

What are we hoping to improve?

As a result of our development planning we have prioritised the following actions for 2005

- Improved information for learners by producing a clearer prospectus and by developing our information and advice services.
- More opportunities for staff to improve their skills and qualifications after identifying what they need from observations.
- Improved marketing to learners to let them know how we can meet their needs.
- The promotion of good practice in health and safety and the concept of the safe learner.
- More advice sessions for learners without a level 2 qualification (NVQ level 2 or 5 GCSE A*-C).
- The development of our data collection and the production of an annual report to share information with our partners.
- Introduction of Service Level agreements for our providers to ensure our targets are met.
- Opportunities to share good practice.
- The formation of a West Berkshire ACL Equalities Group.
- Feedback to learners on what we do through the newsletter "Making it Happen".
- Increased focus on targeted provision for learners experiencing barriers to learning and higher fees for people attending leisure courses from August 2006.

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Welcome to the first annual performance report for Adult and Community Learning to be published in "Making it Happen". This report covers the academic year from 1st August 2003 - 31 July 2004.

Who are we?

| | | |
|---|--|---------------------|
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What do we do?

Our mission is to assist all adult and family learners to achieve their potential through the provision of learning opportunities that:

- are of high quality
- are safe
- are equitably distributed throughout West Berkshire (including rural areas)
- include impartial information, advice and guidance
- are accessible to all
- are varied, and designed to meet the needs and wants of local people
- Allow learners to progress



What were our major achievements?

We are careful in our planning to make sure that people experiencing barriers to learning can be helped to attend, in order to ensure social inclusion and widening participation.

Full details of West Berkshire Council's aims and priorities are contained in the Adult and Community Learning 3-Year Development Plan 2003-06 which is available from the Adult and Community Learning Team.

In support of these aims and priorities the Council subcontracted its adult and community learning provision to two main providers during 2003-04: Newbury College and Theale Green Community School (TGCS). The Council also had partnership agreements with schools, charities and other community and voluntary sector organisations.

In 2003-04 there were 8917 enrolments 78% of which were delivered through Newbury College, 13% through Theale Green Community School and 9% were delivered by partners. During 2003-04 approximately 605 courses were delivered by Newbury College, 42% in the College building and 58% out in community venues, 86 courses by Theale Green Community School and 128 courses by our 31 community partners. The subsidy per enrolment, calculated for national performance indicators was £52.16 and the number of enrolments per 1000 of the West Berkshire adult population was 82.1

The council also supports activities and events to promote adult learning, and provides an information and advice service to learners as part of the Berkshire information, advice and guidance network.

The Council's strategy reflected the key principles identified in West Berkshire's Adult Learning Plans for 2004 to 2006 which are:

- Improving quality and effectiveness and ensuring value for money
- Increasing participation and responding to customer demand
- Extending provision and promoting learning
- Raising employability skills and promoting learning organisations
- Working in partnership

The challenges facing adult education providers in West Berkshire include:

- Preparing people for the world of work
- Providing access for people who experience barriers to learning
- Providing the current workforce with opportunities to retrain and develop skills throughout their working lives
- Giving people unfamiliar with new technology and those in rural areas the skills to make use of broad band and other technologies to access Council services



The main achievements for the year were:

- The development of a clear and effective strategic plan focusing on local and national priorities
- Targeted provision increased the number of learners *aged over 75 years, from ethnic minority communities, with learning difficulties and disabilities and people from areas of deprivation.*
- A new curriculum management structure was introduced at Newbury College, led by the Centre Heads, to facilitate meetings at which lecturers can share good practice, resources and equipment and mentor new staff. A curriculum support group has been formed for Modern Foreign Languages staff.
- A common approach to the observation of teaching and learning has been adopted and a team of observers trained. Specialist observations have also been carried out. This has resulted in an improvement in observation grades as noted in the ALI Re-inspection report.
- A web based management information system has been commissioned by the Council and the Learning and Skills Council data returns were delivered on time. Performance indicator reports have been produced throughout the year to assist planning, monitoring of providers and to report to the ACL Providers' Curriculum and Quality Group.
- In September 2003 the Council's Adult and Community Learning Team achieved the matrix quality standard for information, advice and guidance. The emphasis on information and advice has increased and more training has been included in initial staff induction and in teacher forums.

