INSPECTION REPORT

Knowsley Family and Community Education

10 February 2006

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.
• 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.

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

Knowsley Family and Community Education

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Knowsley Family and Community Education (FACE, or the service) is part of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (the council). It contracts with the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide accredited and non-accredited adult and community learning in all curriculum areas except engineering and manufacturing technologies and education and training. Learning is delivered in six secondary schools, three city learning centres and seven libraries across the borough. The service is managed by the lifelong learning manager, who reports to the director of children's services. There is a management team consisting of the lifelong learning manager, learning quality manager, family learning manager, lifelong learning officer and lifelong learning co-ordinator.   Six centre managers are responsible for managing the adult learning programmes in their secondary schools as part of the extended schools initiative. They are based in and employed by the schools. The service employs 71 part-time tutors.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS   Grade 3

2. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** FACE's leadership and management are satisfactory, as are its arrangements for quality improvement and equality of opportunity. Provision is good in family learning and community development. It is satisfactory in health, public services and care, information and communications technology (ICT), in arts, media and publishing, in leisure, travel and tourism and in languages, literature and culture.

3. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The service has good arrangements for self-assessment. The self-assessment process is inclusive. The views of learners, staff, managers and partners effectively contribute to the self-assessment. Inspectors found most judgements in the self-assessment report to be accurate.

4. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The service has clear and well-considered priorities for how it can improve. Learners' retention and achievement rates over the past three years are generally good. The self-assessment report has a detailed action plan identifying how weaknesses will be resolved and strengths maintained or improved.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR KNOWSLEY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION:

• make use of specialist expertise in some areas to improve the curriculum
• identify and disseminate good practice to improve teaching and learning
• continue to develop and monitor arrangements for quality improvement
• make better use of data to improve the curriculum

- improve systems for monitoring and recording learners' progress

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	3

Health, public services and care		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Counselling Adult and community learning	26	3
Early years Adult and community learning	79	3

Information and communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
ICT for users Adult and community learning	491	*3* 3

Leisure, travel and tourism		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Sport, leisure and recreation Adult and community learning	102	*3* 3

Arts, media and publishing		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Crafts Adult and community learning	185	*3* 3

Languages, literature and culture		3
Contributory areas:	**Number of learners**	**Contributory grade**
Other languages, literature and culture Adult and community learning	256	*3* 3

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		*2*
Adult and community learning	354	2

Community development		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		*2*
Adult and community learning	253	2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

5. Seven areas of learning were reported on and graded. There were too few learners in other curriculum areas to be separately inspected. All provision was inspected in the same week.

Number of inspectors	11
Number of inspection days	55
Number of learners interviewed	254
Number of staff interviewed	103
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

6. **Retention and achievement rates are good on many courses.**   In health, public services and care, retention rates improved from 66 per cent in 2003-04 to 95 per cent in 2004-05. Achievement rates also improved, from 48 per cent in 2003-04 to 75 per cent in 2004-05. The average retention rate for ICT learners improved from 71 per cent in 2003-04 to 91 per cent in 2004-05. The achievement rate on accredited courses in community development is good.

7. Learners develop a good range of skills. **ICT learners gain skills and increase their knowledge.** They successfully apply these achievements in their daily lives. Older learners describe how their ICT skills and personal confidence have improved. **Leisure, travel and tourism learners develop their physical skills and memory of sequences well.** Most learners show a high degree of body awareness with good position and alignment. **In art and craft classes, learners develop a sense of achievement and pride in using the skills they have learnt to produce work of high quality. Learners in dance demonstrate complex sequences and perform choreographed studies at local community events.**

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Health, public services and care	0	3	3	0	6
Information and communications technology	1	6	9	0	16
Leisure, travel and tourism	0	1	5	0	6
Arts, media and publishing	0	3	4	0	7
Languages, literature and culture	0	3	6	1	10
Family learning	3	7	4	0	14
Community development	1	2	4	0	7
Total	5	25	35	1	66

8. **Support for learners is good in most curriculum areas.** In leisure, travel and tourism, learners with physical limitations are offered appropriate alternative movements to enable them to actively participate in class. Staff on community development programmes welcome learners from a wide range of difficult backgrounds. Many learners face considerable personal and social problems. Staff give individual and tailored support to meet learners' needs. ICT tutors provide well-differentiated learning activities and materials to help learners meet their personal goals and achieve their learning outcomes.

9. **Good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in modern foreign languages.** A centre manager employed by the service has produced an outstanding Spanish CD-ROM, which supports learners across the service. It was produced in partnership with two national languages organisations and a local school. A CD-ROM and an interactive whiteboard are used well in a sign language programme. Digital projectors are effectively used in Spanish and German.

10. **Much teaching in family learning is good.**   Tutors plan carefully to meet the needs of adults and children and set clear objectives that are shared with learners. Sessions are managed well. Tutors use a variety of teaching and learning methods to meet learners' individual learning needs. In a session about 'favourite food', the tutor set a range of practical activities such as taste testing, recording preferences, and pair and group discussion, to help learners produce a table to represent their findings.

11. Target-setting is weak for some learners. **In community development, individual learning plans are not completed thoroughly by all tutors**. They are generally used effectively but targets are not always sufficiently detailed or challenging. **ICT tutors do not set appropriately challenging targets to help learners complete the course.** Some learners take too long to complete the full qualification. Staff do not monitor these learners' progress sufficiently rigorously.

12. **Learners' progress is not sufficiently monitored in health, public services and care and in leisure, travel and tourism.**   Individual learning plans are not used effectively. Learners complete an individual learning plan when they start the course but few update their plan during the year. Tutors have received training in how to complete the paperwork, but this training has not led to improvements in the recording and monitoring of learners' progress. Many learners and tutors do not find the individual learning plan helpful or sufficiently related to learning activities. Many individual learning plans are poorly completed and do not record learning outcomes or targets.

Leadership and management

13. **Senior managers provide clear strategic direction.** The service's mission is to support families, strengthen communities and enhance employability. Staff at all levels in the service understand this commitment and are able to clearly articulate its effect on their work.

14. **The service has particularly effective partnerships with local agencies and support services to promote participation in learning.**   The service works with a wide range of voluntary and community organisations to promote adult learning programmes throughout the borough. **Measures to widen participation are particularly effective.** Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

15. The service has a well-established policy for continuous professional development. There is particularly good staff development and support for tutors in health, public services and care, arts, media and publishing, leisure, travel and tourism and family learning.

16. Management arrangements for meeting learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are satisfactory. Learners' needs are identified through the enrolment process and recorded in their individual learning plan. Tutors refer learners to the service's learning support team where appropriate.

17. **Curriculum management is weak in some areas.**   The proportion of good or better teaching in most curriculum areas is too low. Management strategies to raise the standard of teaching and learning have been ineffective. There are few specialist curriculum managers and insufficient sharing of good practice to promote better teaching and learning.

18. **Insufficient use is made of data.** Information in the service's management information system is not always up to date. Centre managers do not make enough use of data to plan the curriculum. A data management group has recently been set up but it is too early to judge its effect.

19. **Quality assurance arrangements are insufficient.**   They have not been effective in improving standards. Senior managers have worked hard to improve quality assurance, however, and have demonstrated their commitment to quality.

