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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Quality and standards in education and training in Wales

A report on the quality of adult community-based learning

in

Powys

March 2008

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**



The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

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- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ LAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Introduction

Adult community-based learning is defined as educational provision for adults made by:

- local authorities;
- voluntary organisations including the WEAs and YMCA;
- further education colleges; and
- higher education institutions.

The provision is funded by the local authority and/or the National Assembly for Wales. It includes learning which is funded by the National Assembly for Wales through the local authority, but delivered by a further education institution. It also includes learning which is funded by the National Assembly for Wales through the further education college, but delivered by the local authority.

Estyn considers provision from a learner's perspective. In line with this approach, the adult community-based learning inspections are conducted on the basis of the learning provision available to learners within a 'travel to learn' area. In most cases, this is a single local authority or CCET area. The inspection takes into account the developing network of adult community-based learning provision in the area. Some providers delivering adult community-based learning in the inspection area may also operate on a regional basis, providing a wide range of education and training. This activity remains outside the scope of the immediate inspection.

The adult community-based learning in Powys was inspected as part of a six-year (2004-2010) national programme of inspections. The purpose of the programme is to identify good features and shortcomings of adult community-based learning in order that the providers may improve the quality of education and training offered and raise the standards achieved by learners. The outcomes of the inspection are intended to give learners more information about the quality of providers of adult community-based learning.

All inspections conducted under the arrangements apply the following principles:

- the use of a common inspection framework which is common to all sectors of education and training in Wales;
- an emphasis on the providers' evaluations of their work;
- the involvement of a provider nominee who works with the inspection team; and
- the inspection of a sample of provision.

Adult community-based learning inspections are conducted using an approach largely based on Estyn's area inspection protocols. This approach considers provision from a learner's perspective and also takes into account the network of provision available in an area.

This inspection took place from 3 March 2008 to 13 March 2008. A team led by Her Majesty's Inspectors from Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the Welsh Assembly Government, undertook the inspection. The team included additional inspectors and peer assessors released from other adult community-based learning providers in Wales.

The team has reported on standards achieved by learners, the quality of education and training provided, the quality of leadership and management and whether the providers deliver value for money.

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

The adult community-based learning inspection areas include:

- Adult Basic Education;
- Welsh for Adults;
- English for Speakers of Other Languages;
- Adult Learning; and
- Community Development.

Adult Learning encompasses all classes for adults delivered in the community. These include information and communications technology, languages and art and design.

Community Development includes community projects such as Communities First and Learning Community Accounts.

For Key Question 1 of the Common Inspection Framework, an overall grade is awarded across all providers. An overall grade is awarded also across the providers for each learning area.

Each of Key Questions 2-7 is awarded an overall grade across all providers.

Grade descriptors

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Grade 1 | good with outstanding features |
| Grade 2 | good features and no important shortcomings |
| Grade 3 | good features outweigh shortcomings |
| Grade 4 | some good features but shortcomings in important areas |
| Grade 5 | many important shortcomings |

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires the providers to prepare written statements of the actions that they propose to take to address the recommendations in the inspection report and the timescales for completing the proposed actions.

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Context

Geographic and demographic profile of Powys

- 1 Powys is an extensive, largely upland and extremely rural county covering 2,000 square miles, which is about a quarter of the area of Wales. With only one person in every 10 acres (four hectares), it is one of the most sparsely populated local authority areas in England and Wales. The economy is based on agriculture and tourism. There is high self-employment and small businesses predominate. The public sector makes an important contribution to employment opportunities in the county.
- 2 There were 1,069 people out of work and claiming unemployment benefits in Powys in November 2007, equivalent to 1.4% of the estimated resident workforce, according to data released in December 2007 by the Office for National Statistics. Compared with the UK as a whole, Powys has a higher proportion of both the older working age group and the retirement age group. The average age of the Powys population in 2006 was 43 compared with 41 in Wales and 39 in England and Wales. Thirty per cent of Powys residents have some knowledge of Welsh compared with an all Wales figure of 28%, and these are concentrated in the north-west and south-west of the county.

The nature of the providers

- 3 The adult education programme is provided by a partnership of providers and is supplied in 15 major centres within Powys; Newtown, Welshpool, Llanfair Caereinion, Llanfyllin, Llanidloes, Machynlleth, Llandrindod Wells, Presteigne, Knighton, Hay-on-Wye, Rhayader, Brecon, Builth Wells, Crickhowell and Ystradgynlais. These centres then in turn provide classes in surrounding towns and villages. The venues for most of the courses include Coleg Powys sites, local high schools or community centres.
- 4 The main providers of DCELLS funded adult community-based learning in Powys are:
 - Coleg Powys
 - Powys County Council
 - Aberystwyth University
 - Coleg Harlech/Workers Educational Association North (CHWEA)
 - Workers Educational Association (South) (WEA(S))
 - YMCA Wales Community College
 - Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations
- 5 These providers are members of the Powys ACL Partnership (the partnership) which was established in 1993, expanded in 2006 and further expanded in 2007. The partnership now acts as the strategic group for taking forward developments in ACL in Powys.