- As a result of support from the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council, a programme of continuous professional development has been introduced, so that lecturers and project managers can access training locally and throughout Berkshire.
- Course levels have been identified in the Newbury College course prospectuses and for community projects.
- A formal process for approving changes to the agreed programme delivered by providers has been introduced.
- Improved monitoring of Health and Safety has been achieved through the introduction of a pre-activity questionnaire for exercise classes and an audit of Newbury College ACL venues and a monitored health and safety action plan.
- The ACL team have contributed to national training courses on the ALI Inspection process and have been complemented on the effectiveness of their support in assisting others in preparing for inspection and re-inspection.
- Lessons learnt in West Berkshire during the re-inspection process were written up in the ALI publication Talisman which has a national circulation.
- Following a successful bid for a capital grant, a new joint adult learning centre and library, known as The Gateway, has been built in partnership with Theale Green Community School, West Berkshire Library Service and the Learning and Skills Council in Church Road, Theale.
- An ACL and Family Learning room has been developed at St Mary's Church of England Primary School in North Thatcham.



Did we meet our targets?

We set ourselves the following targets for 2003-04

| | Target | Achieved |
|---|-------------|----------|
| Overall number of learners | 4350 | 4479 |
| Proportion of learners who are male | 28% | 29% |
| Proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | 6% | 8% |
| Proportion of learners aged 75+ | 2 % | 6% |
| Proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups* | 3% | 4% |
| Proportion of enrolments on concessionary fees in receipt of benefits | 1.5% | 4% |
| Proportion of learners on community projects | 8 -10% | 16% |
| Proportion of learners aged 60+ | 36% or less | 29% |

*Ethnic Minority = Learners other than White British

What was the result of our self assessment?

Each year, as a condition of our funding by the Learning and Skills Council, West Berkshire Council conducts a self-assessment of its provision and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the service. This year the judgements relied heavily on those made by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in their re-inspection of adult and community learning in West Berkshire in December 2003 but also included judgements made in end of course reports from lecturers, course surveys completed by learners, comments and letters from learners and self assessment reports from providers and projects.

| Leadership and Management | 3 |
|---------------------------|---|
| Contributory Grades | |
| Equality of Opportunity | 3 |
| Quality Assurance | 3 |

| Area of Learning | Grade |
|---|-------|
| Science and Mathematics | 3 |
| Land-based provision | 2 |
| Construction | 2 |
| Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing | 2 |
| Business, Administration, Management and Professional | 3 |
| Information and communications technology | 3 |
| Retailing, customer service and transportation | 3 |
| Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel | 2 |
| Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy | 2 |
| Health and social care | 3 |
| Visual and performing arts and media | 3 |
| English, languages and communications | 2 |
| Foundation programmes (SLLD) | 2 |
| Family Learning | 3 |
| Community Learning | 2 |

The key challenges identified in the ALI feedback to the Council after the ACL re-inspection were:

- Continue to develop quality systems and processes
- Continue to improve the consistency of teaching and learning
- Increase the opportunities for lecturers to share good practice
- Revise documentation used with some students

Grades

- Grade 1 - outstanding
- Grade 2 - good
- Grade 3 - satisfactory
- Grade 4 - unsatisfactory
- Grade 5 - very weak

The key findings of the re-inspection and the self assessment review are:

