and promote courses to meet these needs. The learning centres provide good learning environments. Communication across the area of learning is now taking place and the e-learning project is beginning to focus some staff development on equipping tutors to work with newer technologies.

71. An ICT curriculum co-ordinator and an ILT strategy co-ordinator have recently been appointed. However, they have not yet had time to make a significant impact on this area of learning. There is currently no area-wide strategy for identifying the future direction of ICT, or for developing and enhancing the curriculum already being delivered. Some computer resources have recently been purchased, but there is no forward plan for the ongoing updating of equipment, or for the provision of other ILT resources such as digital projectors and interactive whiteboards.

72. Insufficient observations of teaching and learning have been carried out and those that have do not focus adequately on standards of teaching and learning. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Some new tutors are designing their own programmes while in other learning centres, existing tutors have already developed some good resources.

73. In all ICT classes equality of opportunity is implemented appropriately. In one class a learner with learning difficulties was being supported by a learning support assistant.

74. There is an annual meeting for staff across RALS and some staff in local areas meet termly. There is insufficient recording of actions from meetings or methods for capturing some of the creative work on monitoring learners which could be shared across the areas. All staff have access to training and development activities and many are attending courses such as the guide to e-learning and updating sessions for accredited programmes.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	195	4

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good social and health benefits for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate range of teaching methods
- inadequate use of assessment to plan learning and monitor progress
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

75. Learners gain good social and health benefits from taking these courses. Learners make significant health improvements and maintain fitness levels. For example, some learners attend a fitness class to help rehabilitation for back problems. Learners develop good co-ordination of movement, balance and timing. They also develop good body awareness and improved posture. Some gain in self-confidence and apply their learning to daily life. Courses enable learners to become more independent and to improve their lifestyle. For example, a learner recovering from a car accident has made significant improvements in both mobility and confidence. Social benefits are particularly important for older learners who develop good friendships. Some learners report the benefits of new friendships especially during times of bereavement.

76. Retention and attendance levels are satisfactory. A large number of learners repeat courses throughout the year and some have been attending the same course for over 20 years. Attendance at the time of inspection was 79 per cent.

Quality of education and training

77. Learning resources are satisfactory. Most sites have satisfactory access for people with restricted mobility. The satisfactory accommodation includes a large sports hall. All teaching areas are safe and comfortable. Risk assessments of these areas have been adequately carried out by the tutors.

78. Most of the equipment is adequate, but much of it is supplied by learners or tutors. Learners attending an archery course have use of specialist equipment. Learning

RUTLAND LEA

materials overall are satisfactory. Some are well designed and easy to use, while others are not up to date.

79. Most tutors are adequately qualified in their subject area and maintain their competence through professional development activities. There is no mechanism for ensuring that tutors have appropriate teaching qualifications. Most tutors do not have a formal teaching qualification. This issue was identified in the self-assessment report.

80. The range and provision of courses is sufficient to meet individual and community needs. A broad range of courses is offered across the county. Some courses have been effectively targeted at specific groups in order to widen participation. For example, these include keep fit for the over 50s and yoga for men. However, many courses do not offer progression routes. The duration of courses is linked to school terms. This can disrupt continuity and may eliminate the fitness benefits gained.

81. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance is readily available. Some tutors have developed fact sheets that give further information about the subject. Learners receive an induction to their course during the first lesson. On most programmes there are no arrangements for assessing individual needs. Support is not always provided for identified learning needs. There are no learners receiving support for literacy, numeracy or language in this area of learning. Effective pastoral support is also provided.

82. An inadequate range of teaching methods is used by tutors. Most tutors stand at the front of the class conducting demonstrations and giving instructions. This sometimes takes the form of the tutor demonstrating movements for long periods while facing away from the learners. Teaching methods are not adapted to accommodate preferred learning styles. There is insufficient work by tutors to check and correct learners' techniques. A quarter of the lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory.

83. The use of assessment for planning and monitoring learning is inadequate. On most courses, health and medical screening is not carried out at the start of the programme. Some tutors are not fully aware of the relevant personal medical histories of new learners. The identification and monitoring of learners' progress is inadequate. There is not enough formal recording of learners' fitness or skills levels at the start of a course, and insufficient recording of progress during courses. Personal learning outcomes are too general and are not recorded in a useful way. They are not used to measure learners' progress. Most learners are given some verbal feedback on their progress. This feedback is inconsistent across all programmes.