20. Self-assessment is an established part of FACE's quality assurance procedure. The self-assessment report is generally accurate, but does not sufficiently analyse the overall strengths and weaknesses of FACE.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- particularly effective partnerships
- particularly effective measures to widen participation

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management in some areas
- insufficient use of data
- insufficient quality assurance arrangements

Health, public services and care

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- good support for learners
- good partnerships

Weaknesses

- ineffective recording and monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination of the evening early years programme

Information and communications technology

ICT for users   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good retention rates on most programmes
- good attainment on non-accredited programmes
- good attention to individual needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of good practice to promote learning
- insufficiently challenging targets for learners on accredited programmes
- some poor use of management data

Leisure, travel and tourism

Sport, leisure and recreation   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good promotion of health and wellbeing
- good development of skills
- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- limited range of provision
- inadequate curriculum co-ordination

Arts, media and publishing

Crafts   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good achievement of individual goals
- good skills development

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- weak curriculum management

Languages, literature and culture

Other languages, literature and culture   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good use of ICT to support teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management

Family learning

Adult and community learning   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement rates on accredited courses
- good development of personal and social skills
- much good teaching and learning
- very effective partnerships
- good curriculum leadership and management

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment in wider family learning
- insufficient access to ICT

Community development

Adult and community learning   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement
- good personal support for learners
- good quality monitoring of subcontractors
- good partnerships to meet the needs and interests of learners

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for some learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT KNOWSLEY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION:

- the friendly and approachable tutors
- 'the fact that I don't feel stupid when I ask a question in class'
- learning different skills and techniques
- 'I feel stronger and healthier'
- 'having a chance I didn't get as a child'
- 'helping to develop the skills to support our children'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK KNOWSLEY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION COULD IMPROVE:

- the opportunity to have the handouts they use in other centres
- the number of courses to progress onto
- the quantity of paperwork to complete
- the amount of childcare support

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

- clear strategic direction
- particularly effective partnerships
- particularly effective measures to widen participation

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management in some areas
- insufficient use of data
- insufficient quality assurance arrangements

21. Senior managers provide clear strategic direction. FACE has a comprehensive three-year development plan which is closely tied in with the priorities set by the local LSC. The service's mission is to support families, strengthen communities and enhance employability. Staff at all levels in the service understand this commitment and are able to clearly articulate its effect on their work. The director of children's services and the head of service have a strong personal commitment to adult and community learning. The service's ethos is demonstrated in its marketing and promotional literature and in the successful annual event to celebrate learners' and staff achievements.

22. The service has formed particularly effective partnerships with local agencies and support services to promote participation in learning. The service works with a very wide range of voluntary and community organisations to promote adult learning programmes throughout the borough. The head of service plays an active role as chair of the Knowsley learning partnership. The partnership is particularly effective in identifying opportunities for new programmes and initiatives to engage learners, particularly from groups not traditionally involved in learning. The service has good relations with the local community college. A member of the college's outreach team has been seconded to the service to promote progression for learners on family learning programmes. Partnerships are particularly effective in meeting the needs of adults on family learning and community development programmes.

23. The service has a well-established policy for continuous professional development. There is particularly good staff development and support for tutors in health, public services and care, in arts, media and publishing, in leisure, travel and tourism and in family learning. The service markets professional development opportunities for part-time staff through regular newsletters and briefings. Most tutors attend curriculum updating events. The service has appropriate targets for new and existing staff to achieve a relevant teaching qualification.

24. Internal communications are satisfactory. Senior managers meet regularly to consider all aspects of the provision. There are regular meetings between centre managers and senior managers. Meetings for tutors are held regularly but are not well attended. Meetings are carefully recorded and actions clearly identify responsibilities and timescales.

Staff at all levels say that they are supported well by the service. However, tutors have insufficient opportunities to meet in curriculum teams to share good practice.

25. Management arrangements for meeting learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs are satisfactory. Learners' needs are identified through the enrolment process and recorded in their individual learning plan. Tutors refer learners to the service's learning support team where appropriate. In 2005-06, 47 learners are receiving additional learning support. However, not all tutors are aware of the learning support available to learners.

26. Management of resources is satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Eighty-seven per cent have an appropriate teaching qualification and the remainder are working towards one. Teaching accommodation and specialist equipment are generally satisfactory. Some classroom accommodation in family learning is unsuitable. Arrangements for appraisal are satisfactory. Staff receive a review every year, during which they are set performance targets.

27. Curriculum management is weak in four of the seven areas inspected. The proportion of good or better teaching in most curriculum areas is too low. Management strategies to raise the standard of teaching and learning have been ineffective. The service has been slow to implement a strategy for recording learners' progress and achievement in non-accredited learning. There are few specialist curriculum managers and insufficient sharing of good practice to promote better teaching and learning.

28. Insufficient use is made of data. The service's management information system produces data on learner numbers, retention and achievement. However, this information is not always up to date. Centre managers do not make sufficient use of data to plan the curriculum and to monitor performance on programmes for which they are responsible. A data management working group was recently established but it is too early to judge the effect of this initiative.

Equality of opportunity   **Contributory grade 3**

29. Measures to widen participation are particularly effective. The service has clear targets for recruiting learners not traditionally involved in learning. It has established a number of equality and diversity 'theme groups' to promote access and diversity, family learning and information, advice and guidance. Other successful initiatives include community development programmes and 'active dads', a programme to encourage fathers to attend classes with their children. The service maintains good links with local associations and organisations to develop new courses and provide learning opportunities for disadvantaged learners. The family learning programmes have significantly increased the number of parents participating in learning programmes. The use of 'parent mentors' has increased the number of parents participating in learning with their children. Crèche facilities are available in some centres and funding is available for childcare in other centres. Celebration of learners' success is good. Learners and tutors are nominated for awards at a successful annual awards event. The service has a clearly stated fee remission policy for adults who attend learning in the priority curriculum areas, learners living in deprived areas and those with a disability or in receipt of specific benefits.

30. The practical needs of individual learners are effectively assessed and managed. In ICT, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are offered a wide range of adaptive

equipment such as larger keyboards, tracker mice and assistive software. Most centres are equipped with hearing induction loop systems to support those with a hearing impairment. Portable loop units are available for use in other centres. The service has responded appropriately to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

31. Use of equal opportunities data is satisfactory. The service collects data on gender, ethnicity and disability, which it matches to the profile of the community and uses to set targets. Analysis is carried out to identify the participation rates of particular groups and to assist in setting appropriate targets.

32. Access to buildings for those with restricted mobility is satisfactory. The range of course literature is appropriate. It is available in different languages, larger print and Braille and can be signed or read to learners with hearing or visual impairment.

33. The service has an appropriate complaints procedure and regularly carries out analyses of the number and type of complaints received. Complaints are promptly dealt with.

34. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is often restricted to an understanding of direct discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or ethnicity. Learners are made aware of equality and diversity and their entitlement to additional support during induction, through the learners' handbook. Insufficient attention is paid to diversity in some lessons. The tutors' induction and handbook cover equality and diversity, but there is little monitoring of whether tutors promote equality in teaching and learning sessions.

