



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
16 MARCH 2004

Report of the Director of Education

Inspection of the Adult Learning Service

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the outcomes of the Adult Learning Inspection and the work so far on the action plan.
- 1.2 To receive a further report prior to the submission of the final action plan.
- 1.3 To support a review of provision of adult learning with partners in the city.
- 1.4 To refer the report and the action plan to the Education Commission, prior to submission to the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Adult Learning Service (ALS) was inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) in the week beginning 12 January 2004. This report summarises the outcomes of that inspection.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Adult Learning Inspectorate inspects all forms of adult and community learning financed wholly or partly from public funds. Provision is inspected by areas of learning, such as Sport and Leisure, or Visual and Performing Arts but local and national strategic priorities, such as family learning, are also included. In addition, inspectors judge the leadership and management of the service.
- 3.2 Derby's Adult Learning Service was inspected by a team of thirteen inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate during the week beginning 12 January 2004.
- 3.3 The inspectors measure their judgements against those carried out by the service in its annual self-assessment review (SAR), last carried out in the summer term 2003.
- 3.4 The inspection is intended to measure the extent to which students and their communities gain in knowledge and skills and grow in effectiveness as a direct consequence of the learning opportunities delivered.

- 3.5 A grade is given for each area of learning inspected, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing outstanding and 5 representing very weak. For leadership and management, there is one overarching grade, with contributory grades for equal opportunities and quality assurance. Appendix 2 lists the provisional grades awarded to the ALS and the main strengths and weaknesses highlighted by the inspection.
- 3.6 ALI deems provision to be inadequate where:
- More than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
 - Leadership and management
- are judged to be less than satisfactory.
- 3.7 The Education Service received the final inspection report at the beginning of March. A summary of that report is published on the ALI website. The outcome is disappointing with the service being graded 5 – very weak, with the overall judgement being that ‘the quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of learners’. The service will therefore be subject to a re-inspection process which must be complete by March 2005. ALI has appointed an inspector from its Professional Development Unit to work with the ALS over this next year in preparation for the next inspection.
- 3.8 Although disappointing, ALI’s judgements were not significantly different from those within our self-assessment. Importantly, the inspectors clearly stated that *“Derby LEA has a clear strategic direction for the development of its adult learning service. Adult learning benefits from changes put in place in the past two years by Derby City Council. The adult learning service’s relationship with the recently created lifelong learning and community group at the LEA provides a sound basis for the development of the new provision.....Creative flexible arrangements are in place and many new learners benefit from this closer working.”* The inspectors clearly stated a number of strengths including the Village Learning Store which will be written up by the inspectors as an exemplar of best practice and included on ALI’s national good practice website, Excalibur.
- 3.9 The report also noted that *“The recently appointed head of service has refocused the provision. The LEA now has a clearer and more focused mission statement containing measurable outcomes. She has also restructured the management of programmes, establishing clearer structures for curriculum development, quality assurance and operational management of the programmes and learning support. It is too early to judge the impact of this new structure.”*
- 3.10 In summary, the inspectors acknowledged that the decisions made are going in the right direction but that this would not affect the overall grades which are based on the outcomes of past work. The key challenges highlighted by ALI are:
- Improve curriculum management across the provision
 - Consolidate quality assurance arrangements
 - Use data to monitor and improve performance
 - Ensure all accommodation is at least satisfactory

- Improve initial assessment
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Implement the literacy and numeracy strategy.

- 3.11 The challenges presented by the inspection were already known to the Education Service, and the ALS restructure, which was finally implemented one week before the arrival of the inspectors on 5 January 2004, is intended to address these challenges. Much of the challenge relates to sharing and embedding good practice across the board, implementing proper monitoring and quality assurance systems and developing much more rigour in the planning, delivery and evaluation of teaching and learning. Even where students are attending an adult education class as a social or relaxation activity, there will be requirements for tutors to set targets for students' learning, measuring achievement and demonstrating progression.
- 3.12 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for determining adult and community learning provision and funding. LSC staff were present at the ALI feedback session and shared our disappointment at the outcome. They also reported that almost 50% of adult and community learning services which have been inspected have had a similar outcome. The LSC made it clear that they value the work of the ALS and the direction it is going in. They will be accessing support for the ALS through the Learning and Skills Development Agency.
- 3.13 Work has already started on addressing the issues arising from the inspection. A meeting has been held for all managers within the ALS to hear the overall findings of the inspection and to begin to develop the post-inspection action plan.
- 3.14 The Adult Learning Service Post Inspection Action Plan must be completed and submitted to the Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council by 30 April 2004, eight weeks after the publication of the full inspection report. A draft version of the plan has been attached as appendix 3 but is not yet complete. The plan has to be fully cross-referenced to the inspection report. Consultation on the action plan will be sought from staff at all levels within the service, partner organisations and a learners' forum. Officers from the LSC and the Education Service will meet monthly to monitor and review progress against the action plan.
- 3.15 The ALI report highlights the fact that overall the provision is currently not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of learners, but it also acknowledges the strengths the service has, particularly in relation to attracting new learners from under-represented groups. The action plan contains a proposal to review the Adult Learning Service to ensure that the service has the capacity to focus on its areas of strength. Discussions are taking place with the Learning & Skills Council to fund an external review of the service. That review will be undertaken in collaboration with the LSC and our partners in Derby College and in schools.
- 3.16 Plans for the relocation of adult learning classes currently run at St Helen's House are dealt with in another report to this Council Cabinet.
- 3.17 A further concern of the ALI was the lack of resources to support students' learning. When allocating funding to the ALS, the LSC assumes that 25% of costs are met by