- 6 In 2006-2007 Coleg Powys provided 56% of all adult community-based learning activities in the county. This was an increase from 2005-2006 of 21 percentage points. The Council delivered 19% of adult community-based learning in 2006-2007. This was a decrease of 14 percentage points from the previous year. During 2006-2007, providers changed the number and range of their classes and this contributed to these fluctuations in activity levels. In September 2007, the Council transferred the non-accredited Adult Community Learning (ACL) provision it previously delivered to Coleg Powys. The Council did this on a temporary basis through a Service Level Agreement. The Council is still responsible for the management of this provision. The college delivers ABE, ESOL, Adult Learning and Community Development classes.
- 7 As a result of the Welsh Assembly Government's reconfiguration of Welsh for Adults (WfA) provision across Wales, Mid Wales WfA Centre (MWWfAC) was awarded the Department of Children Education and Lifelong Learning (DCELLS) contract to deliver WfA in Powys. The centre is managed by Aberystwyth University (AU) which administers the Welsh Assembly Government WfA funding. MWWfAC directly provides almost all the Welsh for Adults courses in Powys and sub contracts a small Welsh for Parents provision to CHWEA, also within the partnership. In September 2007, MWWfAC enrolled some 15% more learners than in the previous year.
- 8 In 2006-2007 CHWEA delivered 10% of the adult learning in the County which included ABE and ESOL, Adult Learning and Community Development. In the same year WEA (South) and YMCA together delivered 12% of the adult learning.
- 9 Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) is a County Voluntary Council. It receives funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to support education and training for voluntary sector organisations.
- 10 During the inspection around 240 adult community-based classes were on offer from the providers.

Learning areas

- 11 We inspected the provision in the following learning areas:
- Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
 - Welsh for Adults;
 - Adult Learning; and
 - Community Development.

Provider	ABE	ESOL	Welsh for Adults	Adult Learning	Community Development
Aberystwyth University			✓		
Coleg Harlech WEA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coleg Powys	✓	✓		✓	✓
PAVO					✓
WEA South				✓	✓
YMCA					✓

Summary

Table of grades awarded

12 The inspection team judged the providers' work as follows:

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	3
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	3
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	3
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	3
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	3

Summary of overall grades by learning areas

Learning area inspected	Inspection grade
ABE/ESOL	3
Welsh for Adults	3
Adult Learning	2
Community Development	2

Standards

- 13 Attainment rates vary too much across the provision. Attendance at classes is generally good and at an average of 77%, is above that seen on similar inspections.
- 14 Many learners make good progress and move on to the next stage of learning. They put the skills they learn in class to good use in their everyday lives. Nearly all learners are well motivated and work together well in their classes. They help each other to learn and form good relationships with their tutors. Older learners and those from isolated communities use their learning well to form social networks away from the classroom.

The quality of education and training

- 15 The quality of teaching and assessment is at least satisfactory across most of the provision. Nearly all tutors establish effective relationships with their learners and develop their learners' personal and social skills well. Many tutors demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching skills. However, in a third of observed sessions, tutors do not use a wide enough range of teaching strategies to stimulate and challenge the learners. A minority of tutors do not make best use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) or records of assessment.

- 16 There is a good geographical spread of courses to meet the needs of a rural area. Many courses are successful in attracting learners back into learning, particularly in disadvantaged areas. There is a good response to the needs of employers.
- 17 There are too few learning opportunities across the partnership for ABE and ESOL learners. In Adult Learning, Community Development and ESOL there are too few opportunities for learners to progress to higher levels. There are not enough opportunities for bilingual and Welsh-medium learning.
- 18 The quality of care, support and guidance for learners in Powys is generally good. However, it is not yet available to all learners. All providers offer a comprehensive range of information using brochures, leaflets and websites. Most learners complete some form of initial assessment and in some cases receive diagnostic testing and testing for specific needs. The majority of learners receive a good standard of induction. Childcare provision is available and learners can access financial support through providers' assistance schemes or hardship funds. Most learners know how to make a complaint.

Leadership and management

- 19 The partnership has a clear vision for ACL in Powys. Its terms of reference have clear aims which the partnership matches successfully to wider Welsh Assembly Government national learning and skills priorities. It contributes well to the social inclusion agenda through community development activities. However, the partnership does not realise well enough the full potential of these activities. It does not yet have a strategic overview of community engagement and community capacity building in Powys.
- 20 The partnership is at an early stage of development but is already improving joint working. Partners work well together to agree common strategic goals. One of these is to improve the quality of provision in the County. The partnership has put in place good quality assurance procedures, including a Quality Development Plan (QDP). However, this does not have clear time-bound and staged actions, which makes it difficult for the partnership to monitor progress closely enough. In addition, not all partners understand the impact of the quality system. They do not monitor formally the performance indicators they agree in their service level agreements. The partnership has recently begun to collect and share useful data to help analyse and monitor its performance. However it does not always make effective use of data to set targets for improvement.
- 21 Individual providers have good procedures in place to improve quality, although a few of their action plans are not detailed enough. All providers have arrangements in place to observe tutors in class. The effectiveness of the observation system is variable across the partnership. In a few cases feedback does not identify well enough what tutors need to do to improve their teaching.
- 22 The partnership is improving the way it uses resources. Many staff have appropriate qualifications and there are good staff development opportunities available to tutors across the partnership. It is making good use of ICT to share resources with both staff and learners through the e.powys.net website.
- 23 The recent review of adult learning has led to an increase in the number of providers supporting the planning of partnership activities. However, the partnership has not

identified all of the resources available to make sure that adult community-based learners have the best opportunities. Members of the partnership management group do not always have sufficient authority to make strategic management decisions leading to improvements for adult community-based learning in Powys.