Quality improvement   **Contributory grade 3**

35. FACE uses feedback from learners and staff to develop the provision. Learners' views are collected at several stages during their course and they complete a detailed questionnaire each term. There is an effective learners' forum to gather and respond to learners' views. Feedback is effectively collated, tabulated and reported on. Actions are clearly recorded and promptly dealt with.

36. Internal verification and moderation of externally accredited awards are generally satisfactory. However, action points are not always effectively monitored. Internal verification arrangements are particularly good in family learning and community development.

37. Quality assurance arrangements are insufficient. They have not been effective in improving standards. The scheme for observing teaching and learning has not sufficiently raised standards in teaching and learning. Some observations do not place sufficient emphasis on learning. Too much focus is placed on generic issues, such as lesson plan timings or use of question and answer techniques. Observations are not always carried out by curriculum specialists. Observation records do not always comment on subject-specific aspects of teaching and learning. Observations of teaching and learning in family learning and community development are good.

38. Lesson plans and schemes of work are generally satisfactory. However, individual learning plans are often inadequate. Quality assurance audits of lesson plans, schemes of work and individual learning plans are carried out but are not used to improve consistency or rigour. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Staff do not routinely meet

colleagues from other centres working in the same curriculum area to share good practice.

39. Senior managers have worked hard to improve quality assurance and have demonstrated their commitment to quality. Over the past nine months, the service has produced and implemented a set of policies, systems and procedures, including a quality framework policy. However, these procedures are not fully established and it is too early to judge their effect on learners.

40. FACE produced its fourth self-assessment report in September 2005. Self-assessment is an established part of the quality assurance procedure. Centres developed their own self-assessment reports that contributed to the overall service self-assessment. Senior managers moderated and collated the centre reports. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment report does not sufficiently analyse the overall strengths and weaknesses of FACE. There are many contradictions between strengths and weaknesses in some areas of learning. Inspectors judged many of the strengths in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice and identified additional weaknesses. The self-assessment report is generally accurate in family learning and community development. The quality improvement plan identifies actions to improve the provision and is reviewed and updated regularly.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care   **Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Counselling Adult and community learning	26	3
Early years Adult and community learning	79	3

41. FACE offers a range of accredited programmes at secondary schools, community learning centres. No non-accredited programmes were running at the time of inspection. Learners can study for a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 or 3 in early years care and education and in children's care, learning and development. There are three counselling courses at level 1 and 2. Training in children's care, learning and development is provided by a subcontractor. Sixty-five per cent of learners attend daytime courses. Most programmes are taught for two hours a week for 30 weeks.

42. There are 105 learners enrolled on programmes. Most are white British and 96 per cent are women. Three per cent have declared a disability. Sixty-four per cent of learners claim concessionary fees.

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- good support for learners
- good partnerships

Weaknesses

- ineffective recording and monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination of the evening early years programme

Achievement and standards

43. Retention and achievement rates on accredited programmes are good. The retention rate improved from 66 per cent in 2003-04 to 95 per cent in 2004-05. Achievement rates have also improved, from 48 per cent in 2003-04 to 75 per cent in 2004-05. Retention rates on counselling courses in 2004-05 were good.

44. Learners gain confidence and self-esteem. They are able to apply their new skills in their work placements. The service has successfully established taster sessions for childcare learners and an effective strategy for monitoring attendance on programme. Childcare learners have the opportunity to gain additional qualifications in health and safety at work, paediatric first aid and food hygiene. The standard of learners' practical and written work is satisfactory.

The quality of provision

45. Support for learners is good. Learners who miss a class receive good additional support from tutors at times which suit them. Tutors provide class notes, handouts and other learning materials to encourage learners who are at risk from withdrawing from the programme, to complete their studies. Learners value the help and support they receive from their tutors. They are encouraged to arrange individual support sessions where appropriate. Tutors regularly visit learners' work placements to review progress. They often arrange to meet with learners outside of the usual attendance times, if necessary. Tutors run additional individual tutorial sessions for early years learners to help them with their coursework and assignments. Tutors give learners their mobile telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to encourage them to keep in touch if they have problems which they want to discuss outside of normal class times. Some learners receive financial help from the service to pay exam fees, meet childcare costs and buy course books.

46. The service has formed good partnerships which benefit learners. Communication with partners is good. Work-placement supervisors and the subcontractors' staff report that the service is responsive and supportive. FACE's partners say that the service is always 'just at the end of the phone'. Staff make regular visits to the subcontractor and partner agencies. The subcontractor has been fully involved in the service's self-assessment process and has implemented the service's quality improvement procedures alongside its own. The service has implemented clearly recorded quality improvement audit visits since March 2005 that follow up identified actions. All partners are linked to local Sure Start programmes and early years forums to share good practice and discuss common issues.

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All observed lessons were satisfactory or better. Sessions are planned well with detailed schemes of work. Good use is made of a variety of learning materials to engage learners' interest. Sessions are appropriately paced to meet the needs of all learners. Tutors use group work effectively. In one childcare session, learners produced posters to illustrate the development of gross and fine motor skills. This activity led to a lively discussion about child development. Tutors use question and answer techniques to check and reinforce learners' understanding. Learners participate actively in sessions and are able to communicate confidently during discussions and when feeding back from group work.

48. Tutors are well qualified. They make good use of their professional experience to explain key principles in childcare. Tutors encourage learners to use their personal and work experience during learning sessions. NVQ childcare assignments are clearly cross-referenced to the national standards. Learners are able to reflect on the experience they have gained in their work placements and clearly demonstrate their developing knowledge of childcare.

49. Resources are satisfactory. Tutors provide extra course books to help learners plan assignments and complete assessments. The range of evidence in portfolios is good. Learners who attend the daytime subcontracted provision complete a full literacy and numeracy assessment before starting the course. Learners who attend the evening provision complete a generic initial assessment. A pilot for testing literacy skills was introduced this year. Most learners are aware of this initiative and the opportunity to obtain literacy support. Learners attending the intermediate counselling course are required to provide evidence of their previous learning at level 1 before starting the

programme.

50. The learners' handbook gives detailed information about appropriate sources of independent information, advice and guidance. Most learners obtained advice from centre managers and tutors before enrolling onto their course.

51. Insufficient recording and monitoring of learners' progress takes place. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. The service has introduced appropriate paperwork to monitor each learner's progress. However, this paperwork is poorly completed by tutors. In some cases, there are no records of learners' progress. Individual learning plans are not used effectively. Learners complete an individual learning plan when they start the course but few update their plan during the year. Tutors have received training in how to complete the paperwork, but this training has not led to improvements in the recording and monitoring of learners' progress.

Leadership and management

52. The service provides good staff training and development opportunities. Tutors are informed of training workshops through newsletters or directly by their centre manager. Centre managers have attended training and completed risk assessment for all the service's venues. All staff report that they are supported well by the service and that internal communications are good. There is a tutors' website to promote communication and networking across the service. One centre manager has developed a communication sheet, to respond to each tutor's needs. Staff meetings at service and centre level are regularly held. All staff are occupationally competent.