Leadership and management

84. Curriculum management is weak. There is insufficient expertise to plan and develop the curriculum. There are not enough progression routes. A curriculum review is carried out at local level, after seeking learners' feedback. However, this information has not been sufficiently well used in the overall analysis of the curriculum. Insufficient use is made of data for planning or to bring about improvements. Plans for developing the

curriculum are at an early stage.

85. Communication is poor at an operational level. Tutors' meetings are not carried out regularly. There is insufficient identification and sharing of good practice. Management is not fully aware of tutors' professional development needs or their current teaching qualifications.

86. The observation of teaching and learning occurs infrequently and a number of tutors have never been observed. Development needs are not always identified. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. The report accurately acknowledges many of the issues identified during inspection. Since the production of the self-assessment report, a number of actions have been taken and some improvements have been made. However, it is too early for the actions to have had a significant impact.

87. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Some partnership work is taking place to engage groups of under-represented learners, although the number of learners affected is quite small.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	121	3
Crafts - Adult and community learning	111	3

Arts and crafts

Strengths

- highly accomplished craft work
- particularly effective and challenging projects in arts and craft courses
- good equipment and accommodation for jewellery and pottery classes

Weaknesses

- inadequate curriculum planning
- poor management information

Achievement and standards

88. Learners on non-accredited and accredited courses produce highly accomplished craftwork. For example, in jewellery classes learners produce a range of skilfully designed pieces. Traditional techniques, such as enamelling and cuttlefish casting, are used to produce well-cut and finished necklaces, rings, and brooches with detailed figurative and abstract motifs. In pottery classes, learners use a range of reference materials, such as art books, to help them design and produce very good earthenware dishes and ornaments. In other classes chairs have been successfully upholstered and learners have produced well-crafted curtain products. Learners produce their pieces for family weddings, partners' businesses and for their own homes. No celebrations or exhibitions of learners' work takes place.

89. No judgement on achievement or progression can be made as reliable data is not available over a three-year period. Attendance at the time of inspection is unsatisfactory, at 74 per cent, with an average class size of eight.

Quality of education and training

90. Good use is made of particularly effective and challenging projects, designed by tutors. Projects are well planned and presented. For example, in one painting class, projects challenge learners' preconceptions and experiences in art by including briefs

designed around good reference material from international artists and photographs of Greek artefacts. Learners enjoy the challenge of exploring new techniques and using new media by studying artists they may not have otherwise encountered. Many learners gain good self-confidence through developing these ideas. Another tutor produces project briefs with accompanying photographic images to stimulate ideas. The briefs enable learners who need significant guidance to work at their own pace with confidence.

91. There are good resources for learners in jewellery and pottery classes. In jewellery, the equipment such as torches, anvils and other specialist tools are situated appropriately and are fit for purpose. In pottery classes learners have access to clay, kilns and reference books. The accommodation is good. The spaces are utilised well and provide plenty of room for learners to work effectively and safely. For other classes accommodation and access to equipment is satisfactory. Most classes observed have satisfactory access for people with restricted mobility. Staff qualifications and experience are satisfactory. Many are working or practising artists. Some are qualified to post-graduate level. Most have qualifications above the level they are teaching. Some have no qualifications for the area they are teaching and many have no formal teaching qualification.

92. In most lessons, although learning plans are not used well, learners' sketch books indicate good skills' development. All learners can confidently demonstrate what they have been learning and they produce good examples to support their accounts. Tutors provide progressively more demanding projects for learners who have returned to the same classes for many years. Tutors work well with learners at different stages of development in the same class. Learners work well together. In less successful lessons, tutors do not prepare adequately or produce accompanying courses materials for learners' reference.

93. Most tutors monitor learners' progress satisfactorily. There is good verbal feedback given on all courses. Tutors communicate clearly with all learners, providing valuable constructive criticism. Some tutors use peer critiques to good effect. On some courses, learners taking qualifications are well aware of the award they are taking, the level, what they have to do to achieve it and how far they have progressed. However, there is insufficient written feedback given in most accredited and non-accredited classes.

94. There is satisfactory support and guidance for learners. The prospectus provides simple and clear information. Learner handbooks provide clear information. Initial diagnosis of learners' needs is done very well, informally, but RALS's questionnaires to determine learners' styles are mostly not well used. Tutors manage classes very well and provide good, personal and academic support and guidance. Tutors are inclusive in their approach to learners and demonstrate a great deal of care when talking and providing advice for individuals. However, there is not enough formal specialist advice and guidance on progression. Additional support is available for learners who self-refer, but there is no initial diagnosis to determine their literacy, numeracy and language needs.

