INSPECTION REPORT

Kent LEA

26 May 2005

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

· work-based learning for all people aged over 16
· provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
· **learndirect** provision
· Adult and Community Learning
· training funded by Jobcentre Plus
· education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Kent Adult Education Service (the service) is one of the largest adult education services in the UK, providing learning programmes for families and adults of all ages. Provision is provided by the service on behalf of Kent Count Council's (the council) local education authority (LEA). It uses 21 main learning centres and 357 other subsidiary centres, community and outreach venues. The provision ranges from entry level to level 3 and access to higher education. The service has an overall budget of approximately £17 million, of which £11.6 million is income from the Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

2. A restructuring of the curriculum and regions was completed in October 2004. In the new structure, the service is delivered through four geographical areas of Thames Gateway, East Kent Triangle, West Kent, and Mid Kent. The review reorganised operational areas with those of the LSC and strategic partnerships, clarified job roles and created new roles to support community development, strengthened management support for tutors and provided substantial contracts for staff.

3. In each of the four new areas, there is a team of three district community learning managers responsible for designing programmes and working with partners. Four curriculum managers are responsible for developing and delivering the curriculum. Each curriculum manager is responsible for provision in two or more areas of learning arranged in curriculum clusters under the headings of skills for life, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, healthy living, creative skills and career and personal development.

4. There are 21 externally funded projects, mainly in information and communications technology (ICT), health and social care, and foundation programmes. Family, or intergenerational, learning is delivered in 11 disadvantaged areas. The service has also managed the contract to provide education in five Kent prisons since January 1999.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS   Grade 3

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is adequate.** Provision is good in business administration, management and professional, ICT, health, social care and public services, and visual and performing arts and media. It is satisfactory in construction, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, humanities, and family learning. Provision in English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes is inadequate. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory, while quality improvement is inadequate.

6. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Staff, learners and stakeholders are appropriately involved in contributing to the findings. Managers have established systems to moderate judgements and ensure that they are supported clearly by sound evidence. However, the provider has not yet established

sufficiently thorough means for assessing the quality of teaching and learning.

7. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** The provider has introduced good measures to change the focus of the service and considerably strengthened its management arrangements and capacity to improve. Roles and responsibilities are much more clearly linked to the strategic development of the service and its future direction. There are clear signs that the service is continuously improving after a period of considerable change. At the time of the inspection, some new improvement measures had not been in place long enough to guarantee consistently good quality of provision.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR KENT LEA:

- to improve teaching and learning in many areas
- to improve participation by under-represented groups
- to strengthen initial assessment and the monitoring of learner progress
- to promote a better understanding of inclusion and equality of opportunity by staff
- to make more effective use of accurate and reliable data
- to accelerate the process of quality improvement
- to develop better sharing of good practice

GRADES

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

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

Construction		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts Adult and community learning	371	3

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration Adult and community learning	423	2

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Using IT Adult and community learning	1,150	2

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Leisure, sport and recreation Adult and community learning	8,956	3

Health, social care & public services		2
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Complementary health services Adult and community learning	1,265	2

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Arts Adult and community learning	5,320	2

Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Other contributory areas Adult and community learning	1,535	3

English, languages & communications		4
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Languages Adult and community learning	6,531	4

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
ESOL Adult and community learning	2,785	*4* 4
Literacy and numeracy Adult and community learning	2,141	*3* 3
Independent living and leisure skills Adult and community learning	1,149	*4* 4

Family learning	3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Adult and community learning		*3*
Adult and community learning	3,096	3

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. The 10 areas of learning inspected and graded were construction, business administration, management and professional, ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, health, social care and public services, visual, performing arts and media, humanities, English, languages and communications, foundation programmes, and family learning. Of these, three were inspected over five days, and the rest over eight days. Provision in science and mathematics, land-based programmes, hairdressing and beauty therapy and retail and customer services were not inspected.

Number of inspectors	29
Number of inspection days	197
Number of learners interviewed	1003
Number of staff interviewed	233
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	219
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	20

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Overall retention rates are very high in many courses in construction, ICT, sport and health programmes.** Retention rates are poor on high level courses in languages. **Pass rates are high on many courses** in business, ICT, health, literacy and numeracy, national tests and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)-accredited programmes.

10. Attendance rates vary considerably between areas of learning. They are good at over 85 per cent in business and health courses, but low in humanities at around 51 per cent.

11. **Construction learners produce work of a high standard.** They acquire good technical skills and are able to use them creatively. Wood carving learners use good design skills, making new artefacts from reclaimed wood, while upholstery learners maintain ornate patterns working with expensive and difficult-to-use fabrics.

12. **Business learners produce work of a high standard and develop good personal and communication skills.** Their work in portfolios is well presented with carefully written notes and demonstrates a good use of research skills. Most learners are able to understand

essential business principles and to express their opinions clearly and confidently.

13. **ICT learners produce work of a high standard and can confidently use many software applications.** They grow in confidence and develop relevant employment skills. New learners quickly acquire a good understanding of basic computer skills such as word-processing and spreadsheets.

14. **Sports and fitness learners make good improvements in their general health, fitness and wellbeing**. They gain in self-esteem and their social skills improve. They develop good relaxation techniques to help manage stress. Learners on food hygiene courses acquire skills that help them gain better jobs.

15. **Learners on sports massage, learning support assistant and complementary therapy courses acquire skills that enable them to be more effective at work.** They use good communication skills in sports massage, showing how well they understand their clients. Many learners produce well-researched projects and assignments of a higher standard than required for their course.

16. **The work of some learners in art and crafts is outstanding.** Calligraphy learners produce particularly detailed miniatures and large wall hangings showing good use of illustration and typography, colour and pattern. Pottery learners produce detailed and technical large-scale ceramics pieces, while music learners produce choral work of a high standard demonstrating confident use of harmony and rhythm. Many learners progress to further education.

17. **Humanities learners acquire particularly good analytical, research and communication skills** and make appropriate use of technical terms and vocabulary. Their written work is of a high standard.

18. **Attainment is high for many English, British Sign Language (BSL) and languages learners.** Many learners in creative writing classes have had work published. In modern foreign languages learners apply their oral and comprehension skills well to practical tasks such as buying food or booking in to a hotel. There are good levels of achievement in accredited courses in BSL.

19. Literacy learners at levels 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in reading more difficult texts, writing in different formats and in improving their spelling. Numeracy learners improve their ability to apply the four rules of number and to understand graphs and charts.

20. Most ESOL learners make satisfactory gains in self-confidence and some achieve good levels of accuracy and fluency in their speaking.

21. **Learners on independent living programmes make good progress in developing their social skills and confidence.** They become more confident in speaking for themselves and are aware of safe working practices.

22. **Learners develop a good range of new skills in family learning.** Their social skills improve and they acquire a good understanding of the school curriculum. They support their children effectively with their learning and homework. **Learners on parenting programmes develop good behaviour management skills**. Very few learners progress to

other vocational or higher level courses.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Business administration, management & professional	1	5	3	0	9
Construction	0	5	4	1	10
English, languages & communications	2	40	23	13	78
Family learning	0	13	6	0	19
Foundation programmes	4	24	40	10	78
Health, social care & public services	5	15	5	0	25
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	20	14	5	40
Humanities	2	3	8	1	14
Information & communications technology	3	23	9	3	38
Visual & performing arts & media	9	28	13	1	51
Total	**27**	**176**	**125**	**34**	**362**

23. **Construction tutors are particularly well qualified** and currently work as professionals in their subject areas. Some still run businesses and this gives learners access to more challenging projects and materials that are not usually readily available. **Records of learners' progress are not recorded adequately.** Tutors do not set specific individual learning goals for learners and not enough attention is given to identifying what they can already do when they start a course. **The implementation of health and safety procedures is not sufficiently thorough.** Not enough attention is given to assessing the potential risks of not wearing protective clothing and footwear or for the control of substances hazardous to health. **Teaching and learning are good in business and management programmes.** Tutors make effective use of questioning and use learners' own experiences to inform discussions and to help with an understanding of theory. There is a high level of learner participation in all lessons. **Curriculum leadership is good and tutors are well supported by managers.** Equal opportunities issues are given a high profile with learners in lessons. The self-assessment is insufficiently thorough and does not contain realistic targets for improvement.

24. **Much of the teaching and learning in ICT is good.** Tutors plan lessons well and identify good short-term targets for learners. Learners develop a good background knowledge of the subject as well as technical skills. Tutors use good illustrations and these help learners understand what they have to do to complete the task. **Good partnerships with many organisations enhance the provision and help attract new learners.** Good use is also made of the information technology (IT) resources in libraries outside normal opening hours and laptop computers are used in community venues to reach more deprived and isolated areas. **Some of the course content is not appropriate for the needs and interests of learners.** Some tutors introduce complicated topics such as databases too early into beginners' courses. Progression routes for some learners are not adequate.

25. **Hospitality and sports learners develop good practical skills.** They improve their mobility and flexibility in fitness lessons and while in badminton, they acquire good racquet skills. They learn good knife skills in cookery and design skills in sugarcraft. Hospitality, learners acquire good research skills using books and the internet. **There is insufficient formal initial assessment and health screening.** Not enough use is made of individual learning records. Learning goals are not sufficiently specific to learners' individual needs or

their progress. **Participation by learners from minority ethnic groups is low.** There is low participation by under-represented groups and a restricted range of subjects. There are not enough food-related or accredited courses in hospitality and sports courses are mainly in yoga and keep fit. There are not enough courses for learners with specific health problems.

26. **There is very good teaching by specialists in health.** Learners' experiences are used well to enhance their learning. Lessons and courses are carefully planned. Tutors have good strategies for linking learning to real-life situations. **Tutors work effectively with external agencies such as community groups and nurseries to widen participation.** Innovative initiatives such as complementary therapy coffee mornings are held to attract new learners. A range of taster courses are held in community venues to widen participation. **Specialist equipment and accommodation for therapies is poor.** Some centres are cold and do not have adequate toilet facilities.

27. The service makes reasonable adjustment for learners with special needs. When learners disclose a disability, tutors ensure that learning materials and facilities are adjusted to meet their needs. **There is insufficient sharing of good practice.** Tutors have few opportunities to meet and discuss their teaching, particularly when they are based in small, remote centres. There is some informal sharing of good practice, but this is not routinely shared across the whole provision. The service is considering a number of ways in which it can improve the sharing of good practice. **Teaching and learning in the arts and crafts are very good and learning sessions are well planned.** Tutors provide excellent course materials for learners and use a range of innovative learning activities. Learners develop good teamwork and technical skills. **Tutors offer a very good range of inclusive course activities for beginners and more experienced learners.** Continuing learners are challenged by progressively more difficult projects and all learners can attend planned trips to exhibitions and display their work publicly. **Learners' progress is not recorded thoroughly enough.** They do not understand how to identify and monitor their own progress and many do not hold evidence of the progress they have made. Summary data is not available in a suitable format to enable tutors to monitor learners' performance.

28. **In humanities, measures to improve the quality of individual courses are not yet effective.** There are inconsistent standards in course paperwork. Not enough measures are in place to ensure that the provision meets the needs of learners and the local community. Tutors do not meet often enough to adequately share good practice. A large number of courses have been cancelled.

29. **A particularly wide range of course is offered in Spanish, Italian, German and French.** In these languages, seven stages of learning are available to learners, so people can start as beginners and progress to very advanced levels. Progression routes are generally good except in BSL. **Much of the teaching and learning is poor on modern foreign language and BSL courses.** In these classes, learners have insufficient exposure to the language they are learning. Lessons are poorly planned and learners' mistakes are not routinely corrected. **Quality improvement is ineffective.** Teaching and learning assessments carried out by the service do not tackle the identified weaknesses and do not set targets for improvement. Levels of learning are not clearly defined. There is insufficient professional development for staff.