53. Arrangements for promoting equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Teaching sessions in childcare cover equality of opportunity and special needs. One classroom displayed examples of positive images promoting equality and diversity. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of the service's complaints procedure, and all learners reported that they were confident to follow the process if required. Access to most buildings for people with restricted mobility is good.

54. Quality improvement arrangements are generally satisfactory. Staff have implemented successful strategies for raising retention and achievement rates. Good use is made of learners' feedback to make improvements. Internal verification procedures for childcare are satisfactory. The service's grading of lessons through its observation of teaching and learning scheme is too generous.

55. There is insufficient curriculum co-ordination of the evening early years programme. Visits to learners' work placements are not recorded, except when assessments are taking place. Learners' reviews and monitoring of learners' placements and attendance are not recorded. New placements are not formally vetted. Criminal records bureau checks are completed for learners who are not in employment, but those who are employed are not required to provide any proof of their clearance. Not enough individual action-planning and target-setting take place in tutorials. There is insufficient sharing of good practice to promote improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

56. The self-assessment report identifies one of the weaknesses found by inspectors. However, some of the areas identified as strengths in the self-assessment report are no

more than normal practice and one weakness was not identified. Inspectors gave a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

Information and communications technology   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ICT for users		*3*
Adult and community learning	491	3

57. ICT courses are offered across the borough at the service's community learning centres, partner venues, shared premises, schools and library service venues. The service provides non-accredited short taster courses and summer schools and one-year accredited courses. Learners can follow programmes in website design, digital photography and computer maintenance, as well as introductory courses in information technology and the internet. Sixty-three per cent of the provision is accredited.

58. The length of courses ranges from two hours for taster sessions to 10 weeks for leisure programmes and 30 weeks for level 2 accredited programmes. At the time of inspection, there were 34 courses delivered in 12 venues by 17 part-time tutors. There are 491 learners, of whom 334 are women. Thirteen learners are from a minority ethnic group. Nineteen learners declared a disability or other specific need. Ninety-eight learners are aged over 65.

ICT for users   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good retention rates on most programmes
- good attainment on non-accredited programmes
- good attention to individual needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of good practice to promote learning
- insufficiently challenging targets for learners on accredited programmes
- some poor use of management data

Achievement and standards

59. Retention rates are good. The average retention rate in 2004-05 was 91 per cent. This is a considerable improvement on the 71 per cent retention rate in 2003-04. Attendance is good. Registers showed high levels of regular attendance in classes running during inspection.

60. Attainment is good on non-accredited programmes. Learners gain skills and increase their knowledge. They successfully apply these achievements in their daily lives. Older learners describe how their ICT skills and personal confidence have improved. For example, one woman attending a computer maintenance class reported that she was pleased to be making good progress towards building a computer for her grandchildren. Learners are enthusiastic about the classes they attend. One group of learners described how they had overcome their fear of computers as a result of attending classes. Many now

feel able to help colleagues at work to use computers. Achievement on accredited programmes is satisfactory.

61. Targets are not sufficiently challenging for learners on accredited programmes. Tutors do not set appropriately challenging targets to help learners complete the course. Some learners take too long to complete the full qualification. Staff do not monitor these learners' progress sufficiently rigorously.

The quality of provision

62. Good attention is paid to learners' individual needs. Tutors provide well-differentiated learning activities and materials to help learners meet their personal goals and achieve the learning outcomes. Many tutors set and review homework for learners. One tutor has set up an e-mail account to enable learners to contact her outside lessons if they have problems with their work. Learners who miss a session receive a copy of the material they need to help them to catch up. Tutors provide good support to these learners before and after the session.

63. Learners value the high-quality tutor-produced worksheets and learning materials. Tutors produce adapted work for individuals, providing materials in different media or with additional content. Examples include a CD-ROM given to learners in a digital photography class, containing video recordings of the tutor demonstrating all the techniques covered on the course. Learners frequently use these materials for reference and further practice at home and work. Working relationships between tutors and learners are productive. Tutors' feedback is used to monitor progress and encourage additional practice or work on supplementary materials.

64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lesson planning and schemes of work are effective. Tutors ensure that learners fully understand what they have previously covered before starting a new topic. Learners participate enthusiastically in lessons. They are able to develop their skills by completing appropriate tasks set by the tutor or projects brought from home. There is insufficient integration of theory with practical demonstration in the less effective lessons. In these lessons, learners spend too much time on individual tasks. There is insufficient use of small-group activity.

65. Arrangements for meeting learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs are satisfactory. Tutors carry out induction exercises with learners to help identify any literacy, numeracy or language needs. Additional support is given by tutors, specialist staff or by the provision of specialist equipment. Staff working in centres run by the subcontractor have specialist literacy and numeracy skills qualifications and provide valuable help to learners. Many tutors provide individual support through the use of additional learning materials and teaching strategies developed with advice from basic skills tutors. Staff give effective course and careers guidance to learners before enrolment and during the programme. Most learners chose their course from the leaflets delivered to their homes, personal recommendation or publicity in community venues.

66. Provision is available across the borough in venues that are readily accessible to learners. Much of the provision is offered in the evening, although the service provides open access learning for six days a week in the borough's public libraries. The service is responsive to suggestions for new courses. Learners appreciate the range of programmes offered. Many describe how attending a course has enabled them to progress at work,

meet personal needs for contact with distant relatives and contribute to community projects.

Leadership and management

67. The service has formed effective partnerships with schools, city learning centres and the library service to improve the opportunities available to learners. Some equipment in the schools has recently been upgraded. Specialist resources, such as tracker balls and specialist keyboards, are made available for learners with specific support needs. Courses are well managed. The accredited courses meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. Tutors maintain useful files containing schemes of work, lesson plans, learning materials and progress records. Tutors are suitably qualified.

68. Accommodation is satisfactory. Access for learners with restricted mobility is good, with well-lit parking areas for disabled learners adjacent to buildings. The equipment in centres is appropriate for learners' needs, although some school premises do not have enough suitable seating. There is a well-established procedure for replacing computers and upgrading software and peripherals. Risk assessments have been completed for each programme.

69. New initiatives have been introduced in quality improvement, but these are not yet fully implemented. Quality improvement processes are inconsistently applied in some centres, although there is good practice in individual programmes. A new system for monitoring and recording achievement on non-accredited programmes has recently been introduced. Most tutors complete the supporting paperwork. However, this system is not being used consistently across the service. The paperwork sometimes records tutors' activity rather than learners' progress and achievement. The service has not taken enough action to monitor how effectively this procedure is being applied by tutors.

70. The representation of learners from minority ethnic groups on ICT courses broadly reflects the size and composition of these communities in the area served by the provider. Staff and learners are aware of the provider's policies on equality and individual entitlement to freedom from discrimination. However, there is little promotion of diversity in lessons and little promotional and celebratory material in classrooms.

71. Several staff with ICT expertise have curriculum management responsibility, but only for parts of the overall provision. There is insufficient sharing and promotion of good practice across geographical areas. Some tutors have created high-quality ICT workbooks and exercises and others have developed good practice in the use of individual learning plans and the monitoring of learners' progress. However, these are not available in all centres. The learners' experience varies depending on the venue they attend. Tutors' attendance at training events is poor. Limited use is made of lesson observation records to identify and disseminate best practice. An intranet facility has recently been set up to provide a tutors' forum and regular meetings now involve the subcontractor's staff. A common approach to the provision of online learning is being developed through the commissioning of a service-wide 'learning platform' to store and distribute information and resources for tutors. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this initiative.

