

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Stockton Training & Employment Services**

24 July 2003



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

## Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed 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.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Stockton Training & Employment Services

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	3
Overall judgement	3
Grades	3
Key findings	5
What learners like about Stockton Training & Employment Services	10
What learners think Stockton Training & Employment Services could improve	10
Key challenges for Stockton Training & Employment Services	11

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	12
Equality of opportunity	13
Quality assurance	14
Land-based provision	16
Construction	20
Business administration, management & professional	25
Retailing, customer service & transportation	29
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	33
Health, social care & public services	37
Foundation programmes	41

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Stockton Training and Employment Services (TES) was established in 1996 after a merger between Stockton Borough Council and a local voluntary organisation. Part of the resources directorate of Stockton Borough Council, TES provides work-based learning for adults and young people in land-based industries, design and print, construction, business administration, management and professional, retailing, warehousing and transportation, hospitality, sport and recreation, health care and public services and foundation programmes. There were too few learners in design and print for this area to be inspected separately. The organisation has seven training centres, all in Stockton and the surrounding area.
2. TES's general manager is responsible to the Stockton Borough Council's newly appointed head of resources. The general manager leads a senior management team of three, comprising the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) operations manager, the Jobcentre Plus operations manager, and the quality assurance and support services manager. The rest of the staff team includes four senior contract managers, seven lead training officers, and a range of training, assessment, support and administrative staff. The organisation has expanded rapidly over recent years, and currently employs 78 staff, of whom 14 are part time.
3. TES funds its training provision through Tees Valley LSC and Jobcentre Plus. Some foundation provision, and some key skills training, are subcontracted to other local training providers. In June 2003, the unemployment rates in the Stockton area are 3.7 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent nationally. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 2.8 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally. In 2001, 44.8 per cent of school leavers in Stockton gained five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, compared with 47.9 per cent nationally.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Land-based provision

4. There are 11 learners on land-based training programmes. Of these, nine are foundation modern apprentices working to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) level 2 in amenity horticulture and two are NVQ learners working towards a level 1 qualification in horticulture. TES provides horticulture training for New Deal 18-24 clients, but none were attending at the time of inspection. Learners attend work placements for three or four days each week, and are assessed in the workplace. Weekly off-the-job training takes place at TES's training centre.

## **Construction**

5. There are 56 learners in construction, 39 of whom are foundation modern apprentices and nine are advanced modern apprentices. Seven learners are on NVQ training and one client is on the New Deal 25+ programme. Learners attend off-the-job training one day each week, during which they develop their job knowledge and practical skills, and work on their portfolios. The remaining four days are spent in the workplace. TES's staff visit learners in the workplace each month to review their progress.

## **Business administration, management & professional**

6. There are 58 learners in business administration, 46 of whom are working towards modern apprenticeship frameworks and NVQs in administration, and two are working towards level 2 NVQs in accounting. There are six clients on the New Deal full-time education and training option, and four on longer occupational training (LOT). Most learners spend four days each week in the workplace, and the remaining day attending off-the-job training at TES's training centre. Learners who are unable to attend the training centre are given individual coaching at their workplace by the provider's staff. Assessment takes place in the workplace.

## **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

7. There are 59 learners in retailing, 17 of whom are foundation modern apprentices, and 13 are on NVQ training. Twenty-six clients are on New Deal 18-24 programmes, and three are on work-based learning for adults. Learners work towards NVQs at level 2 in retail operations, distribution, warehousing and customer service. Most training is carried out in the workplace. Off-the-job training for background knowledge, basic skills, key skills and jobsearch skills, is provided by TES. Learners attend between half a day and one and a half days each week depending on their individual needs. Assessment is carried out by TES's staff in the workplace.

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

8. There are 11 learners in hospitality and catering, seven of whom are foundation modern apprentices and three are NVQ learners. One is a New Deal 18-24 client on the full-time education and training option. Learners spend three days a week in work placements, such as hotels, restaurants, staff restaurants, care homes and day centres. They attend off-the-job training at one of TES's training sites for one day a week. Assessment is carried out in the workplace.

## **Health, social care & public services**

9. There are 111 learners on health, care and public service programmes. Five are work-based learning for adults, and 10 are New Deal 18-24 clients. Twenty-seven learners are advanced modern apprentices and 35 are foundation modern apprentices. A further 34 are NVQ learners. All learners are on work placement or in employment in care homes, day centres, nurseries, playgroups, crèches and after-school and holiday clubs in the Stockton area. Off-the-job training is provided by TES, and the duration and format varies between programmes. Assessment and internal verification are carried out by TES's staff.

## Foundation programmes

10. There are 96 learners on foundation programmes. Twelve are on a Life Skills programme and they attend training at TES for a minimum of 16 hours each week and stay for approximately 20 weeks. Fourteen learners are on the intensive activity period (IAP), which lasts between six and 13 weeks, depending on learners' needs. IAP learners attend TES for a minimum of 30 hours each week. The other 70 learners are on basic employability training (BET) and attend TES for up to 26 weeks to improve their basic skills and increase their employability. Training for foundation learners is provided by TES and two subcontractors. Some learners spend part of each week in the workplace.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	11
Number of inspection days	44
Number of learner interviews	105
Number of staff interviews	71
Number of employer interviews	37
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	7
Number of visits	56

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

11. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. TES's leadership and management are good, as is its approach to equality of opportunity. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The quality of provision on foundation programmes is good. Training in construction, business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer service and transportation, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and health, care and public services is satisfactory. Work-based learning in land-based industries is unsatisfactory.