95. Curriculum planning is inadequate. There is inadequate planning to determine the relevance of accredited classes. Many learners on accredited courses have already

RUTLAND LEA

achieved the qualification or do not want to do the qualification and therefore will not show on achievement data. In other classes, learners are all taking the qualification willingly and are achieving well, but the level of the qualification falls short of the standard of work being produced. For non-accredited classes where learners have been attending for years, enrolments are growing to the point where it is difficult for many of the new learners to join. At present there is no maximum and minimum number of enrolments which take into account the size of accommodation and the type of activity. On others, new learners are enrolled and turn up at classes mid-way through the year and have to be integrated with the class without prior tutor knowledge. Individual learning plans produced by RALS are not fit for purpose for visual and performance arts classes and are not being used well. There has been no analysis to determine why there are declining learner numbers on some courses over the past three years. A new curriculum leader is in post but the appointment is too recent for there to have been any impact on the planning and management of the curriculum so far.

Leadership and management

96. Management information is poor. The centrally held records of staff qualifications and experience do not accurately reflect tutors' current and past industry experience. Retention and achievement data does not match up on individual data sheets or when compared with the self-assessment report. RALS has an information advice and guidance service for learners but it is unclear how many learners from visual and performing arts have taken up this opportunity. It is too early to judge the impact the new curriculum leader will have on improving the flow of information. The poor management information makes an accurate assessment of the quality of provision difficult.

97. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It provides adequate contextual descriptive information. The self-assessment reflects some of the findings from inspection. The development plan refers to the provision as a whole and does not contain specific areas of improvement for visual and performing arts. Lesson observations are carried out, but the paperwork is not adequate. They also contain insufficient information on attainment and the development of learners.

98. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Tutors use a satisfactory range of international sources in teaching and learning. They are inclusive in their teaching. There is adequate access to classes for people with mobility difficulties. In one class, a learner with special educational needs is appropriately supported.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
English - Adult and community learning	29	3
Languages - Adult and community learning	193	3

English and languages

Strengths

- high level of learners' engagement and participation
- highly effective use of the foreign language by tutors
- very well-qualified and experienced tutors

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCSE and AS level courses
- insufficient use of specialist resources to support learning
- insufficient attention to individual learners' needs

Achievement and standards

99. Attainment by learners is satisfactory. Some language learners display a good ability to understand the spoken and written language and they communicate confidently with their tutors and peers. Others have poor self-confidence and although they can successfully convey basic ideas and information, the incidence of errors increases significantly when they attempt to use more complex language. Some English learners are not able to critically evaluate literary texts, and their written skills are in some cases inadequate for the demands of their course. The standard of written work is satisfactory, with many learners working at the expected standard. In some advanced language classes the more able learners display good standards of both written and oral skills. Some language learners report increased confidence when using their language skills for practical purposes in their personal lives.

100. Pass rates on many GCSE and AS level courses are low, with an average of 53 per cent in 2003-04, including GCSE English at 58 per cent, GCSE Spanish at 52 per cent, GCSE Italian at 50 per cent, and AS level Italian at 33 per cent. In 2002-03, the overall pass rate was 44 per cent with pass rates ranging from 32 per cent in GCSE Spanish to 43 per cent in AS level Italian. Retention rates are satisfactory. Provisional figures for 2004-05 show an average retention rate of 85 per cent. Over the previous two years retention was 70 per cent.

Quality of education and training

101. There is a high level of learners' engagement and participation in lessons. Learners work well on their work and develop good working relationships with tutors. They fully understand their progress. Learners are motivated to complete their work to a good standard.

102. The use of the foreign language by tutors is highly effective. All lessons are conducted mainly in the foreign language. Tutors use effective techniques to promote learners' understanding and maximise their exposure to the spoken language.

103. Tutors are very well qualified and experienced. Most tutors hold relevant degrees and post-graduate teaching qualifications and have many years of experience both in schools and in adult education. In the best lessons this expertise translates into skilful classroom management and effective teaching techniques. These lessons develop in a progressive, coherent way enabling learners to build confidence and make good progress.

104. Evening provision allows French learners to progress from beginner to intermediate level. In Italian, beginners can progress onto GCSE and AS level. There is also a daytime programme in Spanish leading to OCN credits at level 1 and 2. However, some level descriptors do not provide a clear indication to learners as to what the starting level or previous experience should be before joining the course. Some enrichment opportunities such as visits to the theatre or cinema, have been made available to GCSE English learners.