30. **A wide range of ESOL programmes is available to meet learner and community needs.** Classes are available across the county and at different levels in the main learning

centres providing progression opportunities. Learners can learn language in the context of other skills such as cookery, information technology (IT), art and citizenship and additional funding is used well to provide specific courses for employees. **The service has responded particularly well to the introduction of new qualifications for learners.** Most tutors have been trained to teach the qualifications and 1,445 learners are entered for the examinations this academic term. **Much of the teaching and learning is inadequate.** Tutors use an inadequate range of teaching methods to develop learners' language skills. Learners are given exercises that do not provide an appropriate context for their learning. Learners' prior learning and experience are not recorded in sufficient detail and tasks are not sufficiently different to meet the individual needs of learners. **Progress reviews do not identify what learners need to do to improve.** Individual learning plans are used mainly to record work completed by the whole class. **The service does not sufficiently monitor its teaching and learning.** Observations of teaching and learning are not carried out frequently enough. Course reviews are not systematically used to evaluate programmes across the county.

31. **In literacy and numeracy, the service attracts many new learners to a wide range of accredited provision.** Learners are attracted by the flexibility, speed of learning and independence offered by provision at five flexible learning centres for learners seeking national test qualifications. Partnerships with library, youth and community services and employers are productive and external funding is used well to support short additional introductory programmes. **Arrangements for initial advice and guidance are good.** Learners have good access to information through a widely advertised central telephone number and can arrange interviews, assessment and induction throughout the year. **The records of the progress that learners make when working towards their targets are inadequate.** Individual targets are not always achievable within the time allocated and learners do not know exactly what they need to do to improve. However, records are more thorough in the flexible learning centres.

32. **In independent living skills, learners have a wide range of programmes and subject choices** and can try out many different activities ranging from yoga to IT. **There are many opportunities to gain externally accredited certification** including the National Skills Profile and the Certificate in Adult Literacy. The flexible use of assessment criteria allows learners to work towards accreditation at their own pace. **Tutors use a narrow range of teaching and learning methods.** Not enough account is taken of the individual and highly different needs of individual learners in planning lessons. There is too much use of worksheets and resources are often not suitable for adult learners. **Initial assessments are inadequate.** Tutors do not adequately identify learning needs and often do not have sufficient relevant information on their learners. Learners are not clear about what they are supposed to be learning or why. Relevant information on learners is not always passed to tutors by care staff. **The provision is not sufficiently co-ordinated across the county.** There is insufficient consistent practice to assure that learners have a good-quality experience throughout their learning programme.

33. **The quality of teaching and learning is good in family learning.** Tutors make good use of stimulating learning materials and resources to promote learning and a range of teaching techniques. Independent learning is encouraged through discussion and group work. The programme is very successful in engaging new learners in hard-to-reach communities. **There is insufficient planning and overall co-ordination of family learning** and no separate strategy for family learning with clearly stated aims and measurable

objectives. The strategy for family learning is contained within the services community development strategy.

Leadership and management

34. **The council, the head of service and senior managers of the service provide strong strategic leadership and have a clear vision for the service.** There is a high level of active involvement by elected members. The mission statement is clear and is supported by key priorities to reflect the national educational agenda and the learning and economic development needs of the local community.

35. The service has invested significantly in enhancing resources including, computers, specialist equipment, accommodation, buildings and staffing.

36. **The new management structure of the service provides a strong framework for the work it does.** Senior managers work well together and good teamwork is clear at all levels throughout the service. The standard of curriculum management across the service is inconsistent. In some areas of learning there are poor course reviews, insufficient analysis of data and an unrealistic evaluation of teaching and learning.

37. **Staff are provided with good training, development and support linked to the business plan and service objectives.** There is a high level of staff participation in a wide range of training and development activities which focus on improving the learners' experience.

38. **Management data for 2004-05 is inaccurate.** Enrolment is managed effectively. However, guidance on reporting learners who leave their course early is not consistently applied. Registers are not updated systematically and learners' attendance is only updated on the central system every six weeks. Reports on enrolment, retention and achievement are based on inaccurate data and do not provide a secure foundation on which to base decisions.

39. **The service has many innovative projects to widen participation, particularly by under-represented groups.** Very good strategic partnerships with schools, libraries, health, social services, and further and higher education providers contribute to effective planning for new needs and good joint marketing materials. Partnerships are used well to secure additional funding for projects which aim to attract groups of people who might not otherwise participate in learning.

40. **The council's comprehensive set of policies and procedures for equality of opportunity have not been adapted specifically for adult and community learning.** The equality and diversity action plan is used to identify priorities and implement improvements. However, overall responsibility to monitor actions is unclear and there are no resources or specific targets allocated to each of the actions within the plan.

41. **Staff have not been provided with sufficient training on new and current legislation.** Recently, training has been provided on the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but there has not been enough training on the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. No training has been provided on human rights, child protection, sex discrimination or cultural diversity.

42. **Learners have an insufficiently developed understanding of equality and diversity.** However, the day-to-day support given to learners is good. Staff provide good personal and pastoral support to learners and financial support is provided for tuition or childcare.

43. A detailed quality assurance handbook is given to all staff, covering all aspects of the learners' experience. As part of the quality assurance system, tutors are required to maintain a standardised course file but a significant number are not completed thoroughly.

44. There are well-developed procedures to collect and take action on learner feedback. A yearly learner survey is used to assess the quality of teaching, advice and guidance, overall learner satisfaction and to identify areas for improvement.

45. The complaints procedure is generally effective. Quality assurance managers receive reports every term on the nature, type and outcome of all complaints for each geographical area. However, learners are not always made sufficiently aware of the formal complaints procedure.

46. **There is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.** The service has an established scheme for the observation of teaching and learning with a comprehensive guidance to observers about what to look for during observations. Newly appointed staff are observed frequently but for other tutors the target is at least once every four years. Many observation reports focus too much on teaching methods rather than on learning. Reports are often descriptive, insufficiently evaluative and there is insufficient focus on whether learning is taking place. Inspectors gave lower grades than those in the self-assessment report for teaching and learning in most areas of learning.

47. Self-assessment has been carried out annually since 2002. The self-assessment process is inclusive and all established staff contributed to the report. Curriculum managers review the curriculum annually and account is taken of feedback from learners and external partners. The latest report identified some of the key strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. However, inspectors found many additional weaknesses and many strengths to be no more than normal practice.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good partnerships with a wide range of organisations
- good strategic leadership
- effective and innovative projects to widen participation

Weaknesses

- inaccurate management data
- insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning
- slow response to equality of opportunity legislation

Construction

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good standard of learners' work
- particularly well-qualified and experienced tutors

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording of learners' progress
- poor implementation of health and safety procedures

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- high standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- particularly effective curriculum management

Weaknesses

- insufficiently thorough self-assessment

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good retention and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- particularly effective partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- inappropriate content on some courses
- high proportion of cancelled classes

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- particularly significant improvement in the quality of learners' health, fitness and wellbeing
- high retention rates
- good development of practical skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient assessment, monitoring and recording of individual learning
- low participation by under-represented groups

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses in 2003-04
- very good teaching and learning
- good working partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- poor specialist equipment and accommodation for therapies

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- high standards of work
- very good teaching and learning
- very good range of inclusive activities
- strong curriculum leadership

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording of learners' progress
- inappropriate data to monitor performance

Humanities

Strengths

- high levels of attainment in many classes
- good retention and pass rates in AS law and GCSE psychology

Weaknesses

- low attendance on many courses
- insufficient quality improvement at course level

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- high levels of attainment in many classes
- particularly good range of provision in Spanish, Italian, German, French

Weaknesses

- poor retention on many higher level courses in modern foreign languages
- much poor teaching and learning in modern foreign languages and BSL
- ineffective quality improvement

Foundation programmes

ESOL   *Grade 4*

Strengths

- wide range of programmes
- particularly good response to the introduction of new qualifications

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching and learning
- inadequate review of learner progress
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning

Literacy and numeracy   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good achievement on accredited courses
- wide range of provision
- good initial guidance and assessment

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory recording of learners' progress against targets
- insufficient specialist resources
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of the provision

Independent living and leisure skills   *Grade 4*

Strengths

- good development of social skills and confidence
- wide range of programme choices
- wide range of accreditation opportunities

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching and learning strategies
- inadequate initial assessment
- ineffective use of care staff
- ineffective management of supported learning

Family learning

Adult and community learning *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and self-confidence
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor progression
- insufficient planning and co-ordination of family learning

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT KENT LEA:

* gaining new skills and increased self-confidence
* the friendly and supportive tutors
* opportunities to learn in non-threatening environments
* the accessibility of locally available learning centres
* being treated as an adult

WHAT LEARNERS THINK KENT LEA COULD IMPROVE:

* the availability of facilities in some learning centres, such as refreshments, car parking, and creche
* the brochures
* the number of forms to fill in
* the amount of provision in the summer months
* the guidance for progression

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 Mentor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them
Learning goals	Main learning goals Secondary	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge. These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
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 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 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.
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 self managing, sustainable communities.

Active citizenship	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make 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 3

Strengths

- good partnerships with a wide range of organisations

- good strategic leadership

- effective and innovative projects to widen participation

Weaknesses

- inaccurate management data

- insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning

- slow response to equality of opportunity legislation

48. The service has particularly good working partnerships with a wide range of organisations including local colleges, the university, charities, community groups, and the voluntary sector and public service bodies. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. These arrangements contribute effectively to the planning and development of the curriculum. The partnerships help to identify new provision and avoid course duplication. The service and partners have good joint marketing materials. The district community learning managers work effectively with local communities to develop new projects and further provision.

49. The director and senior managers of the service have a clear vision for the service and provide strong strategic leadership. This is communicated effectively to all staff. There is a strong commitment to the development of an effective adult and community learning service and there is a high level of active involvement by elected members. The mission statement is clearly expressed and supported by key themes and priorities as set out in the service's strategic plan. The plan is comprehensive and identifies realistic strategic objectives to reflect the national educational agenda and the learning and economic development needs of the local community. Managers and staff contribute to the plan and fully understand its relevance to their own areas of learning. There are comprehensive business plans and community strategic plans for the four areas of the county. These clearly focus on the specific needs of each community and enable managers to put the strategic plan into practice. Strategic and business plans include comprehensive actions to achieve continuous development of the provision.

50. The service has invested significantly in improving its resources including, computers, specialist equipment, accommodation, buildings and staffing. Particularly noteworthy developments include a discovery centre at Dover that brings together the shared resources of a library, a museum, and adult and community learning opportunities to provide a wide range of facilities for all learners and users.

51. The management structure of the service was substantially revised during 2004. The planned changes to the structure were managed well. Staff and managers fully understand the new structure which provides a strong framework for the work of the service. All managers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Senior managers work well

together and good teamwork is clear at all levels throughout the service. Managers have an open and consultative approach. Teaching and learning is managed through four curriculum managers. The standard of curriculum management across the service is inconsistent. In visual and performing arts, curriculum leadership is strong and provides clear direction in all aspects of the area of learning and ensures the inclusion of all part-time tutors. However, in English, languages and communications, course reviews are poor, analysis of data is insufficient and evaluation of teaching and learning is not adequate.