72. There is some poor use of management data. Management information on learner numbers, retention and achievement is generally accurate but managers do not make sufficient use of this information to plan the curriculum and to set targets. This is

recognised in the self-assessment report. Only limited information about the destinations of learners is collected to show the extent to which ICT qualifications help learners to progress into employment or further training. The service has recently established a working group to promote better use of data by managers, but it is too early to assess the effect of this initiative.

73. The self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. However, the strengths were over-stated. Inspectors gave a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

Leisure, travel and tourism   **Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Sport, leisure and recreation		*3*
Adult and community learning	102	3

74. There were 562 enrolments in 2004-05, representing 382 learners. Ninety-three per cent of learners were women and 11 per cent were over the age of 65. One per cent of learners were from a minority ethnic group and 1 per cent declared a disability. At the time of inspection, 102 learners had made 113 enrolments on six non-accredited courses in yoga, tai chi, dancercise and aerobics and one accredited course in leisure and tourism. Courses run for between one and two and a half hours a week for 10 to 12 weeks. The accredited course in leisure and tourism runs for 30 weeks. Most courses are taught in the evening at four secondary schools. There are six tutors, most of whom teach one session a week. They are managed by school-based centre managers.

Sport, leisure and recreation   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good promotion of health and wellbeing
- good development of skills
- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- limited range of provision
- inadequate curriculum co-ordination

Achievement and standards

75. Promotion of health and wellbeing is good. Learners report considerable physical and emotional benefits from attending classes. They become better toned, feel fitter and are able to relax more easily. Their mobility, balance and co-ordination improve. One learner with severe spinal problems has been able to reduce her dependence on crutches and a wheelchair after attending tai chi classes. A learner with anxiety problems has learnt to relax and feel calmer. Learners with arthritic and joint difficulties find they can now manage a greater range of movements. One learner, who works in an office during the day, says that the regular yoga practice has improved her posture. Learners report improvements in the co-ordination and balance of both sides of the body. Yoga breathing exercises have helped one learner, who has been attending speech therapy.

76. There is good development of skills. Learners develop their physical skills and memory of sequences. Most learners show a high degree of body awareness with good position and alignment. In one class, the tutor made use of more experienced learners to demonstrate postures. Learners in yoga, tai chi and dancercise were able to remember and carry out complicated sequences of movements. Learners were able to practise these skills at home. On the accredited course, learners acquire good study, research and

portfolio-building skills and make good progress towards their qualification.

77. Attendance and retention rates are satisfactory overall, although erratic on some courses. In the daytime class, many older and less physically able learners miss sessions owing to ill health or having to attend hospital appointments. In some classes, tutors use the service's recently introduced procedures to contact absent learners and encourage them to return.

The quality of provision

78. Individual support for learners in teaching sessions is good. Tutors circulate among the learners, sensitively correcting their posture and offering support and guidance. Learners with physical limitations are offered appropriate alternative movements to enable them to participate actively in class. In one yoga class, a learner with moderate joint and arthritic problems, who had recently joined the class, was offered adapted and alternative options for many movements. On the accredited course, the tutor uses e-mail to send work to a learner who has missed sessions due to an extended family visit abroad.

79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better classes, tutors give clear explanations and demonstrations, highlighting the benefits of a range of yoga, aerobic and dance movements. Tutors reinforce safe working practices. In the accredited class, the tutor makes good use of a data projector to display and discuss digital photographs taken by learners on a field trip.

80. Initial assessment is satisfactory. However, the results of initial assessment are not always recorded in schemes of work or lesson plans. No learners have been identified with literacy, numeracy or language skills support needs. Most tutors are aware of the procedure for referring learners for additional support. One learner on the accredited programme has specific needs related to cultural awareness, which the tutor diagnosed during the induction process. The learner is now receiving appropriate support from the tutor. In the accredited class, short written assignments were given in the first two weeks of the course, to diagnose any additional learning needs.

81. Accommodation is satisfactory. The only resources supplied for physical activity are music players and exercise mats in some venues. Chinese fans are supplied for tai chi. The service does not supply specialist yoga resources for learners. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced.

82. Most tutors effectively meet the needs of beginners and intermediate learners in mixed-ability classes. Tutors are attentive during physical activity sessions and ensure that learners practise movements safely. Learners' achievement is celebrated every year. Last year a yoga learner was one of the 'learners of the year' in the service's annual celebration of learners' achievements. Course fees are generally low and meet the needs of learners who cannot afford to attend fitness classes in private health clubs.

83. Initial advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners receive handbooks and course information brochures. Learners on the accredited course receive clear information about progression opportunities. All learners on courses involving physical activities complete health check questionnaires. Learners are required to declare any disabilities and additional learning needs on their enrolment form. Any declarations are followed up with a letter explaining how they can receive support.

Leadership and management

84. Internal communications are satisfactory. Tutors are supported well by centre managers. Centre staff provide individual updates for tutors who are unable to attend training events on new service procedures. Staff development opportunities are good. Tutors receive financial support to help them attend external training events to achieve subject-specific qualifications. Following a recent survey of tutors, the service now offers training events at a range of times and venues, to encourage attendance. Tutors' attendance at staff workshops has improved.

85. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The service recognises that there are too few men enrolling on sport and leisure courses, but its attempts to improve this by running courses which appeal more to men have not been successful. There is insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity. There is no strategy for improving recruitment of learners from minority ethnic groups.

86. Quality improvement arrangements are adequate. Most tutors complete the standardised paperwork for schemes of work and lesson plans. The programme of observations of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, staff carrying out observations are not always subject specialists. The grades given by the service to learning sessions are more generous than those given by inspectors.

87. The range of provision is limited. A narrow range of courses is offered. There are no level 2 or 3 courses. There is only one daytime class and no weekend provision. Very few men enrol. Courses with low recruitment are cancelled before they start and others are closed if attendance is too low. The service is unable to run some courses owing to a lack of suitably qualified tutors.

88. Curriculum co-ordination is inadequate. Provision is planned locally by individual centres. There is no overall planning strategy for the curriculum area. Most classes are mixed ability, with very little opportunity for progression to higher-level courses. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between tutors working at different centres. Tutors do not meet as subject specialists. Good practice in teaching and learning is often identified through the observation of teaching and learning scheme, but there is no procedure for sharing this.

89. The self-assessment report identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. Inspectors gave the same grade as that in the self-assessment report.

Arts, media and publishing   Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Crafts		*3*
Adult and community learning	185	3

90. FACE offers accredited courses at entry level 1 in art skills and craft for beginners and a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in dance. There are 12 non-accredited programmes in crafts, fine arts, dance and music. Courses are offered at four secondary schools and one adult education outreach centre. Courses run for six to 30 weeks. Four school-based centre managers manage and co-ordinate the programmes. There are 14 part time tutors and 185 learners. Ninety-four per cent of learners are women. Four per cent have declared a disability. Ninety-seven per cent of learners are white British.