105. There is insufficient use of specialist resources to support learning. Most classrooms are equipped with audio and video facilities. However, in some lessons there is not enough use of multimedia or other visual resources such as television, film, overhead projectors, maps, newspapers, magazines and other resources to promote learners' language skills. In these sessions, tutors rely on the use of the whiteboard and paper-based resources. There was no use of ILT in any of the sessions observed, either in class or to extend the learning experience beyond the lesson. Literacy, numeracy and language support is available and is offered to learners during their course.

106. There is insufficient attention to individual learners' needs. Many lesson plans consist of only a list of activities with no indication of timing, type of interaction, skills to be developed or expected outcomes. No opportunities for informal assessment of learning are identified and there is no planned or delivered differentiation of activity to cater for learners with different levels of abilities or learning styles. These lessons tend to be characterised by an unimaginative, uniform approach to the whole group, where less able learners are not adequately supported and the more able ones are not sufficiently challenged.

107. There is a well-designed learner record form and a preferred learning styles questionnaire for learners and tutors to record initial assessment results and progress towards and achievement of learning outcomes. However, most tutors do not make

adequate use of this to contribute to their planning or to provide feedback to learners. Initial assessment generally does not take place before learners enrolling on courses.

Leadership and management

108. Communications are effective. The staff pack handbooks are informative and the annual staff meeting is used well to share information. A newly appointed curriculum leader is responsible for supporting the team and facilitating the exchange of good practice and mentoring. There is, however, some confusion between the role and responsibilities of curriculum leaders and learning centre co-ordinators, especially with regard to some operational issues. Individual meetings with line managers are often informal. Formal appraisal is not an established practice for part-time tutors.

109. There is a good range of staff development events. The programme is, however, planned at management level and there is no direct input from tutors regarding their own professional development needs. Funding for external training is available and some tutors take advantage of these opportunities to develop their own professional expertise.

110. Curriculum planning and development has no strategic direction. New courses are set up in response to high demand, mainly from existing learners. There is no attempt to investigate the needs of potential learners to widen participation or to create links with local employers. Subject expertise and local knowledge are not used to identify demand.

111. Many tutors are not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. The report and the development plan do not focus on specific subjects or issues. There is no evidence of how teaching and other activities impact on the learners' experience and no specific actions are identified to tackle the weaknesses of the curriculum area.

112. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Data and information are collected and analysed at local level, although these are not always used to implement improvements. Observation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently extensive and thorough. It is carried out by staff who are not always subject specialists and are not able to provide subject-specific advice and support. Some key weaknesses in teaching and learning have not been identified. There is currently insufficient sharing of ideas and resources among subject team members. The newly appointed curriculum leader is now responsible for leading developments in this area.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	98	4
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	10	4
<i>Family learning</i> - Adult and community learning	13	4

Literacy and numeracy, independent living and leisure skills, and family learning

Strengths

- good achievement on intensive literacy and numeracy courses
- good support for learners in rural communities
- particularly good individual tuition

Weaknesses

- inadequate setting of learning targets
- inadequately qualified staff for literacy and numeracy teaching
- ineffective arrangements for family learning
- inadequate strategic planning for skills for life

Achievement and standards

113. Achievement is good on intensive literacy and numeracy courses. Ninety-five per cent of learners enrolled on week-long courses at an MoD army base pass the certificate in literacy or the certificate in numeracy, or both. They take the level 1 or level 2 tests online on the final day of the course and receive their results the same day. The programme meets effectively the needs of their military career including writing military reports and numeracy for a technical purpose. Forty-three learners have completed this course, representing 36 per cent of the total learners on foundation programmes at the time of inspection.

114. Achievement on other foundation courses is satisfactory. RALS provides the certificate in literacy and numeracy at entry level and levels 1 and 2. Level 2 English and mathematics workshops leading up to GCSE are offered as a progression route. Family learning is currently non-accredited. Other types of achievements are valued in all courses, such as increases in confidence, parents' skills in helping their children, progression to college courses, and employment, paid or voluntary. Learners are asked to rate their competency in various skills at the start of each course, again at the time of reviews and at the end of the course. This gives measurable evidence of their attainment.

115. Retention rates are satisfactory. They have averaged over 85 per cent for the past two years. Given the high proportion of short and very short courses in Rutland, retention is not a key indicator of the success of a programme.