52. Staff are provided with effective training, development and support. All new employees, including part-time tutors, have a comprehensive induction to the service. Staff appointed to new roles through the review have received training to help them understand and fulfil their responsibilities. The service has an established annual staff appraisal and regular individual support meetings for staff. Managers meet individual staff to set and monitor objectives linked to the key performance targets and priorities of the service. Staff have clearly written job descriptions and good support materials related to their job. The training needs analysis for staff and managers is updated regularly and linked to the business plan and service objectives. There is a high level of staff participation in a wide range of training and development activities focused on improving the learners' experience. Many staff have achieved information, advice and guidance and teaching qualifications. Eighty part-time tutors are working towards a certificate in education. Many staff take part in the training offered by the council. The service promotes staff from within the service wherever possible.

53. Working relationships are good between managers, staff, tutors and learners. Regular staff meetings are well attended and work to standard agenda items including health and safety, equality and diversity, and quality assurance. Comprehensive minutes are circulated to staff and detailed action points are followed up. Staff use meetings well to exchange information and share ideas. Staff are able to raise any concerns with managers, either at meetings or informally.

54. Management data is inaccurate. The service has made a substantial investment in its management information systems. All main learning centres are connected to the central management information system designed to improve the collection of data. Staff have received comprehensive training in collecting and analysing data. Enrolment is effectively managed centrally using online enrolment and through a call service releasing tutors to provide individual interviews for prospective learners. However, guidance on reporting learners who leave their course is not consistently applied, registers are not updated systematically to reflect active learners, and learner attendance is only updated on the central system every six weeks. Although the central management information system provides regular reports on enrolment, retention and achievement, these are based on inaccurate data and do not provide a secure foundation on which to base decisions.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 3

55. The service has many effective and innovative projects to widen participation, particularly by under-represented groups. Very good strategic partnerships with Kent LEA, libraries, health, social services, and further and higher education providers contribute to effective planning and co-ordination of the provision. These partnerships are used well to prepare joint bids for funding, to provide learners with progression routes from taster courses to other programmes, and to share accommodation and teaching resources. The service has a specific aim to develop community-based provision which is fully in line with

local needs and priorities. The project aims to attract groups of people who might not otherwise participate in learning. These include adults on low incomes, those with learning difficulties or disabilities, asylum seekers and people living in isolated parts of the county. Examples include IT for beginners delivered within a hospital working with people recovering from drugs and alcohol problems, community empowerment courses in some of the most deprived wards, work with the traveller communities, and ESOL courses for newly arrived asylum seekers. However, there is no overall strategy to link effectively all these initiatives and projects. In addition, not enough targets are set for participation, achievement and progression.

56. Kent LEA has 22 clusters of schools including secondary, primary, special and pupil referral units. The service has restructured the delivery of its service to fit these clusters and four local government areas. This has facilitated many family learning and parenting projects and initiatives. These successful programmes, aimed at parents and their families, are offered, in many cases, at one specific school with families invited in from neighbouring schools.

57. There is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that cover equal opportunities, race equality, the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and child protection. However, the service has not tailored these policies or procedures specifically for adult and community learning. In 2004 a part-time post was created to co-ordinate, promote and manage equality of opportunity. In order to meet the staff training requirements outlined in the equal opportunities action plan, the working hours for this post were increased, but the post remains part time and overall responsibility for equal opportunities still lies with the quality assurance manager.

58. The equality and diversity action plan is used to identify priorities and implement improvements. However, it is not clear who has overall responsibility to ensure that actions set in the plan are completed. There are no resources or specific targets allocated to each of the actions within the plan. The management information system has only recently produced a comprehensive set of equal opportunities data. Data is not used to set targets.

59. Staff have not been provided with sufficient training on new and current legislation. Recently, training has been provided on the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but there has not been enough training on specific teaching strategies to support this work. Equally there has not been enough training on the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. No training has been provided on human rights, child protection, sex discrimination or cultural diversity. Some tutors do not sufficiently understand the implications of these government acts. Eighty per cent of tutors have attended staff conferences at which equality issues are discussed.

60. All learners are provided with a learners' charter at the start of their course that lists their entitlements. It does not refer to the grievance process or the newly developed procedure for reporting racial incidents. The charter is being redrafted and will be available in nine community languages. Learners have an insufficient understanding of equality and diversity. There is insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity in adult education centres and at community-based venues. However, all managers and tutors work well to provide good learning and meet learners' needs. The day-to-day support given to learners is good. Staff provide good personal and pastoral support to learners. There are systems to

identify and meet learners' learning and additional specific needs such as literacy and numeracy support. All tutors are provided with criteria to ensure that learners' needs are prioritised according to personal circumstances, and financial support is provided for tuition or childcare. Satisfactory advice and guidance is available to learners. The service works in partnership with the information, advice and guidance service for Kent and Medway, particularly through its district community learning managers who are responsible for the provision of information and guidance in their areas.

Quality improvement   Contributory grade 4

61. The detailed quality assurance staff handbook incorporates quality improvement policies and procedures that cover all aspects of the learner's experience. As part of the quality assurance system, tutors are required to maintain a standardised course file that records learners' induction, initial assessment, attendance, assessment and feedback. Most tutors maintain these course files, although some are not fully completed or used as a tool to aid improvement.

62. Procedures to collect learner feedback are well established. Learner surveys are carried out halfway during each course and at the end. Tutors evaluate feedback and produce action plans to tackle identified issues. Tutor evaluations contribute to course reviews and to the curriculum self-assessment process. A yearly learner survey is used to assess the quality of teaching, advice and guidance and overall learner satisfaction, and to identify areas for improvement.

63. The complaints procedure is generally effective and complaints are dealt with promptly by tutors and other staff. Quality assurance managers receive summary reports each term on the nature, type and outcome of complaints for each geographical area. However, not all learners are made sufficiently aware of the formal complaints procedure.

64. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. There is very little good teaching in humanities and in independent living and learning skills. A high proportion of teaching in foundation programmes is inadequate, particularly in ESOL, and in English and languages. Foundation, and English and languages programmes, represent approximately a third of all learners in programmes being inspected. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not thorough, and the grading of lessons is too generous, with insufficient identification of weaknesses. There is a well-established scheme for the observation of teaching and learning, supported by detailed guidance to observers about what to look for during observations. Newly appointed staff are observed frequently during the first six months of their employment, but for other tutors the target is only once every four years. Feedback to tutors focuses on teaching methods and strategies rather than learning. Reports are often descriptive and are insufficiently evaluative. There is too much emphasis on the quality of lesson plans, schemes of work and course files, and insufficient focus on whether learning is taking place. Managers internally moderate the observations and some grades have been amended. Grades for teaching and learning were too generous in most areas of learning, particularly in foundation and English, languages and communications. Observation reports do not always sufficiently identify what tutors need to do to improve their teaching and learning.

65. Self-assessment has been carried out annually since 2002. The process is inclusive and all established staff contribute to the self-assessment report. Curriculum managers review the curriculum annually and full account is taken of feedback from learners and external

partners. The final report is produced by senior managers using summary evidence from curriculum managers. However, self-assessments of individual courses are not produced. Many of the actions in the action plan are being implemented. The latest report, produced shortly before the inspection, identified some of the key strengths, but did not identify many of the weaknesses found by inspectors. Inspectors also found many of the strengths to be no more than normal practice. The accuracy of data on learners held locally in learning centres is unreliable and cannot be used as a sound basis for self-assessment.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts Adult and community learning	371	3

66. Currently 371 learners are enrolled on courses in construction including woodwork, wood carving, model engineering, upholstering, furniture restoration, do-it-yourself and bricklaying. To date in 2004-05, 634 learners have made 1,264 enrolments. Of these, 191 are new learners. All courses are non-accredited and take place throughout the day and in the evening. Courses generally run for two or three hours a week for a total of 10 weeks. Many courses take place three times a year. Approximately 64 per cent of learners are women, 65 per cent are aged over 50, 9 per cent are recorded as having a disability and 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. There are 14 tutors, all of whom work part time.

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good standard of learners' work
- particularly well-qualified and experienced tutors

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording of learners' progress
- poor implementation of health and safety procedures

Achievement and standards

67. Overall retention rates are good at 95 per cent in 2002-03 and 95 per cent in 2003-04. Retention rates are particularly high, with many at 100 per cent, in upholstery, furniture restoration, woodwork and woodcarving classes, which together make up more than half of the provision. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory at 72 per cent.

68. Learners produce a good standard of work. In wood carving, learners demonstrate good design skills in the creation of new artefacts from reclaimed wood. In upholstery, learners show that they have acquired good skills in maintaining ornate patterns, often working with expensive and difficult materials when applying fabrics. In restoring furniture, learners work effectively with veneers and French polishing to replace damaged components. They were able to show a wide range of extended skills on a community project which involved repairs to a statue.

The quality of provision

69. Tutors are particularly well qualified and experienced. Many currently work as professionals in their subject areas. Some still run businesses and provide learners with access to a range of projects and materials not usually readily available. Many learners contact their tutors outside of class time for help on resolving practical problems with their

work.

70. Tutors give effective individual support to learners in workshops. They make good use of their experience to ensure that learners' needs are met and provide clear explanations, advice and feedback. Learners respond well to feedback from tutors. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors understand the individual learning and development needs of learners and provide appropriate learning activities. Learners visit exhibitions and historic properties. They have a good understanding of the properties of materials and the difficulties in using traditional materials safely. Learners fully understand their own progress and achieve a high level of satisfaction when they complete a piece of work. Although some tutors do not use formal schemes of work, lessons are generally managed and taught well.

71. Learners' guidance and support is satisfactory. Learners are provided with a clearly written guide that explains the support available. Learners with a disability or literacy and numeracy needs are invited to request support during enrolment or at induction. Support is provided if requested by the learner. Currently no learners access learning support in this area of learning. Course advisory sheets are designed well and indicate if prior knowledge or special equipment is required. Individual support in workshop sessions is good.

72. Learners have access to a satisfactory range of courses and subjects at a range of appropriate venues, including technology schools and village halls. Although there are very few courses offering progression routes, learners who return to the same course are set more complex tasks. There are not enough enrolments from hard-to- reach learners. Currently, no family learning courses are provided. Only 8 per cent of current learners have an identified disability and only 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. The provider has implemented actions to rectify this situation through the construction provision strategy. Taster courses are being developed and Saturday family learning events are planned. It is too early to judge the impact of these measures.

73. Recording of learners' progress is insufficient. All courses are non-accredited and achievement is not routinely measured. Not enough use is made of individual learning records. Goals set in these by learners are not specific and do not have achievement dates. During learning sessions, tutors do not identify individual goals and short-term targets against which progress can be measured. There is no systematic initial assessment to establish and record learners' starting points. Some photographic evidence of learners' work is kept, but this is generally retained by the tutor and is not used to record achievement. Learners are assessed informally in classes, but this is generally used to reinforce good practice, give constructive feedback, or correct mistakes.

74. Implementation of health and safety procedures is poor. In workshops, risk assessments are not always available, up to date, or relevant to current learning activities. For example, there are no risk assessments of the dangers of not wearing protective clothing and footwear. The sheets used for the control of substances hazardous to health, provided by the service, do not specifically identify materials used in particular workshops. In some sessions, learners are allowed to bring in their own materials without these sheets. Some learners bring their own electrical tools that have not undergone portable appliance testing.

Leadership and management

75. Communication is effective with regular team meetings between the curriculum manager and area programme managers. Information from these meetings is shared with programme managers. Tutors are provided with good support by programme managers and have access to regular, detailed newsletters.

76. The development strategy for the area of learning is satisfactory and tackles issues such as participation rates by hard-to-reach learners and improving the curriculum. The strategy provides 12 specific improvement targets. These form personal targets for area programme managers. Monitoring takes place at monthly meetings. It is too early to judge the impact of the development strategy.

77. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Performance is measured through a learner satisfaction survey carried out by an independent organisation, a learner end-of-course survey, and a teaching and learning assessment scheme. Feedback from these is used to update the development strategy. However, not enough teaching and learning observations take place and only one observation has taken place since September 2004.

78. Staff development is satisfactory and includes understanding learning outcomes and supporting dyslexic learners. Most tutors make good use of development activities. There are insufficient opportunities for tutors to share good practice and not all tutors have a sufficient grasp of formal policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are set out in a well-written tutor handbook, but this is not used effectively by tutors.

79. Storage facilities are unsatisfactory at three venues. At one venue, the tutor has to transport five boxes of tools and equipment, and bags of materials for each learning session. New venues are currently being sought. There are not enough tools at some learning centres.

80. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths in the self-assessment report, but identified additional weaknesses. The grades awarded to teaching and learning sessions were too generous.

Business administration, management & professional   **Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration Adult and community learning	423	2

81. Currently 423 learners are enrolled on 94 business courses. Of these, 242 are new learners. Adult and community learning provision includes professional courses in transactional analysis, presentation skills, business administration, and shorthand. There are 72 accredited courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in management, learning support assistant training, teaching assistant training, bookkeeping, accounting, and shorthand. Courses last from one day up to 30 weeks and are delivered across the county throughout the day and in the evening. Six per cent of learners have a declared disability, 25 per cent are men, approximately 5 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, 59 per cent are aged 30 to 49, and 5 per cent are over 60. The programme is taught by 20 hourly-paid tutors. During 2003-04, 635 learners enrolled on 81 courses.

Strengths

- high standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- particularly effective curriculum management

Weaknesses

- insufficiently thorough self-assessment

Achievement and standards

82. Retention rates are high and pass rates on many courses are good. In 2003-04, retention on learning support assistant courses was 100 per cent. The retention on most management courses is 100 per cent. Attendance at lessons is good and during the inspection, average overall attendance was 84 per cent with 25 per cent of observed classes having 100 per cent attendance. Pass rates are particularly high in the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Open College Network (OCN) learning support assistants courses. However, there are low pass rates on management courses and on some accredited accounts and bookkeeping courses. Pass rates on a bookkeeping course in 2003-04 were 20 per cent.

83. Learners produce work of a high standard and develop good personal and communication skills. The work in portfolios is presented well with carefully written notes and evidence of thorough research. Most learners fully understand key concepts and facts, and express their opinions with clarity and confidence. They co-operate well and work effectively in groups to discuss and debate issues. In one class, the learners worked in groups to discuss different behavioural problems in children. Each group provided comprehensive feedback on their topic and then contributed appropriately to a general discussion on each topic. On the learning support assistants course, many learners produce very good audiovisual teaching aids and worksheets for use in their schools. On accounts courses, learners fully understand how to use an industry standard accounting

system. Learners analyse well their own progress and are fully involved in planning their own learning.

The quality of provision

84. Teaching and learning are good. In the better learning sessions, tutors make good use of learners' own experiences during discussions. They use directed questioning to ensure that all learners contribute to effective group work. In one learning session, learning support assistants used their personal experiences in the classroom in a practical exercise on dealing effectively with disruptive children. The learners gave examples of how they had dealt with such children in their own workplace and this enabled them to share their ideas and methods. In another lesson, learners discussed the challenges they face in classes containing children, including asylum seekers and immigrants, who speak English as an additional language. The group discussion helped them construct a portfolio of good practice on how they should support these children. The tutor handled sensitive issues appropriately. There is a high level of learner participation in all lessons. Some tutors take too long on one activity.

85. Tutors are appropriately qualified with 60 per cent of part-time tutors holding relevant teaching qualifications. Teaching accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Some of the classrooms in the main learning centres have interactive whiteboards and most have access to computers, although these have to be pre-booked. All classrooms have standard equipment such as whiteboards, television, video recorders and cassette players. Tutors are able to request any additional equipment they require for their courses.

86. Individual learner support is satisfactory. Course information is available through leaflets and prospectuses in the learning centres, local libraries, or other local venues. Learners are given explicit guidance on the experience or qualifications needed to join the finance-related courses. Enrolment is only permitted after a formal interview. Learners joining a learning support assistant's course take an initial literacy and numeracy test to ensure a level of competence appropriate to the classroom environment they will work in. Assessment is thorough and meets awarding body criteria. Learners receive good detailed feedback. Learners on bookkeeping courses get useful tips on how to tackle questions as part of their exam preparation. In other classes, tutors provide more useful information than is required by the awarding body. For example, in a computerised bookkeeping class, the tutors covered trial balances to help learners check their work and also to help them in the workplace. Learners are informed of progression options available to them at the end of their courses. There are good links with a local university to enable learners to take the foundation degree locally.

Leadership and management

87. Curriculum management is particularly effective. Regular programme and team meetings provide an opportunity for thorough discussion of the programme and of learners' progress. Action plans are appropriately detailed and actions are implemented promptly. For example, accounting courses were reviewed and more precise entry criteria identified to ensure all applicants have achieved a certificate in accounts or have relevant experience before enrolling. Communication systems with part-time tutors are good and include e-mail and newsletters. Equal opportunities and diversity are promoted effectively. All tutors attend conferences where relevant issues are discussed and action points raised. Tutors work well to identify ways to promote equal opportunities and diversity during

learning sessions. New tutors who do not hold a teaching qualification are enrolled on tutor training programmes. All tutors are observed within their first few weeks of teaching and complete a teaching and learning assessment after six months. However, there is currently no scheme to observe tutors on an annual basis.

88. The self-assessment process is insufficiently thorough. The self-assessment report accurately reflects the quality of the provision, but does not contain realistic targets for improvement. Targets are not set at course level. Course reviews are not completed to a consistent standard. The better ones are self-critical with detailed analysis of learner satisfaction surveys and internal verification, but in others, the formal processes used and targets set are not sufficiently specific.

Information & communications technology   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
Adult and community learning	1,150	2

89. There are currently 1,150 learners on 157 ICT courses including computer literacy, an exam-based European computer qualification, computer maintenance and installation, web-page design and programming. To date in 2004-05, 3,250 learners have enrolled on ICT courses. Courses are from beginner to level 2, with 56 per cent of courses accredited. Courses last from six hours to 30 weeks, mainly in two-hour sessions, and are run during the daytime and evening, with a very small number at weekends. They take place at learning centres, community venues, schools, libraries and residential homes. The provision is directly managed by the full-time skills for life team, comprising one curriculum manager, four area programme managers and seven programme managers, who also manage foundation programmes. There are 84 part-time tutors.

Strengths

- good retention and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- particularly effective partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- inappropriate content on some courses
- high proportion of cancelled classes

Achievement and standards

90. Retention and achievement rates are good. For example, retention rates on non-accredited programmes have been more than 90 per cent for the past two years. On accredited programmes, retention rates rose from 89 per cent in 2003-04 to 94 per cent in 2004-05. Achievement rates for 2002-03 and 2003-04 are 89 per cent and 87 per cent, respectively.

91. Learners' work is at least satisfactory and in many cases good. They develop good self-confidence and relevant employment skills. On beginners' courses, learners quickly develop a good understanding of basic computer skills such as word-processing and spreadsheets. One learner on the fifth week of a beginners' course was sufficiently confident to use appropriately the installation disk for an application. In higher level courses, learners develop their skills with relevant application software packages, using them effectively to produce computer-based presentations. They are able to access the internet and send and receive e-mails. On specialised courses, learners develop a thorough understanding of how to set up and maintain computers. Some learners also develop the skills to design and produce websites. Although most learners arrive promptly for their lessons, attendance is only 72 per cent overall.

The quality of provision

92. Teaching and learning are good. Sixty-eight per cent of lessons were graded as good or better. Learning session plans are particularly thorough and make very good use of short-term targets for learners. Tutors fully understand learners' individual needs and ensure that they develop good background knowledge, as well as technical skills. They use clear, well-written paper-based learning materials that are supported by good illustrations. These help learners understand what they have to do to complete the task. Learning sessions are well structured with clear introductions to explain the learning aims. Learners make good progress with their learning. Tutors encourage a helpful atmosphere of mutual support among learners. However, not all tutors identify short-term targets for learners sufficiently clearly and some tasks are completed with too much tutor guidance. A few tutors have insufficient knowledge of the software packages they are teaching.

93. The provider has particularly effective partnerships with a wide range of organisations to improve the provision. Learning sessions are run in dedicated classrooms in a number of county libraries. Good use is also made of the IT resources in libraries outside normal opening hours. Computer suites in secondary schools, and laptop computers in a number of community-based venues, are used well to ensure provision is available in specific deprived and isolated areas. For example, one village hall has provided its own computer suite and is using the revenue it receives from the provider to upgrade the suite for the local community. There are effective partnerships with local churches, youth organisations, drug rehabilitation centres and neighbourhood learning centres. A pilot project with Kent Association for the Blind is being used to evaluate the best way to train people with visual impairments to use specialist screen magnification software. This will enable them to attend mainstream classes in IT and to access the internet and e-mails at home or through libraries. The provider is currently developing a range of employment-based IT qualifications through a separate partnership.

94. Initial advice and guidance is generally good and promotional materials clearly and accurately describe the provision. Learners visiting centres for registration receive good appropriate advice. There is no formal initial assessment for new learners other than a personal declaration of prior knowledge. A few learners enrol on inappropriate courses following the advice of staff who are not ICT specialists or having taken no advice. On-line enrolment does not enable appropriate advice to be given. Learners receive satisfactory advice on possible progression routes. Learners' work is appropriately marked and prompt relevant feedback is provided. Assessment of externally accredited work is in line with the requirements of relevant accrediting bodies. Satisfactory use is made of appropriate resources. Learners identified as having additional support needs are provided with appropriate support during lessons.

95. Some of the course content is not appropriate for the needs and interests of learners. Some tutors introduce topics into beginners' courses that are too complex sometimes diverting learners from their declared interests. For example, many learners at the early stages of their course identify that they want to learn how to access the internet, and to send and receive e-mails, rather than use databases. In some learning sessions, learners opted out of the spreadsheet training taking place preferring to continue with word-processing exercises. Progression for some learners at the lower levels is not adequate. Some learners repeat work or do not find it sufficiently challenging. The provider is planning to tackle these weaknesses.

Leadership and management

96. Communications are good between most managers and tutors. Attempts to improve communication and share good practice have not been sufficiently successful with some more established tutors. A few tutors do not fully understand the new management structure or how to access relevant professional advice. Assessment of tutors' performance is adequate, with good training for observers, regular standardisation meetings, and appropriate support for new tutors. Actions following assessment are agreed, but are not closely monitored.

97. Managers carry out systematic reviews of the provision that include the evaluation of learner feedback and an analysis of data. These measures are not recorded fully in the self-assessment report. Full-time staff are fully involved in quality improvement work, but there is not enough involvement by part-time tutors or partner organisations. The reviews have identified the need to reduce the number of courses provided. A high proportion of courses are cancelled. For example, in 2004-05 43 per cent of courses have been cancelled through insufficient enrolment. Plans for the provision in 2005-06 include adequate measures to discontinue certain courses and extend provision to deprived and isolated areas. The recent changes to the management structure enhance the providers' capacity to strengthen curriculum development and improvement. There are several trial and pilot schemes, such as a business development initiative to evaluate work-linked ICT qualifications and courses for those with visual impairment. Managers fully understand quality improvement, but some do not have sufficient ICT expertise. Managers have identified that some courses need to be improved.