fee income. Currently 6% of costs in Derby are covered by fee income. In order to increase funding available to be spent on resources the service intends to raise its fees for both leisure and qualification courses for 2004/05. Further adjustments to funding will await the outcome of the review of the service.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The City Council, through the Education Service, has a statutory requirement to secure adult learning provision for its residents. It can meet this requirement either through direct provision or by securing provision in partnership with other providers such as Derby College and schools. The Derbyshire LSC is currently undertaking a Strategic Area review to consider all adult learning provision in the city and county.

For more information contact:	Lesley Whitney / 01332 716852 / Lesley.whitney@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 - Derby ALS Inspection Feedback Appendix 3 – Draft ALI Action Plan

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The Adult Learning Service will increase fees from £2.40 to £2.60 an hour for leisure courses and from £1.20 to £1.30 an hour for qualification courses for 2004/05.
- 1.2 Discussions are taking place with the LSC to meet the costs of the review.

Legal

2. The Learning and Skills Act 2000 gives the Adult Learning Inspectorate the responsibility for the inspection of Adult Community Learning.

Personnel

3. There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report although the review may give rise to some in the future.

Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change

4. The Adult Learning Service contributes to the corporate themes of **job opportunities, education, protecting and supporting people and integrated, cost effective services**. Access to adult learning opportunities improves people's quality of life, contributes to their personal development and gives people the skills to take up employment and participate in the development of their local communities.

DERBY ADULT LEARNING SERVICE

INSPECTION FEEDBACK – 16TH JANUARY 2004

Area 6 Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

Self Assessment Review (SAR) Grade 4

Inspection Grade 4

Strengths

- Good initiatives for widening participation

Weaknesses

- Poor development of skills in some sessions
- Poor initial assessment
- Poor assessment on non-accredited courses
- Ineffective management.

Area 8 Hospitality, Sport, Leisure & Travel

SAR Grade 4

Inspection Grade 5

Strengths

- No significant strengths were identified.

Weaknesses

- Very poor teaching
- Inadequate resources
- Ineffective assessment of learners' performance
- Narrow range of courses
- Particularly weak curriculum management.

Area 11 Visual and Performing Arts

SAR Grade 4

Inspection Grade 3

Strengths

- High standard of work in visual arts
- Good use of feedback in sessions
- Effective personal support for learners with disabilities.

Weaknesses

- Poor advice and guidance about progression routes
- Weak management of curriculum-planning
- Insufficient quality assurance arrangements for courses.

Area 13 English, Languages and Communications

SAR Grade 4

Inspection Grade 3

Strengths

- Good attainment
- Good enrichment activities for learners
- Well planned provision in BSL
- Good learner involvement in planning course content in modern foreign languages
- Good support for BSL tutors.

Weaknesses

- Poor individual target setting for learners
- Insufficient use of target language in modern foreign language lessons
- Poor assessment in non-accredited courses
- Inadequate venues to meet learners' needs.

Area 14 Foundation

SAR Grade 4

Inspection Grade 4

Strengths

- Good partnerships to reach new learners
- Good advice and guidance to help learners choose courses
- Particularly good courses for learners with profound learning needs.

Weaknesses

- Inadequate target setting for learners
- Inadequate resources
- Insufficient involvement by tutors to improve the provision
- Insufficient use of data to improve learners' progression and achievement.

Area 15 Family Learning

SAR Grade – no grade

Inspection Grade 4

Strengths

- Good use of recruitment strategies
- Clear strategic planning for family learning
- Good support for learners.

Weaknesses

- Insufficiently challenging learning objectives
- Ineffective initial assessment
- Poor planning of learning sessions
- Weak quality assurance.

Area Leadership and Management

SAR Grade 4 Inspection Grade 5

Strengths

- Clear focus on the strategic development of the Adult Learning Service
- Good initiatives which attract under-represented learners to learning.

Weaknesses

- Weak curriculum management
- Insufficient management information to set targets or monitor performance
- Insufficient strategies for literacy, numeracy and language support for all learners
- Poor resources in some curriculum areas
- Weak promotion of equality of opportunity
- Poor monitoring of equal opportunity
- Inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- Insufficient involvement of all staff in the self-assessment process.