Crafts   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good achievement of individual goals
- good skills development

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

91. There is good achievement of learners' individual goals. This strength is partially recognised in the self-assessment report. In soft furnishing classes, learners design co-ordinated soft furnishing for their homes. They produce professional handmade celebration cards. In art and craft classes, learners develop a sense of achievement and pride in using the skills they have learnt to produce work of high quality. Learners in dance demonstrate complex sequences and perform choreographed studies at local community events. Learners benefit from general improvements in their health and fitness. Many learners who live on their own, or are lone parents, develop increased social skills and feel at ease on social occasions.

92. Skills development is good. This is not recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners on the six-week card-making course make good progress in developing technical craft, creative skills and a basic awareness of colour, tone, texture and design. Learners in line dance classes develop very good physical co-ordination and rhythmic skills. Belly-dancing learners acquire performance skills for public events and an understanding of dance traditions and cultural conventions. Art skills learners are encouraged to develop research, exploration and compositional skills. Fine art learners explore professional techniques for preparing paint and paper for watercolours, the appropriate use of washes and dry brush technique. Many become skilful with a range of different media. Soft furnishing learners develop design and pattern cutting skills. Learners report improvements

in their communication and interpersonal skills.

93. Retention rates are satisfactory. The retention rate on non-accredited programmes rose from 72 per cent in 2002-03 to 82 per cent in 2004-05. On accredited programmes, the retention rate was high in 2002-03 at 96 per cent but dropped significantly to 46 per cent in 2003-04. It rose again to 96 per cent in 2004-05. Attendance on most courses is satisfactory.

The quality of provision

94. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Schemes of work are generally good with clear aims and learning outcomes. The better sessions are particularly well planned. Practical demonstrations are short, simple and effective. Learners are able to explore their creative potential, individually or with others, and have many opportunities to reflect on their learning. Tutors provide a range of appropriate class activities for beginners and for more experienced learners. Learners attending the same course for a number of years are challenged by progressively more difficult projects. Learners in art classes attend galleries and exhibitions. The weaker classes are generally tutor-led with a limited range of teaching and learning methods. Accommodation is generally satisfactory. There is one specialist dance studio and school gyms are used for other dance classes.

95. Guidance and support for learners are generally satisfactory. Learners on all programmes receive good individual support. Tutors are responsive to learners' different needs and abilities. Adaptations to dance routines are prepared for learners who have restricted mobility. Extra attention and time are given to learners with less confidence. Visual resources and simple English text are prepared for learners with dyslexia. This support is not always effectively recorded. Additional learning support is provided for those learners who have declared a disability. Learners are provided with a handbook and course requirements at enrolment or induction. Learners can request specialist advice and guidance on a particular course from a tutor before or after enrolment. Course outlines are given out by tutors. They vary in quality, from those that are detailed and supportive, to some which contain very little specialist information to support learners' decisions. Some learners are recruited to inappropriate programme levels. Not all learners receive the induction booklet, which contains helpful information on learners' entitlements and sources of financial help.

96. There is insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress on non-accredited programmes. Standardised paperwork does not meet the specific requirements of some practical classes. Learners' information on initial assessment paperwork is not used to prepare individual learning plans. Many learners and tutors do not find the individual learning plan helpful or sufficiently related to the learning activities. Many individual learning plans are poorly completed and do not record learning outcomes or targets. The consistency and effectiveness of assessment is not monitored. There are no formal moderation arrangements for assessment practice on non-accredited programmes.

Leadership and management

97. Internal communications are satisfactory. Tutors speak highly of the support they receive from their centre manager. Tutors have good access to staff development and training opportunities. There are regular meetings to disseminate information from managers, but little opportunity to discuss curriculum issues or to share good practice.

Health and safety arrangements are generally satisfactory, but risk assessments are not carried out for practical activities.

98. Learners have a basic awareness of equality of opportunity and of the complaints procedure. Equality and diversity are poorly promoted. Information on equality and diversity in the induction booklet is not written in a style to engage and interest learners. The booklet contains a brief equality statement and learners are advised to find the policy from the council's website or from a centre manager. The booklet is available in different formats but not different languages. There is little reinforcement of equality of opportunity for learners. Access for learners with restricted mobility is poor at some venues.

99. Curriculum management is weak. Strategies for developing the curriculum and recruiting new learners are weak. Curriculum planning and co-ordination is ineffective. For example, learners with a very wide range of abilities were recruited onto an art programme. The class subsequently had to be split into two groups. Learners with very little dance experience were recruited onto a GCSE course and many withdrew from the programme. Managers were uncertain of the number of classes running during the inspection and whether they were accredited or non-accredited. Many classes visited by inspectors did not start at the times identified by managers. Tutors are unaware of budget allocations for their course and some tutors are still waiting for basic arts materials requested five months ago. One tutor routinely buys class materials and is reimbursed at a later date. There is no designated storage space for some tutors or a place to exhibit learners' work. Centre managers have recently recognised these problems and are working closely with tutors to resolve them.

100. Observations of teaching and learning are not carried out by specialist tutors. Teaching and learning sessions are graded too generously. Observation reports pay insufficient attention to learning. Feedback to tutors is generic. Insufficient feedback is given on the tutor's specialist subject area. Data is not used systematically to plan improvement. There is insufficient programme review and analysis.

101. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report are no more than normal practice. Inspectors found additional weaknesses and gave the same grade as that given in the self-assessment.

Languages, literature and culture   **Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other languages, literature and culture		*3*
Adult and community learning	256	3

102. At the time of the inspection, 256 learners were enrolled on 30 programmes in English, French, German, Italian, sign language and Spanish. Most programmes are accredited at level 1 or 2. English is offered at level 2 and 3. One programme in French, one in Italian, one in sign language and two in Spanish are non-accredited. Spanish and sign language are the largest programme areas. Fourteen tutors teach in eight centres across the borough. Most sessions are located in Halewood Community School and Prescot School, both of which provide seven programmes, and Ruffwood School, where six programmes are offered. The remaining five centres each offer either one or two programmes. All sessions take place between Monday and Thursday, usually in the evening. Most programmes run for 30 weeks and consist of weekly sessions of two hours' duration. However, English sessions last for three hours, as do some sign language sessions.

Other languages, literature and culture   *Grade 3*

Strengths

- good use of ICT to support teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

103. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. The retention rate was around 80 per cent in 2003-04 and 2004-05 across all programmes. Retention on accredited programmes was generally higher. Success rates on accredited programmes rose from 71 per cent in 2003-04 to 74 per cent in 2004-05.

104. Attainment is generally satisfactory. Many learners attain their personal goals. In a sign language session, most learners maintained signing as the sole means of communication for significant periods during the lesson. Attainment in listening skills is particularly good in modern foreign languages. Too often, it is only satisfactory in speaking. In one session, it was inadequate in both skills. Learners do not always acquire sufficient confidence to practise speaking in the foreign language. Others rely excessively on translation from English. They become discouraged when encountering unknown words. Their fluency is insufficiently developed.