98. Resources are satisfactory overall. Some venues are equipped with up-to-date facilities, but others are not. At a number of venues, learners have insufficient desk space to lay out their work. Access for learners with mobility difficulties has been considerably improved and is generally adequate. However, some of the smaller venues at partner organisations do not provide good access.

99. Tutors fully understand learners' needs. However, the promotion of equality of opportunity is not adequate in some learning sessions. Inspectors awarded lower grades for teaching and learning than those in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is thorough, but the report is not sufficiently analytical. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation Adult and community learning	8,956	3

100. There are currently 8,956 learners on hospitality, sport and leisure courses including toning exercise, circuit training, exercise for mobility, exercise to music, Salsa aerobics, various keep fit courses for older learners, Pilates, walking, golf, swimming, badminton, tennis, fencing, bridge, sailing, tai chi and yoga. Hospitality and catering courses include Indian, Thai and Mediterranean cooking, food and cooking for specific events, various wine courses, sugarcraft courses, and a food hygiene certificate at foundation and intermediate levels. The provision takes place at 149 locations including main adult education centres, schools and community centres. The courses are provided during the day, evenings and at weekends. Most courses last for 10 to 12 weeks with some shorter courses in both food studies and sport. Currently 82 per cent of learners are women, 37 per cent are aged 35-54, 48 per cent are over 55, approximately 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, and 12 per cent have an identified disability. There are 199 tutors, of whom 185 have contracts of between 36 hours and 100 hours, and 14 have contracts of between 100 and 200 hours. Tutors are supported by four programme managers, four area programme managers and the curriculum manager for healthy living.

Strengths

- particularly significant improvement in the quality of learners' health, fitness and wellbeing
- high retention rates
- good development of practical skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient assessment, monitoring and recording of individual learning
- low participation by under-represented groups

Achievement and standards

101. Learners make particularly significant improvements in their health, fitness and wellbeing. Learners improve their mobility, flexibility and strength. For example, one older learner, recovering from an operation, has made rapid progress and can now walk unaided. Others sleep better, gain in self-confidence and self-esteem and their social skills improve. Learners develop a good understanding of, and successfully implement in their everyday lives, good relaxation techniques to help manage stress. Some learners on food hygiene courses acquire skills that enhance their earning potential and help them gain better jobs. Learners produce satisfactory standards of work and performance. In the better classes, attainment is good.

102. Retention rates are high. On non-accredited courses retention has improved from 90 per cent in 2002-03 to 92 per cent in 2003-04. Overall retention and achievement are good at 99 per cent on accredited programmes in 2003-04 and 91 per cent respectively.

Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, but in a few learning sessions, attendance is low and some learners turn up late.

103. Learners develop good practical skills. Learners develop good motor skills in fitness and movement and oriental exercise sessions. In yoga, learners are able to progress at their own pace as they develop specific postures and movements. In badminton, learners develop good racquet and game strategy skills. They learn good knife skills in cookery and design skills in sugarcraft. Learners on sugarcraft courses learn in detail about colour, shaping and moulding. In hospitality, learners acquire good research skills using books and the internet.

The quality of provision

104. The planning of teaching and learning is good in hospitality through detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. Tutors provide learners with an appropriate range of activities to meet their individual needs. Where necessary in sport they design alternative, less strenuous activities and exercises for learners who cannot follow standard programmes. Good handouts and teaching materials are used in hospitality to enhance learning. Good use is made of diverse teaching styles and strategies including whole group instruction, demonstration, correction, individual and small group coaching, and independent and peer learning. Some tutors do not ensure that all learners' needs are met. For example, in a few sports classes, feedback and advice is given to the whole group rather than to individual learners. Staff and learners have a satisfactory awareness of health and safety, and hygiene. Individual learners' needs are not always recorded.

105. Pre-course information is satisfactory. Hospitality learners are provided with comprehensive course outlines and lists of items they have to provide themselves. Across the programme, advice materials are provided at most learning centres. A well-designed website gives learners easy access to further information and an opportunity to enrol online. Learners cannot enrol online for programmes requiring detailed initial assessment or guidance.

106. Insufficient assessment, monitoring and recording of individual learning takes place. There is not enough formal initial assessment and planning. Insufficient use is made of health screening. Not enough use is made of individual learning records. Learning goals are not sufficiently specific to learners' individual needs or their progress. A group planning sheet is available, but its design is not adequate to accurately reflect the variety of learning activities carried out by learners.

107. There is insufficient targeting of, and low participation by, under-represented groups. There are not enough food-related or accredited courses in hospitality. Sports courses comprise mainly yoga and keep fit. There is an effective range of provision for older learners and some targeted provision for specific groups, such as sports courses for adults and children. Some progress has been made in recruiting learners with ill health into mainstream programmes through GP referral schemes. However, only 23 learners have enrolled through this process over the past two years. There are not enough specific courses for learners with health issues. A small number of learners have been recruited onto sports schemes designed to widen participation in learning in deprived wards. Learners on some hospitality courses visit wineries and sugarcraft exhibitions.

Leadership and management

108. Managers work effectively to ensure the provision meets the needs of learners and the community. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced, although only 36 per cent have appropriate teaching qualifications. This issue is currently being tackled by the provider. Staff training includes equality of opportunity and disability awareness. Adequate and appropriate accommodation is provided for most courses, but there are not enough venues for catering courses. Health and safety practice is generally satisfactory. Most sports equipment is adequate. However, some tutors provide their own support materials. Storage of sugarcraft materials is poor at two learning centres. Risk assessments are carried out, but are not held by the learning centres. Although there is full compliance with health screening in sports classes, it is not used effectively to support formal initial assessment.

109. Learners understand the equal opportunities policy and learner charter. Equal opportunities is promoted well in cookery. Access is generally good for people with restricted mobility. Tutors do not include equality of opportunity in their planning. However, all learners are dealt with fairly and appropriately.

110. Inspectors generally agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. However, they gave lower grades for teaching and learning than those in the report. Teaching and learning assessments are not used sufficiently to improve the provision. There is not enough sharing of good practice. Data is analysed effectively and used to plan the provision. The service is considering future funding strategies and developing existing partnerships to maintain mainstream provision and target new learners more effectively.

Health, social care & public services   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Complementary health services Adult and community learning	1,265	2

111. Currently 1,265 learners are on health and social care courses, 669 of whom are on accredited programmes. Overall, 295 are on massage courses and 204 are on complementary therapies courses including reflexology, aromatherapy, Reiki and the Alexander technique. There are 192 learners on 47 counselling courses at level 1 to 3 and 189 learners on learning support assistant courses at levels 1 and 2. A range of short courses is also provided including deaf awareness, first aid and a range of personal development programmes. There are specific courses for learners with mental health problems. In addition, 34 learners are enrolled on an national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in early years programmes. Approximately 50 per cent of enrolments are new learners. Currently 13.5 per cent of learners are men and 5.7 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. A range of taster programmes are offered throughout the year. There are two curriculum managers, eight area programmes managers and 21 programme managers managing a team of 67 part-time tutors.

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses in 2003-04

- very good teaching and learning

- good working partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- poor specialist equipment and accommodation for therapies

Achievement and standards

112. Retention and pass rates are high on many accredited and non-accredited courses in 2003-04. Most courses have average retention rates above 90 per cent. A number of courses including first aid, deaf awareness, and introduction to reflexology, have retention rates of 100 per cent. Pass rate on many courses are high. For example, the pass rate in level one learning support for 2003-04 was 94 per cent. On counselling concepts courses, the pass rates were 90 per cent for the same year. Pass rates on basic first aid courses are 100 per cent and on deaf awareness courses are 84 per cent. In the complementary therapies courses, pass rates are satisfactory or better.

113. In courses such as sports massage, learning support assistants and brief therapy, learners acquire skills that enable them to be more effective in their occupational settings. On all courses learners work collaboratively with each other. Where clients are used in a realistic work environment, learners develop good interpersonal skills. For example, in sports massage, learners demonstrate a better understanding of their clients' background and fully understand how to meet their wider needs. Many learners carry out additional learning beyond the requirements of their courses and produce well-researched projects and assignments. Portfolios of evidence are well organised. Written work is of a

satisfactory standard, and some of it is particularly good.

The quality of provision

114. Teaching and learning are very good. Of those lessons observed by inspectors, 20 per cent were graded as outstanding and over 80 per cent as good or better. Tutors make very effective use of a variety of relevant and challenging learning activities. For example, in one counselling class, learners develop a thorough understanding of Freud's ideas through a free association exercise. Learners have good working relationships with tutors who negotiate learning outcomes and adapt their plans to meet individual needs. For example, a tutor was able to reassure and reduce the anxiety of a group of learners with mental health needs. Tutors relate background knowledge to its use in a practical setting enabling learners to understand theory more easily. Tutors ensure that learners fully understand what they have learnt before moving on to the next activity or topic. Learners are able to improve their work through the regular oral and written feedback they receive from tutors. Tutors are occupationally competent and most are current practitioners with relevant teaching qualifications. Over 90 per cent hold a current teaching qualification.

115. Working partnerships with local voluntary and statutory organisations are good. Courses are targeted to meet the needs of the local communities and widen participation. For example, the programme includes a course for learners with mental health needs, a confidence building course, a programme for young care leavers, and an NVQ in early years, supported by local nurseries. In one area, complementary therapy coffee mornings have attracted new learners who have subsequently attended short programmes in Indian head massage and reflexology. Progression routes are satisfactory in courses for counselling, learning support assistants (levels 1-3) and complementary therapies, with approximately 25 per cent of learners progressing to higher level programmes. Taster course in the holistic therapies and counselling are offered to help learners decide whether to enrol on accredited courses. Learners on holistic therapies courses who have already qualified at level 3 can progress to Swedish massage or sports massage qualifications.

116. Assessment procedures are thorough and supported by effective systems to monitor learners' progress. Internal verification is satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate guidance and are able to practise for examinations. Most tutors provide comprehensive written and verbal feedback to help learners improve. Initial assessment and induction is suitable for the course requirements. For example, learners on deaf awareness programmes are asked about their previous experience of working with hearing impaired clients or of BSL.

117. Learners can get support with childcare, transport, course fees and equipment. Pre-course guidance information is reinforced at pre-course meetings. Many tutors provide individual tutorials for learners and there are planned visits from guidance advisers. In the holistic therapy courses, tutors monitor and reinforce safe working practices. In counselling, massage and first aid, tutors give clear directions to help learners to look after themselves.

118. Accommodation and specialist equipment for therapies is poor. Some rooms are too cold for learners to work on external clients. There are not enough screens to ensure clients' privacy during massage sessions. Facilities, such as toilets, are not always adequate. The provider is working to rectify these issues. Many buildings have improved access for learners with restricted mobility. Where there are no lifts, classes take place in rooms on

the ground floor. Where learners disclose a disability or learning need, appropriate arrangements are made for their support, such as adaptations to palettes that hold aromatherapy oils for learners with visual impairments, and modified handouts for learners with dyslexia. In one learning centre, learners are provided with a useful study guide for counselling concepts. Learning materials reflect diversity and include anti-discriminatory practice where relevant.

Leadership and management

119. Managers work well to improve the provision and give priority to improving teaching and learning. Managers are set specific targets to reduce the number of cancellations and increase the number of accredited courses. Targets for achievement are being introduced from August 2005. Professional development opportunities tackle generic issues such as equality of opportunity. However, staff are required to maintain their own continuous professional development.