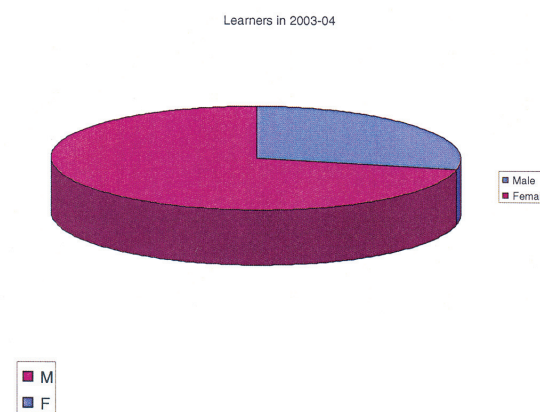
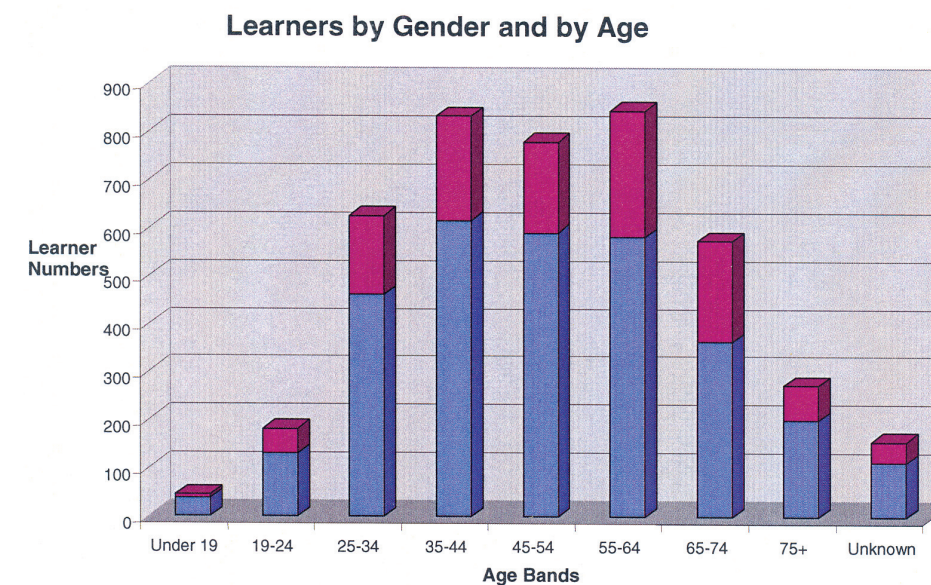
- There is good management of Adult and Community Learning contracts
- The Council's self assessment and action planning processes are detailed and thorough.
- 29% of learning sessions were awarded grades of very good or excellent by the Adult Learning Inspectorate and 66% of learning sessions were awarded good or satisfactory.
- The council met its target of observing 40% of lecturers during the year.
- There are imaginative initiatives to widen participation in learning in West Berkshire by colleges, schools, family learning providers and community projects.
- A programme of professional development for Adult and Community Learning Staff has been introduced so that lecturers can access training locally and throughout Berkshire
- Most learners produce good work and achieve their learning goals
- There is a good range of ICT equipment available for all learners and there are good resources for most sports and leisure lessons.