Standards achieved by learners in the learning areas inspected

- 24 There are improving trends in performance over the last three years for ABE and ESOL learners. Many learners attain well in ABE classes. They progress well and move onto the next stage of learning. A minority of ESOL learners do not remain on courses for long enough to take an examination. Nearly all learners improve their independent learning skills and gain in confidence and self-esteem. They work well and supportively together.
- 25 There are poor completion rates in ABE and ESOL. A minority of ESOL learners do not achieve or progress well enough. Not all ESOL learners understand what it is they have to do to improve. For a few ESOL learners, poor attendance has a negative impact on progression. In a minority of cases, varying levels of ability within ESOL classes hinders progress too much.
- 26 In **Welsh for Adults**, attendance and completion rates are generally good. Learners are motivated and aware of the benefits of learning Welsh. Enrolment and attainment numbers have increased since 2005-2006. Many learners develop good oral and listening skills, can read texts and complete written tasks that are appropriate for their level. A few learners practise their language in the community.
- 27 A few learners do not make appropriate progress and use too much English in class. A minority do not develop well enough as independent learners. Nearly half the learners do not understand how to improve their learning.
- 28 Learner completion rates on accredited and non-accredited **Adult Learning** courses are generally good. However, attainment rates on accredited courses are too variable. Most learners make good progress in their learning. They develop good skills in communication, problem solving and working with others. In a few cases, learners do not pay enough attention to grammar and spelling in written work. Most learners attend class regularly.
- 29 Learners are well motivated. However, in a few classes, learners do not contribute enough to class discussion. Many learners of all ages increase their skills and employment prospects by attending adult learning classes.
- 30 In **Community Development** courses, enrolment, completion and attainment rates are good and have improved since 2005-2006. Many learners engage well with their tutor and their peers and work effectively together to support and improve learning. Most learners achieve good or very good standards and progress well. Many learners make good use of their skills and knowledge in their everyday lives. In addition, many of the more vulnerable learners improve their self-confidence and social skills despite starting from a low confidence threshold. Overall, there is good attendance at community development classes.

Recommendations

- 31 In order to improve, the partnership needs to:
- R1 improve the strategic management of all available resources for adult community-based learning;
 - R2 improve the collection and analysis of data to inform partnership planning;
 - R3 ensure that Powys County Council monitors formally its franchise provision with Coleg Powys;
 - R4 agree and implement a strategic approach to supporting community engagement and community capacity building;
 - R5 ensure that all staff are aware of the support available to learners and that take-up is monitored effectively;
 - R6 raise the standard of session planning to ensure that teaching strategies and learning activities are varied, well paced, provide challenge and are well matched to learners' different abilities;
 - R7 increase the number of learning opportunities in ABE and ESOL;
 - R8 ensure that all ESOL learners gain appropriate outcomes and make progress;
and
 - R9 ensure that learners of Welsh for Adults use Welsh as the target language in lessons and provide opportunities for learners to speak Welsh outside of the class.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

32 Overall, learners' standards of achievement in the sessions inspected are as follows:

Learners' standards of achievement				
Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
9%	61%	28%	2%	0%

33 The standards achieved in each of the learning areas inspected are as follows:

Learning area inspected	Inspection grade
ABE/ESOL	3
Welsh for Adults	3
Adult Learning	2
Community Development	2

Success in attaining agreed learning goals

34 Attainment rates vary too much across the learning areas. In Community Development and ABE, they are good and improving. In Community Development, for example, attainment rates between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 rose from 77% to 84%. Attainment rates in Welsh for Adults are also improving. In accredited Adult Learning classes, attainment is too variable and in ESOL, a minority of learners leave the class before they can take an examination.

35 In Welsh for Adults and Adult Learning, completion rates are good. In Welsh for Adults, for example, completion rates in 2006-2007 were 84%, which is above the national comparator of 81%. In most ABE and ESOL classes, completion rates are poor at 74%.

Progress in learning

36 Many learners make good progress and move on to the next stages of learning. In Welsh for Adults, many learners develop good oral and listening skills, can read texts in Welsh and complete written tasks that are appropriate for their level. A few learners practise their language in the community. A few learners do not progress well enough and use too much English in class. This slows the progress they make in developing their oral skills in Welsh. A few ESOL learners do not attend well enough to make good progress and in a minority of cases the wide range of ability levels within the same ESOL class hinders progress too much.

37 In Adult Learning, learners develop good skills in communication, problem solving and working with others. However, a few learners on access to higher education courses do not pay enough attention to grammar and spelling in their written work.

- 38 In Community Development, learners on IT courses develop higher level skills and progress from simple tasks to using desktop publishing and working with spreadsheets. Nearly all learners in ABE classes in Coleg Powys provision in 2006-2007 progress to a higher level of study.