120. The lesson observations scheme, learner evaluations and course reviews are generally thorough and are used to aid the self-assessment process and implement improvements. Staff fully understand the self-assessment process and how to communicate their views to managers. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, but failed to recognise the importance of poor accommodation and resources for the therapies.

121. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Tutors do not have sufficient opportunity to meet and share good teaching practice, particularly when working in small learning centres or outreach provision. Where tutors share good practice locally this is not shared across the whole provision. Managers are devising ways to rectify this, to standardise teaching, and to increase tutor support across the programmes. For example, curriculum guides for tutors and learners and a mentoring system for new tutors are planned, but are not yet in place.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts Adult and community learning	5,320	2

122. There are currently 5,320 learners on 492 accredited and 718 non-accredited courses, ranging from one-day taster workshops to 10- and 30-week courses. Courses are offered at levels 1-3 and entry level in arts and crafts. All non-accredited courses are in art and crafts, and performing arts and music. The courses are provided at a range of learning centres and venues across the county. There are 243 part-time tutors, eight programmes managers, four regional programme managers, and one curriculum manager.

Strengths

- high standards of work
- very good teaching and learning
- very good range of inclusive activities
- strong curriculum leadership

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording of learners' progress
- inappropriate data to monitor performance

Achievement and standards

123. Learners' work is of a high standard. In calligraphy courses, learners produce outstanding work, such as particularly detailed miniatures and large wall hangings, with good use of illustration and typography, colour and pattern. In embroidery courses, learners fully explore and use a wide range of materials and methods of construction. In pottery courses, learners develop the confidence to produce detailed and technical large-scale ceramics pieces. In botanical drawing courses, learners create particularly detailed illustrations based on fresh flower displays. In painting courses, learners draw their inspiration from poetry to complete their watercolours. Learners enjoy their chosen courses, and make good progress and learn new skills. They explore advanced techniques, such as faux chenille in patchwork, and scrafitto in a mixed-media learning session. One learner has received a commission for private work using her newly acquired skills in soft furnishings. Another learner has had a print short-listed for a national print exhibition. Performing arts learners produce choral work of a high standard, demonstrating confident use of harmony and rhythm. In stained glass classes, learners make very detailed pieces of work. Learners in silversmith and jewellery classes produce very well-designed and technically proficient products. Some learners' work is not sufficiently celebrated.

124. Many learners progress from their courses to further education. For example, learners on a life drawing class are using their work to prepare a folder to support their application. Attendance is satisfactory on most courses.

The quality of provision

125. Teaching and learning are very good and learning sessions are well planned. Tutors in art classes provide some excellent course materials for learners. At one learning centre, a tutor keeps a comprehensive scrapbook of learners' experiences and a sketchbook of a range of different watercolour paintings. Tutors in craft classes use a range of innovative learning activities. In one patchwork and quilt course, the tutor designed a particularly effective project to improve learners' self-confidence, teamwork and technical skills. Craft learners use techniques of a professional standard in their jewellery and stained glass products. Tutors provide very good individual coaching. Discussions and group critiques include important contextual information. Tutors' relevant industrial experience and skills enable them to provide useful guidance for learners at all levels. Tutors develop particularly good working relationships with learners.

126. Tutors provide a very good range of inclusive course activities for beginners and more experienced learners. Learners attending the same course for a number of years are challenged by progressively more difficult projects. All learners participate in planned trips to many exhibitions and places such as Kew Gardens. Their work is celebrated well at a number of venues. Through effective partnerships, learners are able to exhibit in local galleries. Tutors provide excellent resource materials for learners.

127. Measures are in place to widen participation by specific learner groups, such as the introduction of courses in new media and outreach courses with travellers and family learning. Although new learners are enrolling on courses, there are still many under-represented groups.

128. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory. There are some specialist studios and workshops in the adult education centres. Some of this has been improved to allow better access, such as a lift in one adult education centre. However, some sites have poor access for people with restricted mobility.

129. Learners' progress is insufficiently recorded. Learners do not take notes during tutor demonstrations or record their own progress. Generic forms, such as individual learning plans and progress sheets, are not sufficiently detailed. Learners do not understand how to identify and monitor their own progress. Many do not have evidence of their own progress. On many accredited courses there is not enough evidence of learners' progress to link it to assessment criteria.

130. Learner support is satisfactory. Tutors fully understand individual learners' needs and provide good support during learning sessions. Initial guidance provides learners with sufficient detail to choose an appropriate course. A website allows learners to enrol online. All learners receive a satisfactory induction. Specialist equipment is available such as adjustable tables for wheelchair users, to accommodate learners with special needs.

Leadership and management

131. Curriculum leadership is strong and there is clear direction for the development of the programme. All managers fully understand the strategic vision of the service and its overall targets. Within the programme there are good strategies for developing the curriculum and for recruiting new learners and minority ethnic groups. In addition, measures are in place

to reduce the number of cancelled classes, to understand the challenges facing the curriculum area through new funding arrangements and to enable part-time staff to attend regular meetings.

132. Operational management is satisfactory. Communications between managers, staff and learners are effective. The course timetable operates effectively and few classes are cancelled. Resources are well managed with a programme of rebuilding and refurbishment. Some learners do not know that their course is accredited.

133. Data is not available in a suitable format to monitor performance. Detailed course data is not collected consistently or presented clearly. Staff are unable to assess learners' progress and achievement on individual courses. Local managers have access to progression data, but this is not collated centrally.

134. Staff have a good understanding of health and safety issues and provide adequate instruction for learners in the safe use of materials and equipment. Some tutors do not carry out risk assessments. Training for all staff on equality, diversity and disability is satisfactory.

135. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Teaching and learning observations are detailed and reflect many aspects found on inspection. However, they do not contain sufficient detail on learners' work. Internal moderation is satisfactory. Course reviews are completed well, but are not used effectively to produce the self-assessment report. Learner evaluations are completed, but many are poorly detailed. The self-assessment report is self-critical and detailed, but inspectors found additional weaknesses and judged some of the strengths to be no more than normal practice.

Humanities   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
Adult and community learning	1,535	3

136. There are currently 1,535 learners on a total of 174 humanities courses, of which 63 are accredited and comprise psychology and law at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), AS, A Level and OCN accreditation. The remaining 111 non-accredited courses include family and natural history, philosophy, and appreciation of architecture. Some courses are delivered in partnership with a local university. Courses take place in the daytime and in the evening at 45 venues, including community venues, and the provider's own main and local learning centres. Currently, 80 per cent of learners are women, 1 per cent is from minority ethnic groups, 9 per cent are aged 30-39 and 46 per cent are over 60. Approximately 9 per cent of learners have an identified disability. Overall, 659 of the current learners are new enrolments. There are 88 part-time tutors and the programme is led by the curriculum manager for career and personal development.

Strengths

- high levels of attainment in many classes
- good retention and pass rates in AS law and GCSE psychology

Weaknesses

- low attendance on many courses
- insufficient quality improvement at course level

Achievement and standards

137. Attainment is high in many classes. Achievement of skills by learners is particularly good. Learners demonstrate relevant analytical, research and communication skills, and make appropriate use of technical terms and vocabulary. Written work is of a high standard. In one AS psychology revision class, learners worked effectively in small groups to discuss an examination question on cognitive psychology. Many learners on non-accredited classes achieve good skills. For example, in one class learners made very good use of their learning from previous weeks to accurately assess architectural changes in local buildings. Learners also improve in self-confidence during their courses. For example, one learner developed the skills to confidently give evidence in court.

138. Overall retention and pass rates are satisfactory. On accredited courses, retention and achievement rates have improved from 51 per cent and 48 per cent in 2002-03, to 71 per cent and 77 per cent in 2003-04. Retention rates on non-accredited courses have remained stable between 2002 and 2004 at 92 per cent. In AS law, retention and pass rates have improved from 33 per cent and 65 per cent in 2002-03, to 66 per cent and 73 per cent respectively in 2003-04. In GCSE psychology, retention and pass rates have improved from 45 per cent and 30 per cent in 2002-03 to 60 per cent and 75 per cent respectively in 2003-04. Attendance is low on many courses. Overall attendance in observed classes was 49 per cent.

The quality of provision

139. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Tutors develop good working relationships with learners and provide relevant academic support during lessons. They encourage interaction between learners through group activities, and learners support their peers in developing understanding and skills. On a family history course, learners used the internet to research and analyse a range of relevant websites with census records of births, deaths and marriages. In a GCSE psychology learning session, the tutor helped learners to find additional volunteers to participate in an experiment. Tutors provide satisfactory learning materials. Law learners were encouraged to revise effectively through a series of relevant crosswords prepared by the tutor.

140. Accommodation is satisfactory. All learning centres are appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained, and provide adequate access for people with restricted mobility. Teaching and learning resources meet learners' needs. Tutor requests for additional learning resources are dealt with promptly and effectively. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced.

141. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Pre-course interviews are used to identify if a learner has sufficient prior experience and knowledge to complete the course. However, in GCSE psychology, learners do not fully understand the course requirements. On accredited courses, learners are set assignments and are provided with appropriate written feedback. Progress is monitored adequately through group and individual activities, such as games and presentations by learners. On non-accredited courses, progress is checked through individual questioning and group activities. Individual learner records are satisfactory. Learners self-assess their progress against the course learning outcomes, and their assessments are verified by tutors.

142. The standard learner induction process is applied consistently by staff. Learners on accredited courses know how to access study support in their learning centre. Personal and pastoral support is available in most adult learning centres. Satisfactory additional learning support for language, literacy, and numeracy is provided by the skills for life team, either on-course or in drop-in centres. For example, additional support for a learner who speaks English as an additional language and a full assessment of a learner with dyslexia were provided.

Leadership and management

143. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The area of learning was re-structured in November 2004 and a thorough review of the programme and procedures has taken place. Strong initiatives taken to improve the provision have not yet had a significant impact on teaching and learning. The grouping of several areas of learning under the direction of one manager has strengthened cross-curriculum links. Data is used effectively by curriculum managers to monitor the provision, aid planning and implement improvements. Area development workers liaise well with humanities managers to develop specific courses to meet identified needs. Tutors have received training on equality and diversity in the classroom.

144. There are insufficient measures to improve the quality of individual courses. There is no standard course paperwork used for course outlines, lesson plans or tutor evaluations.

In many lessons, evaluations either do not take place or are not sufficiently detailed. Many lessons do not have specific and measurable learning goals. In the better lessons, tutors critically analyse the teaching and learning, and identify appropriate action to implement improvements. There are no measures to ensure that the provision meets the needs of learners and the local community. Many courses have had low enrolment numbers and have been cancelled. Insufficient sharing of good practice takes place between tutors within their subject area across the county. Insufficient subject-specialist tutor training is provided. Registers are not regularly updated to provide an accurate picture of the provision.

145. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths, but inspectors identified additional weaknesses.

English, languages & communications   Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages Adult and community learning	6,531	4

146. There are currently 6,531 learners on accredited and non-accredited courses in English and creative writing, BSL and modern foreign languages. Most of the language provision is in French, Spanish, German and Italian, with a small number of courses in Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, Greek and Portuguese. Courses take place throughout the day in a large number of learning centres throughout Kent. Long and short courses are available and a number of taster courses are also provided. Provision in French, Spanish and German is offered at seven levels to cater for people beginning the language through to advanced learners. The service also provides courses targeted at specific learners, such as Spanish for primary school teachers and French for homeowners. Courses take place in the daytime and in the evening with some weekend provision. Classes in languages are offered throughout the county in over 55 learning centres. Just over half of the courses are accredited. Twenty-two per cent of learners are male, approximately 8 per cent have a disability, and about 5 per cent are from minority ethnic communities. Classes are taught by 196 tutors.