The quality of provision

105. Good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning. A centre manager employed by the service has produced an outstanding Spanish CD-ROM, which supports

learners across the service. It was produced in partnership with two national languages organisations and a local school. A CD-ROM and an interactive whiteboard are used well in a sign language programme. Digital projectors are effectively employed in Spanish and German. A Spanish language tutor uses one to engage learners in an adaptation of a television quiz. A French tutor successfully encourages learners to visit press websites and to bring recent articles to sessions. Some learners in Spanish classes obtain authentic resources from the internet. Many tutors make effective use of more traditional resources, such as video and audio tapes or paper-based resources. An English GCSE tutor makes good use of the examination board's materials to stimulate insightful discussion about poetry. However, some tutors use resources in ways which do not engage learners very actively. For example, in modern foreign languages, learners often receive good listening practice. Speaking practice is often no better than satisfactory. In one session, it was inadequate. Tutors make insufficient use of pair work to give learners opportunities to practise speaking or signing. The focus of some sessions is inappropriately directed towards the tutor rather than the learner. For example, in one modern foreign language session, the tutor answered most of his own questions, rather than developing learners' ability to do so.

106. The range of provision is satisfactory. Learning opportunities are good in English, Spanish and sign language. They are satisfactory in French, but inadequate in German and Italian. Overall, there is a satisfactory balance between accredited and non-accredited learning. However, the choice is restricted in languages other than French, sign language and Spanish. The number of venues is limited. Progression opportunities are satisfactory overall, but depend very much on the subject being studied. For instance, Italian is only available to beginners. The only level 3 provision is in English. No Oriental languages are offered.

107. Support for learners is satisfactory. Managers give learners good opportunities to sample programmes before they commit themselves to study. All learners receive good support in sessions. Tutors provide them with good advice about how to reinforce learning between sessions, for instance by using the internet. Assessment on accredited programmes helps learners understand what they need to do to make good progress. Tutors make appropriate provision for learners who need extra help with literacy, numeracy or language. Although individual learning plans are not used, a 'getting started plan' is used in all programmes. Sometimes learners use this to set appropriate targets to support learning. For instance, one sign language learner recorded a target of 'better finger spelling'. However, many learners receive insufficient support to identify helpful targets. For example, one learner simply wrote as a target 'learn Spanish'. The document is insufficiently focused on skills, for instance those of language acquisition, or steps towards attainment of goals. There is inadequate information for prospective learners. Some courses are incorrectly described as suitable for beginners or intermediate learners. The use of level descriptors on course brochures is generally inaccurate and unhelpful.

Leadership and management

108. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Sessions promote respect for other languages and cultures, for instance that of the deaf community. An English session increased learners' comprehension of what it means to belong to a culture outside their experience.

109. Curriculum management is weak. The service makes insufficient use of the specialist curricular expertise at its disposal. It does too little to develop the quality of the provision

and drive its improvement. There is no shared vision for what constitutes best practice in modern foreign languages or sign language. Learners' experiences vary more than they should, for example in the amount of speaking practice they receive. There is excessive emphasis on commissioning and timetabling programmes and insufficient emphasis on evaluating their quality. Tutors do not have sufficient formal opportunities to share good practice. For example, they do not meet with other languages tutors to discuss strategies for reducing the intrusion of English in modern foreign languages. Staff development opportunities are satisfactory, but there is insufficient emphasis on developing specialist language teaching skills and strategies. However, tutors have recently started to post materials for sign language and modern foreign languages on the service's internet 'learning platform'. This initiative has not yet had any effect on learners' experience.

110. Quality improvement measures are inadequate. The self-assessment report lacks clarity in its key judgements. The large number of contributory judgements from individual centres is confusing. Sometimes these judgements are contradictory. The self-assessment report does not identify the excessive use of English as a weakness requiring action. The service's grades for its observation of teaching and learning are significantly higher than those given by inspectors. Observations give insufficient attention to the development of learners' listening and speaking skills. Inspectors gave a lower grade for the provision than that in the self-assessment report.

Family learning   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		*2*
Adult and community learning	354	2

111. FACE offers 37 family learning courses from entry level to level 2. There are 354 learners enrolled on programmes in family literacy and numeracy, 'keeping up with the children', 'share' courses in getting parents involved with their children's education, 'active dads', 'healthy share' and 'healthy start, healthy future'. Family literacy and numeracy courses run once each week for 17 sessions. Accreditation is available for learners who wish to take the national tests in literacy and numeracy. Learners on wider family learning programmes can submit portfolios for accreditation. Courses are offered in the daytime at 48 venues. Most classes take place in primary schools and some wider family learning classes take place in other community venues.

112. The provision is managed by a family learning manager and a family learning co-ordinator. The service subcontracts with Knowsley Community College for the teaching of family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN).

Adult and community learning   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement rates on accredited courses
- good development of personal and social skills
- much good teaching and learning
- very effective partnerships
- good curriculum leadership and management

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment in wider family learning
- insufficient access to ICT

Achievement and standards

113. Achievement rates are good on accredited courses, and retention is satisfactory. The success rate in 2004-05 was 71 per cent. The retention rate on non-accredited courses in 2004-05 was good at 91 per cent.

114. Learners develop good personal and social skills. They develop skills to help their children with homework and to devise play activities for them at home. Many make significant gains in confidence. Some learners become more involved in the life of the school, as a classroom assistant, a member of the Parent Teacher Association and by playing an active role in local initiatives such as a parents' forum and parent mentoring. Others develop the skills and confidence they need to apply for computer courses or NVQs in childcare or to return to study after an extended break.

The quality of provision

115. There is good teaching and learning. Tutors plan carefully to meet the needs of adults and children and set clear objectives that are shared with learners. Sessions are managed well. Tutors use a variety of teaching and learning methods to meet learners' individual learning needs. In a session about 'favourite food' the tutor used a range of practical activities such as taste testing, recording preferences, pair and group discussion, to help learners produce a table to represent their findings. Learners use a wide variety of learning resources which they are encouraged to take home to use with their families. Tutors have good relationships with learners. They set demanding targets that learners achieve. Learners participate actively in sessions and respond to questions enthusiastically. They enjoy a good variety of challenging activities, especially those that involve working with their children. Tutors encourage learners to consolidate their learning through activities in the home

116. FACE has very effective relationships with partners. The service provides family learning at 60 per cent of primary schools in the borough and has sustained several of these programmes for several years. Schools value the positive effects of family learning on parents and the school. Head teachers report that family literacy sessions have had a positive influence on children's attendance and on achievement in literacy and numeracy. The service responds very effectively to the needs of learners, the community and schools. For example, it has set up a programme targeted at pregnant teenagers in response to the borough's strategy for supporting this group. It has set up 'healthy start' programmes in areas where health problems affect many people. It has also established courses for childminders in response to learners' requests.

117. The service has played an important role in the council's parental involvement strategy. Some schools include family learning in their own improvement strategies as a direct result of working with FACE. The service has a very good relationship with Knowsley Community College. A member of college staff has been seconded to FACE to support the provision of advice and guidance. College skills for life staff provide good support for the FLLN programme and contribute to the development and quality improvement of the service. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language.