Development of personal, social and learning skills

- 39 Nearly all learners are well motivated and work together well in their classes. They help each other to learn and form good relationships with their tutors.
- 40 Many learners grow in confidence while attending these classes and improve their social skills. This is especially true for more vulnerable learners who may be starting from a low confidence threshold. A few ABE learners find employment after developing new skills.
- 41 Many learners put the skills they learn in class to good use in their everyday lives. For example in Adult Learning, learners in rural farming communities have developed new business opportunities after improving their IT skills. In Community Development, learners apply aspects of the farm management skills they learn to other business activities.
- 42 In Welsh for Adults, learners take responsibility for their own learning and attend additional community-based events. In a few cases, members of Adult Learning classes who live in isolated communities also maintain their contacts outside of the class by forming social networks. In addition, older learners in these classes use their learning opportunities well to stay active in their communities.
- 43 Most learners in Powys attend their classes regularly. The overall attendance figure during the inspection was 77%; this is above the average seen on other ACL inspections in this cycle. The exception to this is in ESOL, where attendance rates are poor.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

The quality of teaching in the learning areas inspected				
Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	62%	26%	6%	2%

- 44 Teaching and assessment in most ACL provision in Powys is at least satisfactory.
- 45 Many tutors show good subject knowledge and have effective teaching skills. They plan their sessions well and, in the best cases, involve their learners in designing the learning programme. They communicate clearly the learning aims and objectives so that the learners understand what they are going to learn. As a result, learners take ownership of, and sustain interest in, their learning.
- 46 Nearly all tutors establish effective working relationships with their learners. They help learners to feel confident about themselves and their learning. In most classes, tutors develop their learners' personal and social skills well, so that learners share ideas and resources and support each other to achieve their learning goals.
- 47 The majority of tutors have high expectations of their learners and challenge them effectively. This brings the best out of the learners. In the majority of sessions, tutors vary the pace well to meet learners' needs and to maintain their enthusiasm for their learning.
- 48 Nevertheless, a minority of tutors do not include enough activities which vary the pace of sessions, or which engage and challenge the learners. Too often, they lead discussions themselves and rely too heavily on worksheets. In these sessions, tutors do not give learners enough opportunities to work together to solve problems and reflect on what they are learning.
- 49 In most sessions, tutors do not use ICT to support and extend the learning. Tutors do not demonstrate enough how computer-based technology can make learning more interesting and accessible. In a few cases, the quality of handouts is poor. In mixed level classes, particularly in ESOL and Welsh for Adults, tutors do not manage the sessions well enough. They do not adapt work to meet the individual needs and abilities of the learners.
- 50 During the sessions, many tutors carry out regular, informal assessment and monitor learners' progress on a one-to-one basis very effectively. However, across all learning areas, tutors' use of ILPs and records of assessment varies too much.
- 51 A minority of tutors do not make best use of ILPs and/or records of assessment to monitor the ongoing achievements of learners. Consequently, learners do not always have a clear understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 52 Many courses are successful in meeting the needs of learners and local communities. Learners increase their skills for employment, develop personal skills and contribute to the community. For example, learners develop skills which help them keep in touch with their children and grandchildren via email and webcam. Farmers use IT skills for personal development and to enable them to diversify their businesses. Probation clients engaged in painting a community building as part of their offending order, become more involved in aspects of community life.
- 53 There is a wide range of accredited and non-accredited adult and community learning opportunities to meet the needs of rural communities. There is a good spread of provision throughout the county. In most cases this is in suitable, central locations, and in areas of greatest need. Providers make good use of village halls, so that learners do not have to travel too far to attend. The partnership offers day and evening classes and there are a few Saturday classes for conversational Welsh and for ESOL which meets well the needs of learners who work full-time. There are good opportunities for Welsh learners in Powys as Welsh for Adults classes, at all levels, are available throughout the county. Early evening ICT courses are effective in attracting learners who have been at work during the day.
- 54 There is effective, targeted provision, particularly in areas of rural deprivation. Providers are successful in attracting learners back into learning. In Community Development, local groups in Communities First areas, recruit young parents to short IT courses. A few of these learners progress to other courses such as ABE, counselling and health and social care. Many learners attend short courses, particularly in ICT. This type of provision is attractive to those returning to learning.
- 55 The Powys ACL partners work well together, at an operational level, to audit and plan the curriculum. In Ystradgynlais, they are effective in sharing resources which reduces competition. Social services and MIND work well with the partnership to refer adults with mental health issues or learning disabilities to classes, and to set up relevant learning opportunities.
- 56 A few learners take part in activities that expand and enrich their learning. Handicraft learners gain more ideas about their subject area after a visit to the National Exhibition Centre. Welsh for Adults learners take part in a variety of locally organised activities. The Mentrau Iaith and the MWWfAC give learners opportunities to practice their oral skills and to integrate into their local community.
- 57 Providers respond well to the needs of local employers. Coleg Powys staff have consulted extensively with employers and several have signed the Employer Pledge scheme which supports employees to improve their basic skills. One catering factory with a 100% migrant workforce offers a class where workers learn to read recipes. This helps these learners work more efficiently. Coleg Powys and CHWEA raise basic skills awareness throughout the provision by training staff and community tutors. This means staff can more effectively signpost learners to classes.