Strengths

- high levels of attainment in many classes
- particularly good range of provision in Spanish, Italian, German, French

Weaknesses

- poor retention on many higher level courses in modern foreign languages
- much poor teaching and learning in modern foreign languages and BSL
- ineffective quality improvement

Achievement and standards

147. Attainment is high on many courses, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Many learners in creative writing classes have had work published. Learners develop good analytical skills. In English, learners produce good standards of work. In modern foreign languages, learners use their skills creatively in a variety of practical contexts ranging from simple transactions, such as buying food or booking in to a hotel, to more complex uses such as buying a house and general conversation. Some courses provide a range of additional enrichment activities that enable learners to meet and interact with native speakers in natural contexts, for example, through exchanges. Comprehension skills are greatly enhanced by visits to the cinema, restaurants and concerts, as well as hearing the language used in class. In a BSL class, visitors were invited to give learners experience of different dialects. Other learners are performing at a level consistent with their time on their chosen programme.

148. Retention rates are poor on many higher level courses in modern foreign languages, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. For example, in French and Spanish level

3 courses some classes retained no learners and were cancelled while on other classes, all learners continued to attend their courses.

The quality of provision

149. There is a particularly good range of provision in Spanish, Italian, German and French. In these languages, seven stages of learning are available to enable learners to progress from beginner to very advanced levels. Progression routes are generally good. However, learners on some BSL courses do not have sufficient opportunity to progress to more advanced provision. Learners can participate in tasters or short courses in a range of less commonly taught languages before enrolling on level 1 courses. Classes are offered in the daytime and in the evenings, and there is some weekend provision. There is a satisfactory range of accredited and non-accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. The service also provides specifically targeted provision such as Spanish for primary school teachers, French for second-home owners and family learning.

150. Much of the teaching and learning is poor on modern foreign language and BSL courses, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. In poorer classes there are insufficient use of the target language to help learners develop their comprehension skills. Learners' mistakes are not routinely corrected. In some language classes, grammatical explanations in English are too complex. Learning activities do not help learners understand and apply basic principles. There is insufficient differentiation. Learners work through a series of simple exercises that do not allow them to use the target language creatively. Feedback to learners is inadequate and targets are not set. Nineteen per cent of tutors in BSL and modern foreign languages have no formal qualification in their subject or in teaching.

151. Resources are satisfactory. Most tutors have access to video and audio aids, photocopying facilities and some shared teaching resources. Most learning centres have refreshment facilities and parking on site or nearby. Some facilities are not available when courses are running. Initial advice and guidance for new learners is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

152. Quality improvement is ineffective. The service has an established system of teaching and learning assessments conducted on a four-year cycle with more frequent observations for new staff. The assessments are not always conducted by subject specialists and are not sufficiently evaluative. Action points and grades awarded to learning sessions do not always reflect the feedback provided. For example, where weaknesses are identified, tutors are graded as outstanding and not given appropriate action points. Language levels are not clearly defined. For example, a level 5 French course was seen operating at a much higher level than a level 5, 6 or 7 French course. There is insufficient subject-specific staff development. The service has introduced an assessment tool for tutors to assess the effectiveness of non-accredited learning, but this is not always used appropriately. Feedback is collected from learners, but is not always sufficiently detailed to lead to improvement. A very good tutor handbook has been produced and distributed, but this is not always used well by tutors. Many tutors are unaware of the information in the handbook. Some good initiatives, such as the series of taster courses for less commonly taught languages, do not have immediate follow through into level 1 courses. Data is collected, but there is insufficient analysis of it to improve the provision.

153. Learners are treated appropriately and individual needs are met. However, equality and diversity are not always promoted well during learning sessions. Some courses are not promoted effectively to other relevant learner groups. In English, there is poor identification of learning support needs for some learners. There is a mechanism to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs, and tutors refer learners to guidance services if a need is identified.

154. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths found by inspectors. However, inspectors found some of the strengths to be weaknesses. For example, the teaching and learning assessments were found to be inaccurate and did not focus sufficiently on improving the provision.

Foundation programmes   **Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		*4*
Adult and community learning	2,785	4
Literacy and numeracy		*3*
Adult and community learning	2,141	3
Independent living and leisure skills		*4*
Adult and community learning	1,149	4

155. Currently 2,785 learners are enrolled on 244 ESOL courses. The courses are provided from entry level to level 2 in 25 venues across the county including adult education centres, employer premises and refugee assessment centres. Courses are part time and take place during the daytime and in the evening. Most courses run for between two and six hours a week over 30 weeks. Learners can enrol on more than one course. Fifty per cent of learners are women. The ESOL provision is managed by the skills for life team. The area programme manager for East Kent has a county-wide curriculum responsibility for ESOL. Programme managers in each area are responsible for ESOL, along with other skills for life provision. Courses are taught by 61 part-time tutors.

156. Currently 2,141 learners are enrolled on 120 literacy and numeracy courses. Five courses are supported by other funding streams. Most courses run for two and a half hours a week for 36 weeks. Courses are provided at 40 main sites including flexible learning centres, which are open all year, and other community locations across the county. Most courses are accredited. Eight learners receive additional support.   Eleven per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, 32 per cent are men and 43 per cent have a declared disability. Learners take entry level qualifications or national tests at levels 1 and 2. Five full-time equivalent salaried staff and 60 hourly paid tutors teach on the programme. A curriculum manager leads the development of literacy and numeracy across the county. Four area programme managers, four full-time and one part-time programme managers support the programme.

157. There are currently a range of part-time pre-entry courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are available in the morning, afternoon and evening. Courses range in length from 12 hours to 75 hours and cover subjects from yoga to IT including physical, creative, health, personal and skills for life programmes. There is a wide range of opportunities for accredited learning. The learners are taught in small groups with support. There are currently 1,149 learners attending 135 courses.

ESOL   *Grade 4*

Strengths

- wide range of programmes
- particularly good response to the introduction of new qualifications

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching and learning
- inadequate review of learner progress
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

158. Achievement on accredited programmes is very good at 96 per cent in 2003-04 and 91 per cent in 2004-05 to date. However, this represents only a small number of learners. New exams in ESOL have been introduced for the current year. Most learners make satisfactory gains in self-confidence and some communicate orally at a high level. In an ESOL and IT class, learners at entry level use the target language to understand and send e-mails. In a speaking skills class, learners achieve good levels of accuracy and fluency.

The quality of provision

159. The service provides a wide range of programmes to meet learner and community needs. Classes are taught in learning centres across the county in the daytime and evening. Courses offered at different levels in the main learning centres provide progression opportunities. Learners can also learn the language in the context of other skills such as cookery, IT, art and citizenship. Additional funding is used well to provide specific courses for employees and to meet the needs of specific communities. Currently, approximately 50 per cent of learners are working towards the new ESOL qualifications.

160. A satisfactory range of printed materials and audio resources are available at the main learning centres. Skills for life materials are used well in many classes to provide relevant contexts for learning. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, accessible to people with restricted mobility, and provides an appropriate learning environment for adults. Learners have access to cafés and social areas. Most tutors have a specialist initial qualification and have completed core curriculum training. Tutors fully understand the needs of adult learners from a wide range of backgrounds.

161. Learners receive satisfactory advice and guidance to enrol on appropriate programmes. Some learners receive specialist advice on progression routes from guidance staff. Learners have access to learner support funds to pay for childcare and to buy dictionaries. Attendance is satisfactory and is monitored effectively by tutors and managers.

162. In the better learning sessions, tutors carefully plan to meet individual and group needs. They use appropriate teaching methods to develop learners' language skills and provide opportunities to practise language in relevant contexts. For example, learners in one lesson developed the language they needed to comment on how to reduce the risks of road accidents in towns. Recently arrived asylum seekers learn essential language enabling them to introduce themselves and express basic requests.

163. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Tutors do not use an appropriate range of teaching methods to develop learners' language skills. Learners often work their way through pages of a course book and complete exercises that do not provide an appropriate context for their learning. Information from initial assessment and interview is not recorded

in sufficient detail to help tutors identify learners' prior learning and experience. Diagnostic assessments are not used sufficiently to identify learners' needs or to plan appropriate learning programmes. Tasks are not differentiated to meet the individual needs of learners. Most able learners are not provided with sufficiently challenging learning activities to extend their current skills. These learners often find the work easy and complete tasks quickly. Lesson plans frequently list a series of activities rather than the intended learning outcomes.

164. Progress reviews do not identify clearly what learners need to do to improve. Targets are frequently expressed as a specific language point and do not take account of learners' interests and aspirations or the context in which they want to use language. The individual learning plan is not an effective tool to record learners' progress and is mainly a record of work completed by the whole class. Learners' evaluations of their progress are not regularly discussed or based on feedback from tutors.

Leadership and management

165. The service has responded particularly well to the introduction of new qualifications for learners. Fifty of the 61 tutors have received training to teach the qualifications and 1,445 learners are entered for the examinations this academic term. Tutors have worked very effectively to prepare learners for the exams at short notice, often giving their own time to provide suitable support.

166. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The service has developed courses that meet the needs of particular groups and communities, such as retired Ghurkha families, asylum seekers and hospital workers. In most lessons, the prior experience and cultural background of learners is referred to appropriately by tutors and other learners. Information to publicise courses and support induction is not available in other languages, apart from the learner charter produced three years ago.

167. The service does not sufficiently monitor its teaching and learning. Observations of teaching and learning are not carried out sufficiently frequently to support quality improvement. The service has not identified the extent of unsatisfactory teaching and learning found by inspectors. Course reviews are not systematically used to evaluate programmes across the county. Data is not available in an appropriate format to enable managers to monitor retention. The self-assessment report does not identify the key weaknesses found by inspectors.

Literacy and numeracy *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good achievement on accredited courses
- wide range of provision
- good initial guidance and assessment

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory recording of learners' progress against targets
- insufficient specialist resources
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of the provision

Achievement and standards

168. Achievement on accredited courses is good. Eighty-seven per cent of learners who entered for national tests in 2003-04 achieved their qualification. Eighty-five per cent of those learners entered in 2005 have also achieved their qualification. Pass rates for entry level certificates were 100 per cent in 2003-04. Learners at levels 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in reading more difficult texts, writing in different formats and in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Learners on numeracy courses improve their ability to apply the four rules of number, and to understand graphs and charts. At entry level, most learners make steady progress and some improve their skills substantially. One learner aged 50 who had attended entry level 1 courses for many years, through working with a new tutor, learnt to read and spell for the first time in his life. Another learner attending a flexible learning centre became a confident, capable, independent learner at level 2.

The quality of provision

169. The service provides a wide range of accredited provision from entry level to level 2. It has responded effectively to the challenge of developing skills for life flexible learning centres. Five of these are already operating, with a further seven being developed to cater mainly for learners taking national test qualifications at levels 1 and 2. Learners make good use of the group support and activities available on courses in the main learning centres and community locations. The service has productive partnerships with library, youth and community services and employers. External funding is used well to support short introductory programmes that have recently attracted 355 new learners.

170. Arrangements for initial guidance and assessment are good. Learners have very good access to information through a widely advertised central telephone number. Interviews, assessment and induction sessions are offered at set times during the year in the main learning centres. Flexible learning centres provide interview and assessment arrangements immediately or by appointment. Appointments are arranged promptly at other learning centres throughout the year. Most assessments effectively identify learners' skills and needs. However, although 43 per cent of learners have a declared disability, only eight receive additional support.

171. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The better teaching is carefully planned in small steps, with clear individual outcomes that are fully understood by learners. Good literacy teaching includes structured spelling programmes for learners to practise regularly at home. Learners work on programmes with real-life tasks and a good mix of joint and individual work. In better numeracy lessons, learners apply mathematical concepts to practical tasks such as planning journeys using local maps and timetables. However, teaching is inadequate where tutors introduce too much information at once for learners to understand and do not provide enough practice activities. Tutors do not always fully understand the learning materials used and give inappropriate directions or incorrect explanations. In some lessons, learners spend most of their time completing worksheets and are not given activities to transfer the skills they learn to real-life situations. In others, they complete exercises without understanding the context in which an acquired skill can be used.

172. Recording of learners' progress against targets is unsatisfactory. Individual targets are often not focused or achievable within the given time frame. They are phrased as activities

rather than outcomes, as the main qualification aim only, or in the difficult language of the core curriculum. Progress is not recorded in sufficient detail for learners to know exactly what they need to do to improve. However, recording is good in most flexible learning centres.

Leadership and management

173. Most staff have attended disability awareness training and coloured filters and paper are used to cater for the needs of learners with dyslexia. There is sufficient specialist equipment for learners with visual impairment in most main and flexible learning centres. Access for learners with restricted mobility is good. Data on participation and achievement are analysed by race and gender, but there is insufficient promotion of equality issues within the curriculum.

174. The service has insufficient specialist literacy and numeracy resources. Many staff, including some managers of the new flexible learning centres, do not have appropriate specialist qualifications or expertise. Thirty per cent of staff have not yet attended core curriculum training. There is not enough training on specific teaching strategies. Volunteers, learning support assistants and many unqualified staff do not get sufficient mentoring, induction or training. The very good practice in some parts of the service is not sufficiently shared. However, regular informal teaching observations, frequent contacts, mentoring and shadowing are used to develop new tutors' skills. There is an inadequate range of learning materials in many community locations with poor access to IT. Learning resources are generally good in flexible learning centres, where learners have excellent access to ICT in modern accommodation, but they do not have enough practical numeracy equipment for measures, shapes and space. ICT resources are satisfactory in many main learning centres which also hold collections of good learning materials.

175. The service does not sufficiently monitor the quality of the provision. Teaching and learning assessments do not take place sufficiently frequently and grades awarded are often too high. Quality improvement strategies are inconsistently applied across the four geographical areas. Data to support quality improvement is not always reliable. Managers do not have adequate access to management information data on literacy and numeracy or on learners' progression to higher courses. The self-assessment report does not identify many weaknesses and overstates some strengths of the provision. However, some experienced managers have started action to address weaknesses.

Independent living and leisure skills **Grade 4**

Strengths

- good development of social skills and confidence
- wide range of programme choices
- wide range of accreditation opportunities

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching and learning strategies
- inadequate initial assessment
- ineffective use of care staff

- ineffective management of supported learning

Achievement and standards

176. Learners make good progress in developing their social skills and confidence. They are fully involved in the learning activities and develop good confidence with their communication and social skills. Learners are encouraged to express their views and improve their speaking and listening skills. They fully understand the practical activities and are aware of safe working practices. They know where to go for help and advice. In art and craft sessions learners produce very individual designs, and in healthy living classes they join in enthusiastically with guided relaxation and movement to music.

177. Many learners are repeating programmes over several years and often do not fully understand what they are learning. They are not provided with a clear starting point from which to monitor their progress.

The quality of provision

178. Learners have a wide range of programme and subject choices. They are able to try out many different learning activities including yoga, IT, physical, creative, health, personal and skills for life programmes. Courses are taught by subject specialists who use their detailed knowledge of the curriculum area to help learners develop specialist skills. There are excellent working relationships between staff and learners.

179. In addition to non-accredited provision, there are many opportunities for learners to gain externally accreditation in adult literacy, a certificate of achievement for older learners, and the first aid at work certificate. The use of flexible assessment criteria allows learners to gain accreditation as they progress at their own pace.

180. Tutors use a narrow range of teaching and learning strategies. There is insufficient differentiation in the approaches used to suit individual learning needs. Individual learning styles are not assessed or referred to when developing lesson plans and personal learning records. The individual needs of the more able learners and learners with specific learning difficulties are not met. There is not enough information about learners with more complex learning and support needs. There is too much use of worksheets and teacher-led activities. Resources are not appropriate for adults. Many are poorly produced and some are inappropriate. Tutors do not use an adequate range of source materials and pictures of objects are generally used in place of the objects themselves. There is too much cutting, pasting and colouring, and learners are not sufficiently challenged to extend their skills. Not all learners are adequately engaged or motivated. Some tutors produce poor visual aids that include spelling mistakes and write poorly on whiteboards.

181. Tutors do not make adequate use of initial assessment information to assess individual learning needs. Many tutors do not have sufficient relevant information on their learners and are unable to meet a wider range of learners' individual needs. The information from initial assessment is not always passed from programme manager to tutor. Assessment information is passed informally between old and new tutors but no clear starting points for the new tutor are identified. There are very few risk assessments and no learning support plans. Some learners appear on courses with no advance notice given to tutors.

182. Learning goals are not defined precisely in personal learning records or lesson plans.

Learners are not clear about what they are supposed to be learning or why. The records of their learning consist largely of a list of activities to be carried out, rather than the skills to be learnt. Records of learners' progress reviews are poor. Many learners have been attending the same or similar courses for several years and are often not clear about what they are actually learning.

183. Tutors do not use care staff effectively. Relevant information on learners is not always passed to tutors by care staff. Information held by care workers about individual learners and their particular needs is not used to plan learning activities. Care staff occasionally complete tasks on behalf of the learner rather than providing support to help the learner complete the task themselves.

Leadership and management

184. Management of supported learning is ineffective. There is insufficient consistent practice to assure the quality of key aspects of the learners' progression. Pre-entry arrangements, publicity and arrangements for initial assessment are not of a consistent standard across the county. Many staff do not use the pre-entry curriculum framework or have attended the pre-entry curriculum training programme. Developments in applying the system to identify and record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning are not clearly understood by staff, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Staff are insufficiently clear about how principles of inclusion apply to their learners. Progression routes are poorly planned. There are no regular team meetings for support staff to share ideas and good practice.

185. There is insufficient staff awareness of disability issues. Inappropriate language is used in classrooms and is included in some marketing materials. Many of the marketing materials produced are too difficult for most learners to read.

186. The quality improvement strategy is not systematically applied or informed by the views of all relevant parties. The self-assessment report identifies some of the strengths, but does not identify several of the key weaknesses.

Family learning   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		_3_
Adult and community learning	3,096	3

187. Family learning includes literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) and a varied programme of vocational programmes for parents in creative skills, healthy living and career and personal development. In 2004-05, 4,924 learners have attended 680 courses. There are currently 3,096 learners on 316 wider family learning and FLLN courses. Courses take place during the day, in the evening and at weekends, and last from five to 30 weeks with some taster courses also provided. Course are held in schools, community centres, libraries, adult education centres and other community-based venues. FLLN programmes are delivered in schools and devised by specialist tutor organisers who support a team of tutors. The needs for wider family learning are identified by district community learning managers working closely with schools and community groups. There is an unfilled vacancy for the post of FLLN programme manager. The overall provision is led by one of the curriculum managers.

Adult and community learning   _Grade 3_

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and self-confidence
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor progression
- insufficient planning and co-ordination of family learning

Achievement and standards

188. Learners develop a good range of new skills and gain confidence in their abilities. Learners develop appropriate skills to analyse their own learning and progress. Their social skills improve and learners work effectively with their own and other children and other adult learners. Learners on the FLLN programmes acquire a good understanding of the school curriculum, and are able to support their children effectively with their learning and homework. Learners on parenting programmes develop good behaviour management skills. ESOL learners develop their language skills and improve their knowledge and use of relevant, appropriate vocabulary. Learners are fully aware of their own progress. For example, learners on a parenting programme can identify how their behaviour management skills have helped them with their children. Learners on creative skills courses confidently experiment with design, colour and texture to produce good artwork. For example in one Saturday pottery class, learners, most whom had never attended a pottery class before, worked to a target of making six pottery pieces by the end of the session. Parents and children in the class worked well together, and by the end of the session, all learners met the target and produced clay pieces for their home and for gifts.

189. Progression to other courses is poor. Between August 2004 and April 2005, only 101 learners out of a total of nearly 5,000 are recorded as progressing from family learning courses into other provision. Learners on short courses do not have adequate access to progression routes to enable them to move onto more advanced provision. Very few courses currently available are accredited.

The quality of provision

190. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan well for sessions and make good use of appropriate learning materials and resources to promote learning. Some tutors set individual learning outcomes for learners. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced and fully understand the needs of learners and the local communities. Tutors make good use of a range of teaching techniques. For example, in many lessons tutors regularly ask questions to encourage learners to think and reflect on their learning. In creative skills and healthy living sessions, tutors set standards by using practical demonstrations supported by clear explanations to teach learners new skills. Independent learning is encouraged through discussion and group work. Some lessons are particularly well resourced. For example, in a Chinese cookery class, all the ingredients and equipment were provided for the learners who were able to take home the meals they had made during the session. Tutors have a good knowledge of the individual progress of their learners although this information is not always recorded. Some tutors have developed their own methods to record progress. Initial assessment is satisfactory and appropriate to learners' needs.

191. The current range of provision meets the needs of learners and the local communities. There are effective working partnerships with a wide range of organisations. Family learning is used by the service as part of a wider community development strategy to widen participation. Family learning is promoted through all the curriculum areas. Staff work well with family liaison officers to plan the provision. For example, in creative skills, a specific course is provided to meet young people's interest in music. Team-building skills are taught on the adult family courses and family massage is taught on courses involving babies. The provision takes place in appropriate, accessible community venues. The provider analyses requests for specific courses and promotes its range of courses well to outside organisations. Some courses are over subscribed.

192. Learner support and guidance are satisfactory. Tutors fully understand their learners' needs and progress. Tutors ensure that progression routes are promoted well during learning sessions. One tutor keeps a record of the guidance given to learners. For example, if a learner receives information about a new course, the details and dates are recorded on guidance form.

Leadership and management

193. There is insufficient planning and co-ordination of family learning. There is no clear strategic leadership of the programme. The provider has plans to remedy this. A draft community development strategy incorporates aspects of family learning, but there is no separate strategy for family learning which has clearly stated aims and measurable objectives. Many staff are new to their posts. Some tutors do not fully understand the line management arrangements for family learning. Data held centrally on family learning courses and learner numbers does not fully match that held locally. Data on family learning is not used sufficiently to carry out strategic planning and management of programmes.

There are no clear links between the provision made by different curriculum areas within which family learning is located.

194. The programme is very successful in engaging new learners in hard-to-reach communities. Over 80 per cent of the learners who have attended course in 2004-05 are new to adult learning. Over 40 per cent are men and over 4 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

195. Quality improvement activities are not sufficiently systematic across the provision. Some tutors carry out course reviews, but do not know how the information provided is used for planning and development. Most arrangements with schools and other partner organisations work effectively, but are based on informal agreements. Moderation reports are collated, but there is no clear mechanism for moderation reports to aid improvement strategies. A small number of courses are accredited. During 2003-04, 136 learners registered for accreditation and 110 received certificates. Some Keeping up with the Children courses are offered with accreditation, but others are not. There are no arrangements to enable tutors on non-accredited courses to offer their learners the option of having their learning accredited.

196. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the strengths and some of the weaknesses identified by inspectors. It does not give sufficient weight to rectifying the weaknesses in overall management and co-ordination of the programme.