Quality of education and training

116. There are good arrangements to support learners in rural communities. Tutors are assigned to learners who are unable to attend college for practical or personal reasons. This allows learners to work at home or in a neutral venue and at a time to suit them. Referrals are made by healthcare professions for particularly vulnerable individuals. All learners receive a confidential interview from a project worker who has experience in advice and guidance, and literacy and numeracy. Tutors work for up to 20 hours with each learner and aim to help the learner join a college group. In 2003-04, 20 learners accessed this tuition and eight of them progressed to college. In 2004-05 to date, only two learners are being taught in this way. A similar project is run in conjunction with a local volunteer bureau. This agency reports outstanding improvements in the learners' skills and confidence. A project at a local library invites learners to share reminiscences about war to contribute to a national website. Older learners are responding to the initiative and accessing adult education, often for the first time.

117. Learners receive particularly good individual tuition. This is especially the case when they are paired with a tutor on an individual basis or are able to work in a group session. In the best sessions, tutors work in partnership with the learner, discussing shared experiences and ensuring learning activities are relevant to real life. Learners are helped by clear explanations of tasks and concepts and there are frequent checks of understanding through questioning and summarising techniques. Tutors respond appropriately to the preferred pace of a learner in planning a session. One learner, who has difficulties with memory and concentration, changed activity at frequent intervals within an hour-long session and was motivated by the use of games. In some sessions, tutors make good use of multi-sensory learning strategies. In one session, learners reading a text for aspects of genre and sentence structure used highlighter pens to identify key phrases.

118. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in most group sessions. However, some lessons are not fully effective. Some tutors focus mainly on a finished product, such as a piece of writing or answers on an activity sheet, and do not discuss the skills practised and acquired. In some sessions the focus is on accreditation aims or course outcomes and not on applied learning.

119. Learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Where there are dedicated rooms for literacy and numeracy there is a reasonable range of published and tutor-developed resources and motivational posters and displays. Rooms in schools for family learning have appropriate furniture for adults. Laptop computers are available for classes and outreach work, though there is a narrow range of specialist software. RALS has a designated resource for skills for life continuous professional development.

RUTLAND LEA

However, it is inappropriately kept in a locked cupboard in the sports area of one of the community colleges and is rarely used.

120. Learning support is satisfactory. Learners have access to advice and guidance. Two tutors are trained to provide dyslexia assessments, but as yet this service is not used well. Staff have had training in dyslexia awareness and some are following guidelines for supporting learners with additional learning needs. Help with transport, including taxis, is arranged for learners from outlying rural areas.

121. The setting of learning targets is inadequate. RALS has a new format for individual learner records, but these are not consistently or thoroughly used. Information about prior qualifications is not always entered or taken into account. On one course, a learner already had a GCSE in English, but had targets set at level 1. In another short course, the tutor did not check the learners' self-assessed skill levels until part way through the course. Targets are seldom specific or set in a real-life context. Some targets are not written appropriately to learners' vocabulary. An assessment for preferred learning style is completed by each learner, but tutors do not always make use of this when teaching. One learner was not provided with a laptop computer with appropriate adaptations to aid co-ordination. Individual learning plans are not used effectively. RALS has recently implemented diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy. This is not applied effectively to develop learning targets.

122. Staff teaching literacy and numeracy are inadequately qualified. No tutors have specialist qualifications for teaching adult literacy and numeracy above level 2. Only one tutor has started a subject-specialist award at level 4. There are no explicit targets set for the number of staff achieving new qualifications.

Leadership and management

123. Arrangements for family learning are inadequate. The provision is much reduced in scale and range in the current year, with four 'keeping up with the children' courses and only one instance of wider family learning. Uptake on most courses is low. RALS has used inadequate marketing strategies and does not have the resource capacity to liaise well with families. A family learning weekend took place in October 2004, but was not analysed. The strategy for family learning has not yet been included in the newly structured service. Curriculum development within family learning is inadequate. Satisfactory schemes of work for short courses have been written, but do not allow sufficient scope for prior experience and knowledge of learners. Activities do not always closely link the literacy learning point for the adult to strategies for helping their child at an appropriate level. For example, in a topic on punctuation, learners were not encouraged to adapt an activity appropriately for children. Teamwork is not adequate.

124. Strategic planning for skills for life is inadequate. There is no current overall strategy for RALS and no targets to integrate literacy and numeracy support into programmes. Area basic skills action plans were written in 2003-04, but were not updated for 2004-05. The development plan has no explicit mention of skills for life. There is not enough emphasis on curriculum development issues in the self-assessment report and other

development planning documents. Plans are not clear for extending and improving RALS in response to the new structure. Projects are based on ideas from members of staff, but the source of funding to continue the work is not identified. There is insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity at a strategic level. Data on achievement and retention is not analysed rigorously to evaluate provision or set policy.