- 58 Providers promote sustainability issues well. In a minority of classes, learners carry out projects on sustainability and environmental issues. Following one project in an ABE class, a learner has become a sustainability champion at her workplace. In an Access to Higher Education class, learners are active in promoting sustainability issues. A few learners share transport to attend classes. Coleg Powys has an extensive recycling programme, and learners in floristry and arts and crafts classes recycle materials.
- 59 There are too few learning opportunities for ABE and ESOL learners across the partnership. For the few ESOL learners who have literacy needs in their first language or who have had limited education in their home country, the lack of classes has an even greater impact on their ability to progress. There is poor access in some outlying areas. In a few ESOL classes, there are limited opportunities for learners to gain a certificate. Most ESOL learners only attend one class a week which does not give them enough time to consolidate their learning.
- 60 In adult learning, ESOL and community development, learners have limited opportunities to progress to a higher level. In a few ESOL classes, there is a very wide ability level in the same class. However, generally, many learners progress to other subjects, albeit at a similar level, by joining other classes at the centre they are attending. The use of ICT media such as video conferencing to promote distance learning is too limited.
- 61 There are not enough opportunities for learners to improve their bilingual skills or to learn through the medium of Welsh. In community development and adult learning, there is little incidental use of Welsh. In ABE and ESOL classes, there is not enough reference to Welsh history and culture.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 62 The quality of care, support and guidance for learners in Powys is good; however, it is not yet available to all learners throughout the county.
- 63 Qualified staff offer good advice and guidance and many tutors receive awareness training to help them signpost learners to appropriate advice and counselling services. Providers use well-established links with specialist agencies, like Careers Wales, to advise on employment opportunities and additional training available for learners.
- 64 All providers use brochures, leaflets and websites to offer a comprehensive range of information. However, providers do not always target information at hard to reach learners effectively enough. They use successfully a range of events and venues throughout the county to promote classes. Despite this, a few learners find it difficult to access information on courses and some information is not detailed or clear enough.
- 65 Providers monitor effectively learners' attendance. Many tutors follow up absences with phone calls or emails. They do this for monitoring purposes, but they also check on the well-being of their learners. Tutors in many classes arrange for other learners to collect work on behalf of those who are absent. A few tutors send assignments to their learners by email.