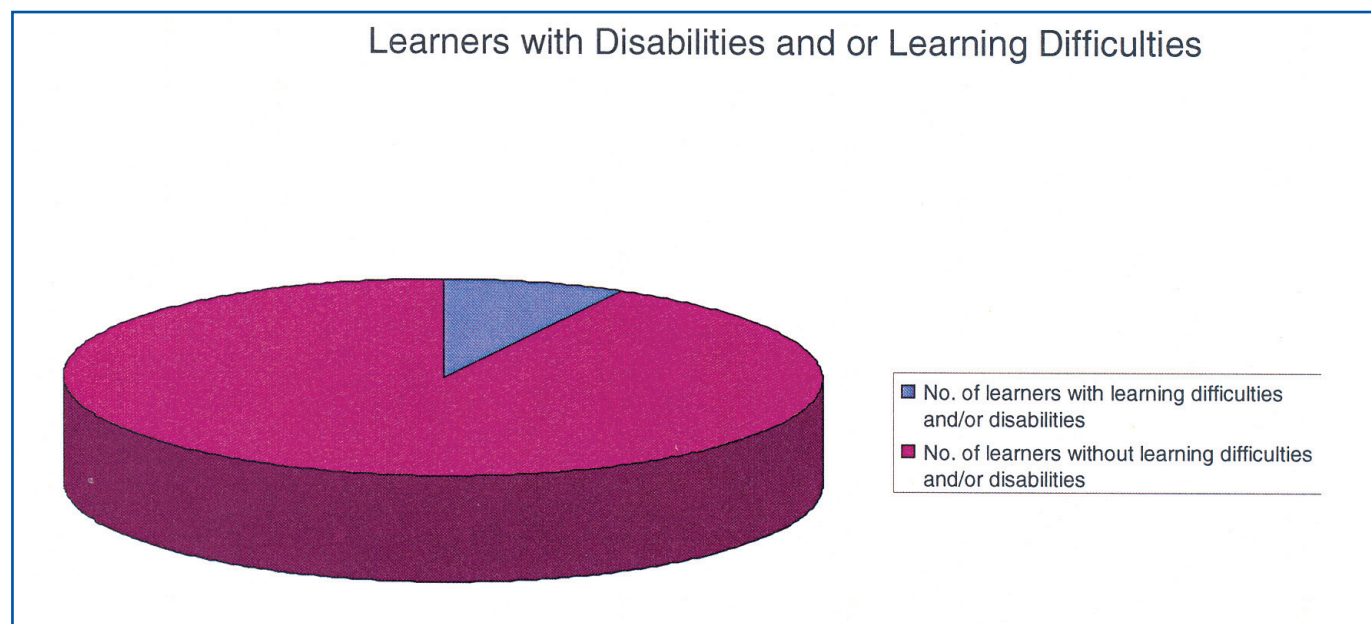
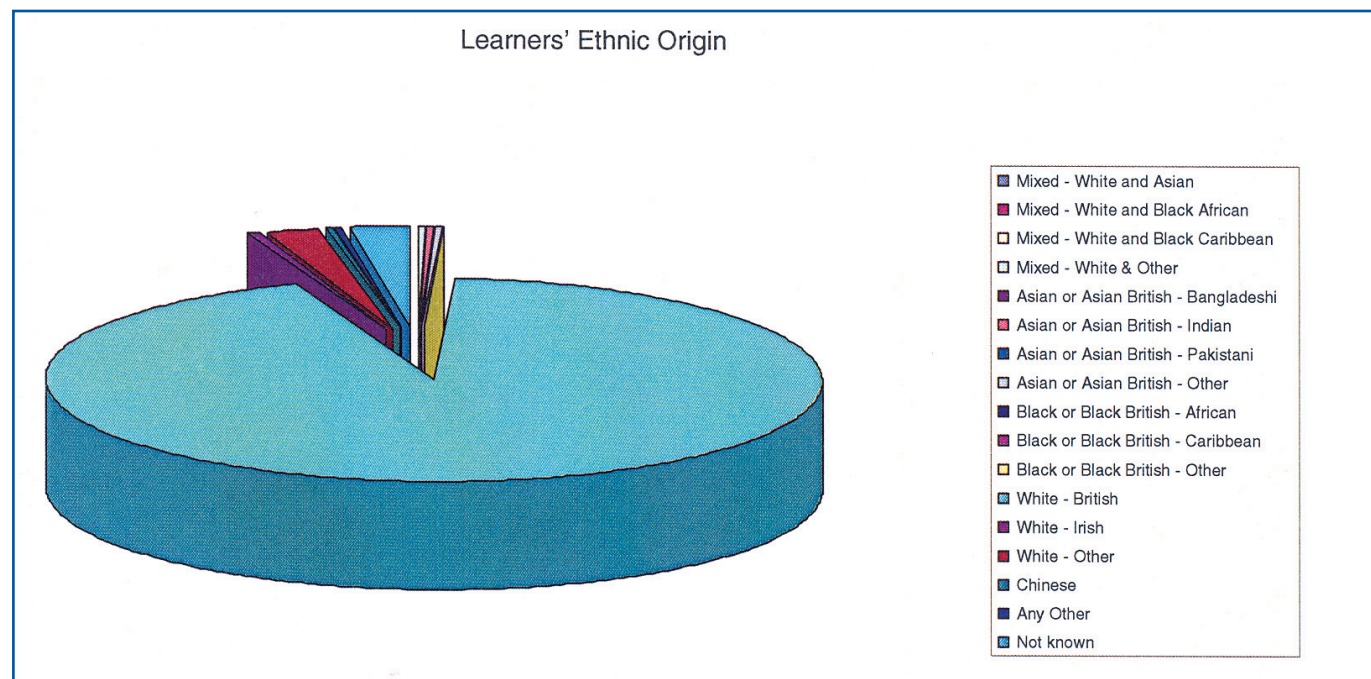
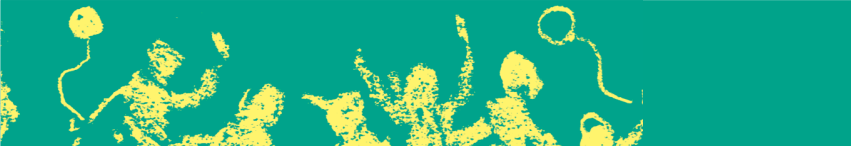
Some of the issues that we need to work on are:

- The application of new quality assurance systems is inconsistent. Lecturers need more training to understand the need for developing course records to support teaching and to record learners' achievement and progress. Some of the forms need to be redesigned for some groups of learners
- There are limited progression routes for learners to develop their learning; this must be addressed by clearer planning and more formal structuring of course levels and content.

