

REINSPECTION REPORT

City of Sunderland Council Reinspection

18 January 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

City of Sunderland Council Reinspection

Contents

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	7

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. City of Sunderland Council (City Council) has a range of provision in training and education, including two work-based learning providers that have also been inspected within the past three years. City Council is responsible for adult and community learning and a large programme of work-based learning for workers in care homes in the Tyne and Wear area. Since August 2004, all of this provision has been included in a single contract with the Learning and Skills Council. The 2004 inspection included the adult and community learning and the care sector provision. The adult and community learning provision is managed by the assistant head of service participation. This person is a member of the standards and quality service, and reports to the head of standards and quality, who in turn reports to the director of education. The assistant head of service participation has a deputy who is supported by project officers. Since the inspection, an additional project officer has been appointed with responsibility for hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. All of the provision is subcontracted.

2. Sunderland has high levels of deprivation, with 39 per cent of the population living in wards which fall within the most deprived 10 per cent in England. At 2.8 per cent, unemployment in Sunderland is higher than the national average of 2.1 per cent. The 2001 census identified that, at 1.9 per cent, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is low, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent. This figure does not include the significant number of asylum seekers and refugees who have moved into the city in recent years.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

3. City Council subcontracts all leisure, sport and recreation programmes to five training providers in the city. In 2004-05, there were 784 enrolments, of whom 201 were new learners. Currently, 188 learners are registered on programmes. City Council offers programmes in 12 areas of learning, of which this area is the sixth largest. Fifty-seven programmes are offered at venues throughout the city, including the city centre and outreach sites. Courses include Pilates, gentle exercise, yoga, aerobics, circuit training and taster fitness. None of the courses is accredited. More than 42 per cent of learners are aged over 65 years and 94 per cent of them are women. Sixteen per cent of learners have declared learning or physical disabilities.

4. A project officer employed by City Council manages this area of learning. Courses are organised termly and last for 10 weeks. Learning sessions last for one and a half hours and are provided in the morning, afternoon and evening, on Monday to Friday. There is no weekend provision. A range of accommodation is used, including church halls, schools, community centres and sheltered accommodation. Eleven part-time tutors are responsible for teaching all of the programmes in this area of learning. They work for

CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL REINSPECTION

between three and seven and a half hours each week.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	18
Number of staff interviewed	13
Number of subcontractors interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	8

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection, leadership and management, including equality of opportunity, were satisfactory. Quality assurance was unsatisfactory. Information and communications technology (ICT), health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts and media, and foundation programmes were all satisfactory. The provisions in family learning and community development were good. Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel was judged to be unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Adult and community learning	160	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		
- Adult and community learning	866	4

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care		
- Work-based learning for adults	729	3
Complementary health services		
- Adult and community learning	119	3

CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL REINSPECTION

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	687	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	22	None
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	64	3

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning - Adult and community learning	395	2

Community development		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning - Adult and community learning	276	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	188	2

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	188	2

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals
- much good and outstanding teaching
- good curriculum leadership and management
- effective action to widen participation for older people and people with disabilities

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning

Achievement and standards

6. The extent to which learners achieve their individual learning goals is good. Learners enrol on courses with a variety of personal aims, such as to learn new skills, improve their fitness or health, build their confidence, and to meet new people. Older learners improve their mobility and co-ordination. They become capable of carrying out daily tasks that they previously found too difficult. Learners value the strong social element in all the courses. For many learners, their courses provide the added opportunity to socialise with others in a secure environment and to try new activities. In many cases, learners form friendships and enrol on other courses. This is a significant achievement for those who have been outside educational activities for many years and have low levels of self-confidence.

7. Learners develop good relationships with their tutors, which help them to overcome obstacles to learning. Tutors have good interpersonal skills and encourage their learners towards new achievements. Many learners find their tutors very motivating, and make the effort to attend learning sessions even in bad weather.

8. Achievement rates are satisfactory, and have increased from 74 per cent in 2004-05 to 80 per cent in the current year. Attendance also improved from 50 per cent in 2003-04 to 78 per cent in 2004-05.

CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL REINSPECTION

9. Sixty-two per cent of the learning sessions observed at reinspection were outstanding or good, and 38 per cent were satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when some coaching and instructing was poor and tutors had a poor understanding of health and safety matters.