- 66 Most learners receive an initial assessment of their learning needs. In a few cases they receive a full diagnostic assessment and screening for dyslexia. ESOL and ABE learners undertake a detailed basic skills assessment. Tutors offer good support when learners themselves identify specific needs. A very few tutors are not aware of the procedures to obtain support for learners with dyslexia.
- 67 Tutors provide the majority of learners with a good induction. This covers health and safety, fire evacuation, equality and diversity, standards of behaviour and rights and responsibilities. The induction ensures learners experience a smooth introduction to learning.
- 68 The majority of tutors make good use of Individual Learning Plans to record learners' additional support requirements and to monitor their progress. Tutors in a few classes do not understand well enough how important it is to meet learners' support needs if they are to succeed on their course. In ABE and ESOL, qualified learning support workers work well alongside learners, though for a few ESOL learners, there is not enough literacy support in class. In a community development group for learners with mental health problems, a personal support worker accompanies a few learners to their class. Many learners use additional support materials and equipment, including reading materials on coloured paper, large font printed materials, and adapted IT hardware and software. A minority of tutors are not aware enough of this type of support or how to access it for their learners.
- 69 All providers use the Genesis Child Care Project to offer learners childcare. Coleg Powys also reserves a number of places with local childcare providers. This helps more learners to attend classes. In a few cases, learners do not secure childcare and a few learners are unable to obtain information on what childcare is on offer. It is therefore more difficult for them to attend classes regularly.
- 70 Most providers have assistance or hardship funds for learners needing financial support. Providers do not always make information about this help readily available. Learners on a few courses are able to obtain Individual Learning Account (ILA) funding. In a minority of classes, tutors either provide materials for learners at a reduced price or loan a range of equipment and materials. This helps these learners to complete their courses.
- 71 Most learners know what to do if they have a complaint. Providers also train tutors about complaints procedures and policies and procedures for working with vulnerable adults. The majority of tutors have current CRB checks with only a very few tutors still undergoing the clearance process at the time of inspection.
- 72 All providers carry out activity risk assessments and the majority of venues seen on inspection are accessible to all learners.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 73 The partnership has a clear vision for ACL in Powys which is set out well in its terms of reference. The partnership has clear and relevant aims which match successfully to wider Assembly national learning and skills priorities.
- 74 The partnership has effective arrangements in place to manage its work. A strategic and an operational group meet regularly and all ACL providers attend well. However, Powys County Council representatives on the partnership management group do not have sufficient authority to make resource decisions at a strategic level in order to carry out the Powys Adult and Community Learning Strategy action plan. The partnership is at an early stage of development, but is already improving joint working. Individual partners work well together to common strategic goals. Managers ensure that individual Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) reflect the overall strategic aims of the partnership and contribute effectively to the joint SAR. This improves the ability of individual providers to work at a more strategic level in Powys.
- 75 The partnership has positioned itself well to be a key partner for the delivery of the Powys County Council Community Strategy. The partnership makes a good contribution to improving social inclusion and the quality of life for adult learners. It does this through a variety of community development activities. However, the partnership does not realise well enough the full potential of these activities. It does not share a common understanding or have a strategic overview for community engagement and capacity building in Powys.
- 76 The partnership is committed to raising standards across all ACL provision. It has introduced a standardised ILP for learners and produced for the first time a joint self-assessment report (SAR) and Quality Development Plan (QDP). However, not all partners have embedded these measures well enough to impact on standards.
- 77 The partnership does not yet manage performance improvement well enough. The County Council does not manage closely enough its franchised provision with Coleg Powys. The council does not monitor formally against the performance indicators it agreed in the service level agreement. In addition, the partnership QDP does not have clear time-bound and staged actions. This means the partnership cannot monitor actively enough how much progress it is making.
- 78 Providers have used membership of the revised ACL partnership well to promote their provision more strategically. One good example of this is the joint publicity work. The partnership's work is less well developed in strategic planning. Although it has audited the ACL curriculum in Powys, it has not yet used this information to identify gaps or duplication. This means the partnership is unable at this stage to strategically plan and target provision to its best effect for learners.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 79 The partnership has produced a comprehensive joint SAR and QDP. This involved every provider and staff at all levels. All partners are working well together towards achieving the priorities identified in the SAR. The partnership QDP makes good use of risk assessments for completing key actions within agreed timescales.
- 80 The partnership and its providers have good self-assessment arrangements in place to monitor and improve the quality of provision. Managers use the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) well to assess provision. There are good quality course reviews leading to clear actions for improvement in Coleg Powys Adult Basic Education and Adult Learning courses. A few individual providers have action plans at course level that are not detailed enough. This makes it difficult to say what the specific steps are to improve quality and how partners will measure progress.
- 81 Managers use partnership working well to plan and deliver quality improvement. All providers have appropriate staff review and performance measures in place to improve and support the performance of staff. The partnership successfully develops common quality assurance processes and shares staff development training which support these. For example, many staff have recently attended joint training on the implementation and use of Individual Learning Plans. Although it is good that these arrangements are in place, it is too early for the partnership to assess their impact on driving up quality.
- 82 All providers have good arrangements in place to observe tutors in class. The effectiveness of the observation scheme is variable across the partnership. In the best cases, tutors receive good, accurate oral and written feedback on their performance. In a few cases, the feedback does not identify well enough what tutors need to do to improve their teaching.
- 83 The partnership works effectively to share good practice. Coleg Powys makes available to the partnership, an effective ICT based communication system called Moodle. Providers make good use of Moodle to share examples of quality improvement documents. One provider, new to the partnership, has replaced its organisation's self-assessment with the template adopted by the partnership. The partnership has recently begun to collect and share useful data to help analyse and monitor its performance. However it does not always make effective use of data to set targets for improvement.
- 84 The partnership and its providers consult well with learners. They have used the results to improve curriculum planning. They do this through community consultation events, road shows, questionnaires and surveys.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 85 The partnership has made good progress in managing its resources. The recent review of adult learning in Powys has improved the funding arrangements and increased membership of the partnership. Although the partnership is making progress, it has not yet identified the full range of resources that all partners bring to the partnership. This means that the partnership does not know clearly enough how effectively it uses resources to improve adult community-based learning in Powys. For example, the IT, Arts and Health and Fitness programmes run by Powys County Council in museums, leisure centres and other community venues are not included in partnership planning. The partnership's strategic planning does not take enough account of The Communities First programme.
- 86 All providers in the partnership keep good records of staff qualifications and experience. Many tutors are well qualified and have relevant experience in the subjects they teach. All providers in the partnership carry out staff reviews. In the best cases, providers use these records and reviews well to deploy tutors and to arrange staff development programmes.
- 87 Providers in the partnership work well individually and together to provide good staff development opportunities. They make effective use of Assembly Government Common Investment Funds to train staff in basic skills and to develop partnership-wide induction training for tutors.
- 88 Coleg Powys helps the partnership to develop its resources by hosting an internet website, <http://www.epowys.net>. This shares effectively a range of management, teaching, and learning resources with staff and learners of all providers.
- 89 The majority of learners in IT classes have access to good up-to-date equipment and software in their classes. Though for a minority of other adult community-based learners, ICT resources are not good enough. For example, there are few electronic whiteboards in community venues. In a minority of sessions in community venues, there are not enough teaching and learning resources for ESOL learners.
- 90 Generally, venues used by the partnership are accessible to adult community-based learners. A few venues are not suitable. For example, Welsh for Adults and Adult Learning classes run in junior schools use furniture that is too small for learners to use comfortably and safely. In many classrooms and centres, there is not enough interesting display material and they are not welcoming enough for adult learners.
- 91 In the best cases, providers at an operational level work well together to identify resources which improve programmes for adult community-based learners. For example, a Training Forum in a Community First ward brings partnership providers, childcare providers and local venue managers together to develop education programmes for local adult learners.
- 92 Overall Powys adult community-based learning provides adequate value for money.

Standards achieved by learners in learning areas inspected

Learning area: **Adult Basic Education and English for Speakers of other Languages**