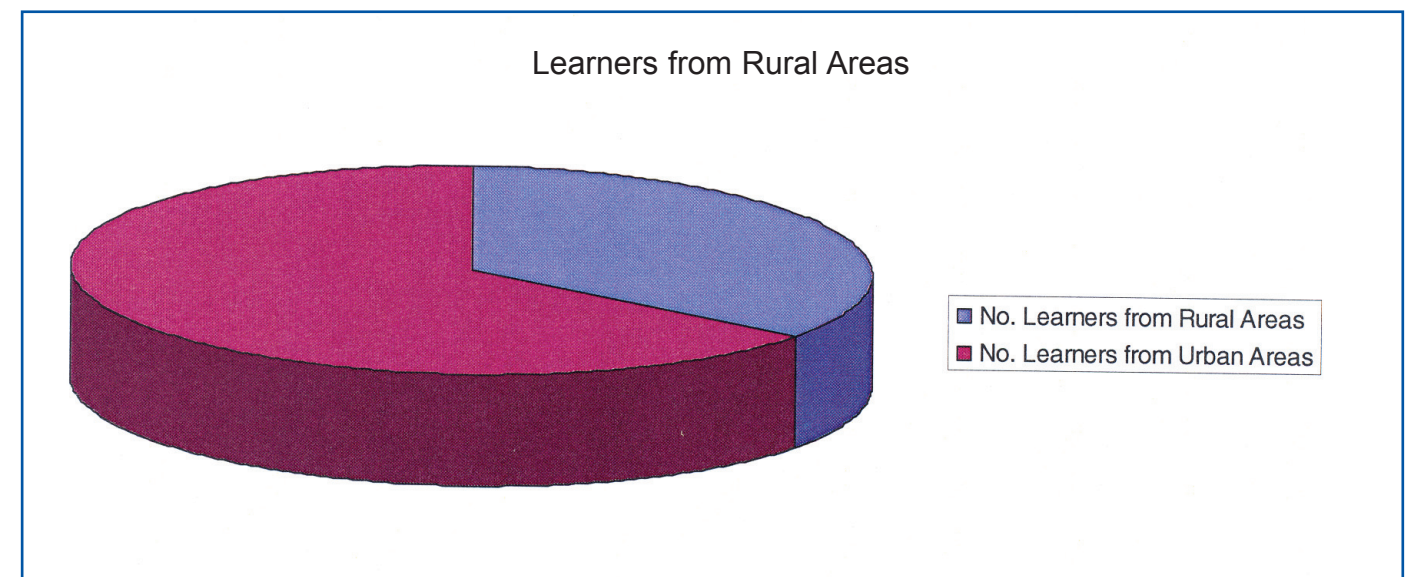
Who did we attract to our courses?

4479 learners enrolled on our courses in 2003-04, 71% of them were female.





- 23 community projects have been offered at no charge to targeted community groups; we worked with 7 schools, 2 Colleges and 18 different community groups to achieve this,
- 20 family learning projects have taken place for parents and for parents and children learning together. 15 schools delivered family learning projects and 38 partner organisations had roles to play,
- funding for informal learning opportunities at the Community Furniture Project (21 men and 16 women), for travellers at two West Berkshire sites (11 men and 16 women) and a Parents as First Teachers project co-ordinated by Greenham Court School (1 man and 7 women),
- 38% of our free courses took place in community venues to attract learners from rural areas and from deprived communities,
- 26% of our learners can from areas which experience deprivation: Calcot, Clay Hill, Greenham, Lambourn Valley, Speen, St Johns, Thatcham North and Victoria.,
- 42% of our courses took place in rural areas,
- 46 courses took place in residential homes and day centres for the frail elderly; our oldest learner is 101 years old,
- 31.87% of our courses took place in Newbury College.



How did we widen participation?