118. Support for learners, including the provision of information, advice and guidance, is satisfactory. Tutors provide effective personal support. Some provide additional tuition outside normal class times. Initial information and advice is good. Learners are made aware of the content and purpose of their programme before they join, including the opportunities to work towards qualifications. Many learners receive appropriate information about progression opportunities. However, some information and advice sessions are not part of the planned programme.

119. Initial assessment in wider family learning is poor. Most learners receive an appropriate initial assessment, but the service does not routinely refer learners with literacy, numeracy or language support needs to qualified skills for life specialists. Additional learning support is often provided by family learning tutors and is generally satisfactory.

120. Learners have insufficient access to ICT. Some learners are able to use ICT to enhance their own learning and support their children's learning. However, some learners

have few opportunities to use ICT in family learning sessions. Not all learners are able to develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills through the use of ICT. They are also unable to support their children's development of these skills.

Leadership and management

121. The service has a clear perception of the role of family learning in the borough and of its strategy to engage hard-to-reach learners and raise achievement for adults and children. Managers support staff well. Staff induction is thorough and effective. New staff receive good support from mentors experienced in teaching family learning. Communications between managers and staff are good. Staff regularly share resources, ideas and good practice. Team meetings are regularly attended by school and college staff. Tutors attend a wide variety of staff development programmes. The service level agreement with Knowsley Community College requires FLLN staff working for the college to attend staff development sessions run by the service. School staff teaching on family learning programmes regularly attend appropriate staff development sessions.

122. Family learning managers have devised an effective 'learner passport' scheme to help record information on learners' progression. Learners complete a document that resembles a passport. This records their learning history, including the courses they have attended and their current education, training and occupational status. The service encourages learners to complete and return a 'tear-off' slip containing this information. The slips are entered in a prize draw as an incentive for learners to provide this information.

123. Resources are satisfactory. The service provides a very good resource library for tutors to share with learners. It also provides activity packs that learners can use at home. Some learners have access to good accommodation. However, some learning takes place in unsatisfactory accommodation. For example, some schools have insufficient suitable furniture for adults.

124. The quality improvement process is good. Managers use data well to support the quality improvement process, for example in working to increase the number of men in family learning provision. Staff at all levels contribute to the continuous improvement of the provision.

125. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Celebration of achievement is good. Many learners participate in well-supported annual award ceremonies that the service uses to promote family learning. FLLN tutors include equality of opportunity topics in session plans. Course folders contain information for tutors in supporting equality and diversity. Learning and publicity materials include positive references to equality and diversity.

126. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. However, some areas that it identifies as strengths are in fact no more than normal practice. Inspectors gave the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

Community development   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		*2*
Adult and community learning	253	2

127. FACE offers 24 courses in community development at six venues across the borough. Programmes are subcontracted to six voluntary organisations that specialise in supporting people with a wide range of personal and social difficulties. There are 253 learners following a range of full-time and part-time programmes in beauty therapy, mentoring, health and safety, ICT, introduction to delivering learning, mathematics and English. Programmes are offered from entry level to level 3. Courses range in duration from one day for the health and safety course, to 36 weeks for the NVQ in floor covering at level 2. Sixty-four per cent of learners are men.

128. The aim of the service's community development programme is to promote social inclusion and independence for disadvantaged groups. The service receives funding for its community development programme from the neighbourhood learning in deprived communities fund, which is administered by the local LSC. The service subcontracts with six voluntary organisations specialising in training and support for people with disabilities, those with mental health difficulties, the homeless, ex-offenders, the long-term unemployed and lone parents.

Adult and community learning   *Grade 2*

Strengths

- good achievement
- good personal support for learners
- good quality monitoring of subcontractors
- good partnerships to meet the needs and interests of learners

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for some learners

Achievement and standards

129. Learners' achievement is good. Many learners have not participated in learning since they left school. They gain confidence and self-esteem on community development programmes. Learners develop good vocational skills. Sixty-six per cent of learners who completed an NVQ at level 2 in floor covering gained employment within 12 weeks of completing the programme. The success rate for learners on the mentoring course consistently exceeds 80 per cent. At a centre for people recovering from substance misuse, one learner has achieved a level 3 Open College Network award in beauty therapy and another has progressed onto the introduction to teaching course, after completing a short taster course. Retention rates are satisfactory. In 2004-05, 75 per cent of learners were retained.

The quality of provision

130. Learners receive good personal support. Induction is thorough and opportunities for personal support and development are clearly identified. Staff welcome learners from a wide range of difficult backgrounds. Many learners face considerable personal and social problems. Some are participating in a recovery programme for alcohol or drug misusers. Staff give individual and tailored support to meet learners' needs. One subcontractor, Local Solutions, arranges pastoral visits to learners from a chaplain and provides access for learners to a wide range of support agencies for debt counselling, and medical and family care. Another subcontractor, Alternatives, provides learning opportunities for substance misusers and the long-term unemployed. Learners value the help they receive from staff.

131. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better sessions, tutors use a wide range of activities to promote teaching and learning. There is good use of question and answer strategies to encourage learners to participate. There are lively discussions in class. Tutors encourage learners to reflect on and make use of their personal experience to support their learning. Learners are enthusiastic and regularly attend lessons.

132. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Venues are accessible and conveniently located in the community. Most classes take place in pleasant, well-equipped centres. Workshops are adequately equipped and meet health and safety requirements.

133. Initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Learners' needs are comprehensively assessed before they are offered a place on a programme. The results of initial and diagnostic assessment are used to determine the correct level of course for the learner and to identify literacy and numeracy support needs. Staff provide specialist literacy and numeracy support to help learners complete their main programme. However, insufficient attention is paid to literacy and numeracy skills in some classes.

134. Learners are provided with opportunities to study additional qualifications in health and safety and first aid. Many learners gain qualifications that help them to find employment. However, the introduction to teaching course is run over a period four times longer than that recommended by the awarding body.

135. Target-setting is weak for some learners. individual learning plans are not completed thoroughly by all tutors. They are generally used effectively but targets are not always sufficiently detailed or challenging. Dates for completing actions are not always evident.

Leadership and management

136. Quality monitoring of subcontractors is good. The service has worked closely with subcontractors to raise the quality of provision. The service's learning quality manager regularly meets with each subcontractor to carry out quality assurance activities. A comprehensive report which clearly identifies areas for improvement is shared with each subcontractor. The quality of teaching and learning provided by subcontractors is carefully monitored. However, insufficient use is made of observations to improve the standards of teaching and learning at one subcontractor. Subcontractors' staff report that they are well supported by the service.

137. The service has good partnerships to meet the needs and interest of learners. It

works closely with a range of voluntary agencies to provide opportunities for long-term unemployed people, substance misusers and lone parents. Many new initiatives to engage the most disadvantaged groups in learning have been implemented. For example, the service has successfully established the level 2 NVQ in floor covering with a local partner to develop vocational skills. Many learners have been successful in gaining employment after completing the programme.

138. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Arrangements for appraisal are satisfactory. Staff at each of the subcontractors have good training and development opportunities.

139. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Subcontractors apply the service's equal opportunities policy and procedures. Learners receive clear information about their rights and responsibilities, during induction. Staff work hard to meet the complex individual needs of learners.

140. The self-assessment report accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. Inspectors gave the same grade as that given in the self-assessment.