10. The sessions observed during the reinspection were well structured. The best sessions were very informative and tutors explained the purpose of exercises clearly to learners, making excellent use of imagery. Teaching methods were well applied and there was good use of corrective techniques with groups and the class as a whole. However, in the satisfactory sessions there was not enough individual assistance and correction of performance. Learning sessions challenge the learners while at the same time accommodating their different fitness levels. Learners enjoy their sessions and have a good rapport with each other and with their tutors. Tutors are paid for an extra half hour for each session in order to spend time with learners or to complete paperwork. A physical activity readiness questionnaire has been devised and is now used for all programmes. Verbal screening is carried out at the beginning of classes.

11. City Council is developing a friendly and welcoming virtual learning environment which learners can access from home in order to gain information about courses and learning centres. Within this environment learners can watch video tapes of tutors performing gentle exercises, and join in if they wish.

12. Individual learning plans are now used satisfactorily. New individual learning plans have been introduced and tutors have been trained to use them. Learners, tutors and learning centre managers are enthusiastic about the new individual learning plans which record suppleness, stamina, speed, strength and confidence. Learners assess their starting points and mid- and end-of-term progress, which is verified by tutors. The learning plans can also be used by learners to request literacy or numeracy support. Some subcontractors have good literacy and numeracy support arrangements, with well-qualified staff who can identify support needs and offer accredited literacy and numeracy courses. The staff handbook has useful exemplars and information to help tutors identify and resolve literacy and numeracy issues. Learners and tutors now receive initial advice and guidance information from nextstep providers during the enrolment and induction phases.

13. All tutors are now appropriately qualified. The provider's equipment and facilities are satisfactory. Most venues are situated on bus routes and are easily accessible.

Leadership and management

14. Since the inspection, a project officer with responsibility for this area of learning has been appointed and she has done a lot of work to improve the quality of provision. A useful document has been produced for subcontractors which helps them to identify appropriate, subject-specific qualifications for tutors. Communications with subcontractors and the monitoring of their provision have improved and are now good. City Council's staff are responsive to the subcontractors and listen to their views.

Contract and quality review meetings are held each term to analyse each subcontractor's data and individual tutors' performances. Data is collected and analysed and targets are set and monitored for recruitment, retention and achievement. City Council has identified the need to monitor performances during each term, as well as at the end of term. Training has been provided for tutors and managers in the use of individual learning plans, in first aid, virtual learning environments and observations of teaching and learning. Continuous professional development is monitored using a spreadsheet, which helps to target staff for particular sessions and can be used for appraisal purposes. Tutors are paid to attend staff development sessions. Subcontractors are responsible for staff appraisals, and City Council checks that these appraisals are carried out. A new and larger team has been recruited to carry out observations of teaching and learning. Good partnership working has been developed with subject specialists in City Council's sports development team. Observations of teaching and learning are more effective. Not all tutors have been observed yet. A good staff handbook has been devised to support subcontractors and tutors. Feedback from learner forums is being used well to improve the provision.

15. City Council has successfully widened participation opportunities for older people and people with disabilities who would not otherwise be able to access learning programmes. Sessions are made easily accessible to learners in the residential homes or sheltered accommodation where they live, or the day centres that they attend. Courses are also provided at the subcontractors' main sites which are easily accessible by public transport. City Council has provided funding for many of these sites to install equipment such as ramps, wheelchair lifts and toilets for the disabled. Many learners are aged over 75 years and have multiple health problems and/or disabilities. The provider has good contacts with agencies that provide support for older people and people with disabilities. This is part of the council's strategy to respond to local needs. The sessions help to develop learners' health and well-being and to maintain their independence.

16. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Tutors complete a questionnaire which is used for self-assessment purposes. The questionnaire asks useful questions about strengths and weaknesses, and learners' achievements and successes. Subcontractors receive training and individual help to enable them to complete a self-assessment questionnaire. The information resulting from this questionnaire is generic and is not specific to the area of learning. City Council collates the information and produces the overall report. The self-assessment produced for reinspection broadly reflected the findings of the inspection. The post-inspection plan has been used effectively to improve the quality of provision.

17. Curriculum planning is restricted. City Council has identified that course levels and content are not standardised. Programmes are currently being classified at three levels. Course information sheets are being produced for each programme, but there is some confusion about how to use them. There is not enough advice available about progression, a situation which City Council is now aware of. There is no weekend provision and very little evening provision, and many people who work cannot attend sessions. City Council has recently begun partnership working with the sports department to extend the provision to men, who are under-represented on programmes.

CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL REINSPECTION

Programmes are only offered during term time. Learners' fitness levels deteriorate during vacation periods. Learners must re-enrol at the beginning of each term, and complete the same paperwork as the previous term. Support is available to allow subcontractors and tutors to purchase equipment, but sometimes tutors have to wait a long time for a response to their requests.

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL REINSPECTION

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