We offered free courses to attract people to new and innovative courses and to family learning programmes. Provision was also free for people on special courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

In addition we have provided:

- transport support to a small number of disabled learners,
- 8 Community Laptop courses for people with very little experience of computers

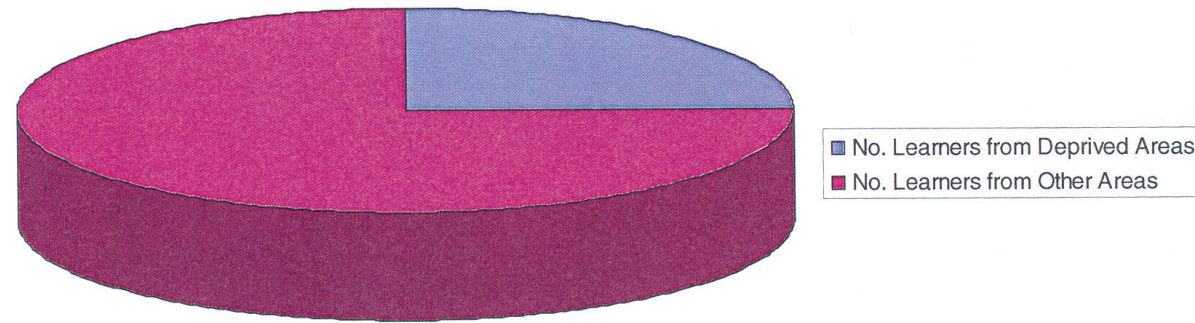


“we have provided transport support to a small number of disabled learners”





Learners from Deprived Areas



How did we provide cost effective learning?

- We have installed a new computerised management information system which allows us to monitor our provision more closely.
- There was only a slight increase in course fees this year to cover inflation
- No charge was made to learners on community projects, Keeping Active courses in residential homes and day centres, discrete courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and on family learning programmes.
- Newbury College and Theale Green Community School provided a 10% early bird discount for those who book their courses two months in advance
- Our fees policy reduces the cost of courses by 50% for the over 60s, for learners in receipt of means tested benefits and carers attending courses with their dependents
- Good partnerships and quality monitoring ensured that provision was effective and met learners' needs.



“Over 1000 courses were on offer in a wide range of subjects, our most popular are the visual and performing arts and media, languages and communications and sport and leisure.”

Courses were provided throughout West Berkshire at Newbury College, at 27 schools, church halls, village halls, community centres, fitness centres, a health centre, Thatcham Discovery Centre, traveller sites, a hospice, a secure hospital, residential homes and day centres, family centres and our partners' premises.

We work with partners within the Council, with Parish Councils, West Berkshire Volunteer Centre, the Community Council for Berkshire, Next Step Berkshire, ContinYou, and with community and voluntary groups working in the arts, with the unemployed, with people with substance misuse issues, and with people with mental health issues.

We offered courses during the day and the evening, during term time and during the summer holidays and used the CLive bus as a mobile classroom when there was no suitable venue available. We offered courses where parents and children can learn together and made sure that our venues were accessible for all our learners.

We work with partners to identify the needs of learners in West Berkshire and design innovative programs for groups and hold the sessions at community locations. We asked a sample of the learners on our community and family learning projects how long it was since they had attended a course and 33% said it was over 10 years ago, 32 % said it was between 2 and 10 years ago.

Over 1000 courses were on offer in a wide range of subjects, our most popular are the visual and performing arts and media, languages and communications and sport and leisure. We also had 473 learners on foundation courses for new learners and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. We advertise courses at different levels and make sure information and advice services are available so that learners are supported to choose the right course and identify the next course, club, volunteering activity or employment they may wish to progress onto.

Training is available for all lecturers so that they can become better qualified and we support them to acquire IT skills and to update their specialist skills. We have an annual teacher forum so that lecturers can exchange good practice and update themselves on equal opportunity issues, health and safety, new legislation, quality assurance, how to help learners who have basic skills needs and information advice and guidance.

How did we engage and motivate all learners?

All our learners are given an entitlement card so that they know what they can expect when they attend our courses and how to comment on their experiences. We ask for their views and take them into consideration in our planning.

| Newbury College | | Theale Green Community School | | | Community Projects | | | Family Learning | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Number of lecturers | With a teaching qualification | Without a teaching qualification/unknown | Number of lecturers | With a teaching qualification | Without a teaching qualification/unknown | Number of lecturers | With a teaching qualification | Without a teaching qualification/unknown | Number of lecturers | With a teaching qualification | Without a teaching qualification/unknown |
| 127 | 80 | 47 | 38 | 18 | 20 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 |