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 93 Overall, attainment rates for ABE and ESOL are satisfactory and show an improving trend since 2005. For a few courses, literacy attainment rates are very good. In ESOL the attainment rate for speaking and listening is also very good. Completion rates for ABE and ESOL are poor across the provision. Enrolments for ESOL have increased considerably over the three-year period to 2006-2007.
- 94 All learners have an ILP but these do not guide ESOL learners at lower levels of ability, well enough. Learners do not always understand the language used to write their targets and are not sure how to improve. A minority of ESOL learners do not remain on courses long enough to take an examination.
- 95 The majority of ABE learners make good progress with their literacy and numeracy skills and understanding. Nearly all learners in ABE classes in Coleg Powys provision in 2006-2007 progressed to a higher level. For example, nearly all learners progressed from an introductory class which aims to improve basic and IT skills to level 1 basic skills. In a few cases, learners progress from ABE classes onto courses in other learning areas, for example Welsh for Adults, Clait and flower arranging.
- 96 Many ESOL learners do not develop their English language skills well enough. In most cases, they can only attend one class per week. They do not have sufficient opportunity to practise, improve and consolidate their language skills in classes. Nearly all ESOL learners have a reasonable level of passive understanding. However, they do not practise speaking and writing enough to improve their active use of the language. In a minority of cases, poor attendance in ESOL classes hinders learners' progress too much.
- 97 Learners value the help they receive from tutors and other learners. They work well together and offer each other support and encouragement. For example the more able learners in a numeracy class offer support to the less able in a practical exercise. Nearly all learners improve their independent learning skills using homework, dictionaries and by accessing relevant websites. Nearly all learners become more confident and improve their self-esteem. One learner has learned to read for the first time in his life. In a few cases learners are able to achieve a job outcome due to their increased self-belief and newly developed skills. For many learners who experienced failure at school this is a significant achievement.

Learning area: Welsh for Adults

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 98 Most learners are motivated and enthusiastic and are aware of the benefits of learning Welsh. They make good progress towards the general learning aims they set out for their courses and achieve a good standard of work. However, nearly half of the learners do not realise how well they are progressing and do not understand what they need to do to improve.
- 99 The overall attendance of 78% is above the average of 73% recorded in other Adult Community Learning inspections. Enrolment numbers have increased since 2005-2006. Seven hundred and ninety-eight learners enrolled in 2005-2006 and 980 learners enrolled in 2006-2007. Enrolments for the first term of 2007-2008 are higher than numbers enrolled in the corresponding term during the past two years¹.
- 100 Attainment rates were 40% in 2005-2006 and rose to 55% in 2006-2007. Completion rates in 2005-2006 were 81% and rose to 84% in 2006-2007. This is above the national comparator of 81% for completion rates.
- 101 Many learners develop good oral and listening skills. Successful learners on intensive Wlpan entry level courses, for example, are able to hold a basic conversation with good pronunciation after attending the course for only three months. A few learners, however, do not make appropriate progress for the level of their course. Learners on a few entry level courses need constant prompting from their tutors to produce sentences using basic language patterns. A few learners use too much English in class and, as a result, they do not develop their oral skills in Welsh well enough.
- 102 Many learners can read simple texts with meaning and good intonation. A few more advanced learners are reading short stories, novels aimed at Welsh learners, newspapers, magazines and *papurau bro*².
- 103 Most learners complete written tasks that are appropriate for their level, both in class and for homework. The majority of learners attending higher level courses are able to write with increasing accuracy and are beginning to include Welsh idioms in their work.
- 104 All learners support each other well and often help each other to learn. Most learners also have a good working relationship with their tutors. This helps to develop the self-confidence and motivation of learners. A minority of learners, however, are too dependent on their tutors and do not develop as independent Welsh speakers.
- 105 A few learners, at all levels, take responsibility for their own learning and practise their Welsh oral skills by attending additional learning opportunities available within the community. This helps them to practise and improve their language skills.

¹ Unverified data supplied by Aberystwyth University

² Local newspapers

Learning area: Adult Learning

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings
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- 106 Learner completion rates on accredited and non-accredited courses are generally good. However, attainment rates on accredited courses are variable. Attainment rates on access to higher education programmes are good, but attainment rates on other certificated programmes are not of a consistently good level between 2005-2008.
- 107 Most learners in adult learning classes make good progress. In environmental studies, most learners make good use of information sources from the radio, television and internet. They have a good grasp of sustainability issues and they are able to say what these issues mean for the local area. In modern foreign languages, learners in Russian classes are able to present a topic in Russian and answer other learners' questions with a degree of fluency. In classes, such as sugarcraft, flower arranging and creative willow, many learners apply skills successfully to make artefacts of very high quality to their own design.
- 108 Most learners make good progress in developing wider key skills through the tasks they undertake in class. In a few cases, learners use the IT skills they learn to order groceries from supermarkets via the internet as an alternative way of shopping. A few learners' writing skills in access to higher education and IT classes are not satisfactory. They do not pay enough attention to grammar and spelling.
- 109 Most learners are well motivated. Seventy-eight per cent of learners attended adult learning classes during the inspection. This is three percentage points above the average attendance for all AL learners during inspections in the inspection cycle since 2004. In the best cases, learners are motivated to develop their learning outside the classroom. In creative willow, most learners plan well thought-out designs for the products they make.
- 110 In many cases, learners use newly developed skills to extend their earning capacity. A learner from a farming area affected by foot and mouth uses her IT skills well to support an alternative business venture in bed and breakfast.
- 111 Most learners come to classes well prepared. In flower arranging classes, many learners bring resources from their gardens which they share with other learners. However, a few learners are not aware enough of health and safety issues.
- 112 Most learners engage actively in sessions. In pottery classes, learners are confident enough to ask tutors searching questions and to develop their own ideas that further their learning. However, in a few classes, learners do not contribute enough to class discussion.
- 113 In many classes, learners support each other's learning well. In a few cases, learners in isolated communities form social networks and maintain their contacts outside of class. In creative writing classes, learners gain confidence through being able to produce writing which interests other people.