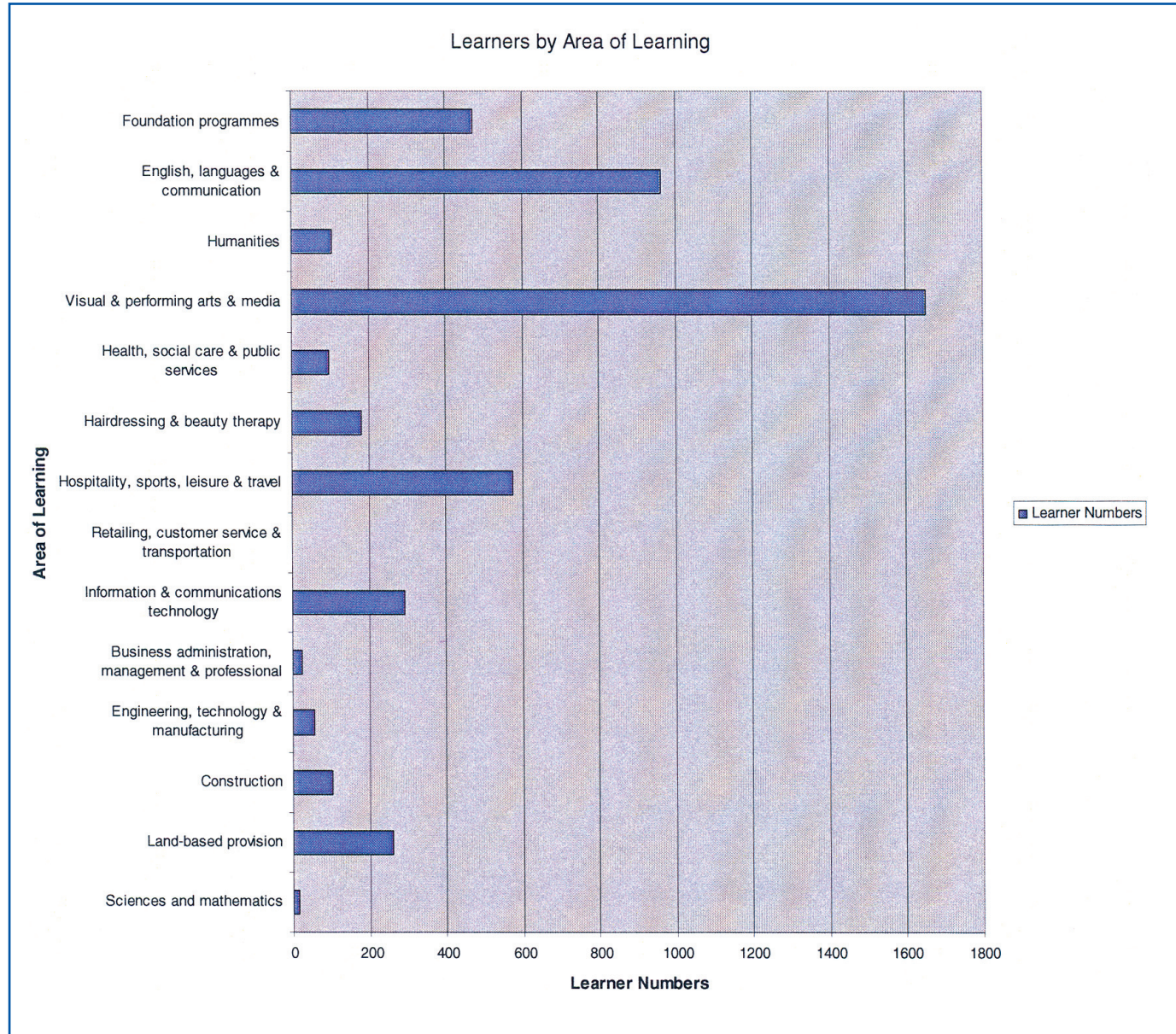
What did our learners achieve?

Apart from sign language, all our courses are non accredited, so we do not record examination results. Currently we are piloting recording systems to help learners and their lecturers record their achievements. Learners are given an induction to their courses and decide on the outcomes they wish to achieve and their progress is recorded. Learners also enter competitions and exhibit or display their work at the college or community location.

Improvements to the Newbury College prospectus have made it clearer to learners how they can progress to other courses and learners on community projects have been provided with packs of information to show them what other opportunities are available to them. It is hoped that in the future we can track the progress of some of our learners through the Management Information System.

Attendance at our core Adult and Community Learning provision increased in 2003/04 to 75.32% from 73.94% in 2002/03 and at our community and family learning projects from 74.47% in 2002/03 to 89.86% in 2003/04..

91.5% of our enrolled students completed their courses.



"We offered courses where parents and children can learn together and made sure that our venues were accessible for all our learners."