- 114 Older learners use learning opportunities well to stay active in their communities and to travel to other areas to take part in activities. Older learners in IT classes use email well to keep in regular contact with relatives and friends around the world. The development of these skills contributes to older learners' well-being.

Learning area: Community Development

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings
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- 115 In Community Development, enrolment, completion and attainment rates are good and improving. Enrolments in Coleg Powys courses have increased from 240 learners in 2005-2006 to 1,266 in 2006-2007. Enrolments in YMCA courses have also increased over the same period from 393 learners in 2005-2006 to 514 in 2006-2007. Attainment rates for accredited courses for all providers have also risen from an average of 77% to 84% over the same period. However, a few learners do not continue with the courses they have started. Learner completion rates vary from 69% in one provider to 99% in another provider.
- 116 Many learners engage well with their tutor and their peers, and work effectively together to support and improve learning. Most learners achieve good or very good standards in their course work. They know what they want to learn and how well they are doing. They are good at organising their files and keep good records of their work. Most learners continue on to other courses including progression onto higher-level skills. For example, learners start with how to turn on a computer, select programmes, and organise files. They then progress to the use of desktop publishing packages, and the creation and manipulation of spreadsheets.
- 117 Many learners make good use of their learning by using their skills and knowledge in their everyday lives. For example, learners are better able to manage conflict situations, access ICT on their home computers, and use aspects of farm management in their home lives and other business activities. In addition, many of the more vulnerable learners improve their self-confidence and social skills despite starting from a low confidence threshold.
- 118 Overall, 85% of learners in community development classes were present in the sessions observed. This is eight percentage points higher than the average attendance figures seen on other inspections of community development classes.

Providers' response to the report findings

Members of the Powys Adult and Community Learning Partnership welcome this report which is received at an important stage within the Partnership's development.

We are pleased to note the strong correlation between the findings of the inspection team with those within our own self assessment report and we will consider carefully the report's recommendations with a view to incorporating them within the Partnership's quality development plan where appropriate.

In view of the rural nature of the area and its demographic and economic structure, it is pleasing that the report has recognised and commended the geographic spread of provision and the good response to the needs of employers. These are particular challenges in Powys that have been addressed effectively in the past by individual members of the Partnership and which will be developed further through our co-ordinated efforts in the future.

We understand the need to improve the strategic management of all aspects of the Partnership's work and to ensure the effective deployment of all the resources available for adult community based learning. In particular, we shall engage further with other local partnerships so as to contribute further to their work of engaging and building capacity within the diverse communities of the County.

We believe that this report supports our view that the Partnership adds value to the work of individual providers and that we can now move forward collectively to drive up participation and the quality of adult learning throughout the communities of Powys.

Appendix 1

Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection team consisted of HMI, additional inspectors and a peer assessor. The team carried out 54 inspection visits and 24 meetings in March 2008.

The team visited:

- teaching sessions;
- a variety of learner activities; and
- community venues.

Members of the team met with:

- learners;
- tutors;
- managers;
- the Principal, and Governors of Coleg Powys;
- the Head of Schools and Inclusion, and officers, Powys County Council;
- the Director and Chairman of Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations;
- the University of Aberystwyth Welsh for Adults service manager and staff;
- the Director of the YMCA;
- the managers and staff from WEA(S); and
- the managers, staff and a governor from CHWEA.

The team also considered:

- a wide selection of learners' work; and
- comprehensive documentation made available by providers, both before and during the inspection.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Rachael Bubalo HMI	Reporting Inspector
Enid Hankins HMI	Deputy Reporting Inspector
Gerard Kerslake HMI	Team Inspector
Penny Lewis HMI	Team Inspector
Jenny Blackaby	Additional Inspector
Megan Dauksta	Additional Inspector
Jo Fowler	Additional Inspector
Patrick Gormley	Additional Inspector
Gillian Jones	Additional Inspector
Steve Mason	Additional Inspector
Jina Gwrfai	Peer Assessor
Sian Pinner	Provider nominee

Appendix 3

Data and statistics: Explanatory note

The statistics described in the report refer to the **National Comparators for Further Education and Work Based Learning** for 2004/2005 and are based on **the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)**. These statistics are compiled by DCELLS from data supplied by individual organisations and institutions and provide comparative data for a range of courses across 15 learning areas.

The National Comparators enable inspectors to compare similar data for individual organisations and institutions and to make judgements about the performance of particular courses and learning areas within institutions and organisations.

There is currently one set of National Comparators:

Completion – this comparator is concerned with the percentage of learners who complete their learning activity, in other words, the percentage of learners who enrol on courses and who stay on their course to the end. However, national comparators are not available for the full range of courses encompassed by adult community-based learning.

Inspectors also use the **LLWR** to determine the size and scale of provision in an area and to compare the scope of each provider's provision.

Providers' own data

Estyn considers that providers should be monitoring the performance of their ACL provision to assess the quality of courses offered to adult learners and to improve outcomes for learners.

Estyn asks providers to supply a summary of their own data before an inspection about the performance of individual courses and qualifications and report on:

- enrolments;
- completion;
- attainments; and
- trends over time.

Inspectors use the data provided to compare the performance of learning areas and individual courses with national comparators for completion. Inspectors also use the data, along with first-hand evidence, to make judgements about the standards achieved by learners.