## GRADES

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

<b>Land-based provision</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Construction</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2
Life Skills	3



## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

12. **Learners on all programmes develop good practical skills.** Their confidence increases throughout the training, and they improve their ability to find and apply for jobs. Although the retention rates were poor, they have significantly improved for 2002-03 in all areas of learning. Achievement rates are poor for most programmes, but TES recruits approximately 40 per cent of its learners from deprived areas, and many make significant personal progress during their programme. Job entry rates are satisfactory or better in all areas of learning.

### Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Construction	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	5
Foundation programmes	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>

13. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and in some cases good. All the teaching sessions observed during the inspection were graded satisfactory or better. Taught sessions are generally well planned and involve the use of a range of appropriate teaching techniques which maintain learners' interest. However, in hospitality, the background knowledge sessions are dull. Jobsearch teaching is mostly stimulating and effective. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory.

14. **Learners have very effective support from TES's staff and employers.** Their individual needs are thoroughly assessed and are mostly well recorded. Well-qualified staff give constructive help with a range of practical and personal problems, and involve relevant specialist agencies when appropriate. Basic skills (literacy, numeracy and language) support is well structured, and the learners who attend literacy and numeracy sessions enjoy and value them.

15. Reviews of progress are satisfactory in hospitality, construction, business administration and retailing. They are weak in land-based industries, foundation and care. In the weaker reviews the targets for learners are insufficiently clear.

16. **Induction is thorough,** and generally memorable to learners, in all areas.

## STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

17. The quality of assessment practice varies across the organisation, from very good in hospitality, to weak in retailing, land-based industries and care. The inadequacies include poor planning, and insufficient diverse evidence in portfolios. Although well planned and regular in most areas, internal verification has not identified the problems with assessment.

18. Resources are satisfactory in most areas of learning, but are inadequate in land-based industries, construction, and on the Life Skills programme.

### Leadership and management

19. **There are good systems for monitoring the progress of learners,** TES's staff, areas of learning, and the organisation as a whole. Staff and most learners are clear about what is expected of them. The appraisal system is thorough, and staff development is varied and appropriate.

20. **The operational management of areas of learning is sound in all cases.** It is particularly good in business administration and care, where change has been well managed and initiatives successfully introduced.

21. **Support for learners is actively managed.** Recent strategies to increase the retention rates have been particularly well considered and are effective. Good use has been made of specialist staff.

22. **Strategic planning is sound,** and TES sets itself clear and appropriate targets which are well understood by staff.

23. **TES's managers and staff place a high priority on equality of opportunity** and promote it effectively to learners, employers and subcontractors. Data have been used effectively to target learners from deprived wards in the area, but have not been sufficiently analysed to identify other under-represented groups.

24. **TES has a clear and well-organised quality assurance system** which has a strong focus on improving the experiences of the learners. However, there is still some inconsistency in practice and performance across the areas of learning. The organisation does not have a formal system for observing the learning which takes place on the job.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Leadership and management

#### Strengths

- good system for monitoring and managing performance
- particularly well-managed support for learners
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient analysis of equal opportunities data
- no formal observation of on-the-job training

### **Land-based provision**

#### **Strengths**

- good work placements
- thorough support for learners

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor retention and achievement rates on youth programmes
- inadequate resources
- some poor assessment practice
- insufficiently challenging targets for learners

### **Construction**

#### **Strengths**

- good job outcomes on adult and New Deal programmes
- good practical skills development by learners
- particularly good personal support for learners
- good workplace assessment

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor retention rates for NVQ programmes
- poor achievement rates for NVQ and modern apprenticeship programmes
- some unsatisfactory specialist resources

## **Business administration, management & professional**

### **Strengths**

- good job outcomes on New Deal programmes
- good leadership, responsive to change and focused on improvement
- well-planned, effective observation of learners' performance
- particularly good support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes
- over-emphasis on written evidence in portfolios
- insufficient involvement of employers in NVQ process

## **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

### **Strengths**

- effective development of learners' skills
- good celebration of learners' success
- good individual support for learners
- very good relationships between TES's staff and employers

### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement and retention rates for youth programmes
- some weak assessment practice
- weak use of individual learning plans

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### **Strengths**

- effective development of practical skills
- particularly thorough assessment
- very effective liaison with employers
- strong support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- poor retention rates
- poor completion rates for foundation modern apprentices
- uninspiring training for background knowledge

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- good progression to employment by adults
- very effective individual support for learners
- clear leadership focused on improvement

### **Weaknesses**

- poor rates of achievement on most programmes
- some poor assessment practice
- ineffective internal verification

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good retention rates for adult programmes
- good teaching of work preparation skills
- effective work placements for adult programmes
- very effective personal support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate feedback to learners
- insufficient resources for Life Skills learners

**WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:**

- good opportunities to find employment
- suitable, enjoyable work placements
- being treated as an equal in the workplace
- good support from understanding staff at TES
- programmes help to develop imagination and creativity

**WHAT LEARNERS THINK STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES COULD IMPROVE:**

- some training accommodation
- computer resources, and access to the internet
- the frequency of assessment on some programmes
- the quality and range of some training materials

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:**

- continue the improving trend in retention rates
- improve achievement rates in all areas of learning
- upgrade the standard and variety of resources in land-based industries, construction and the Life Skills programme
- resolve the weaknesses in assessment practice
- improve target-setting for learners, particularly during progress reviews

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good system for monitoring and managing performance
- particularly well-managed support for learners
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis of equal opportunities data
- no formal observation of on-the-job training

25. The operational management of learning programmes is good, and there is a thorough and effective system for monitoring the performance of learners and assessors. Senior contract managers have monthly meetings with lead training officers, during which they review the effectiveness of each programme. Regular review meetings are also held with subcontractors. These meetings involve a detailed discussion about performance against contract, and about the progress of each learner which is closely monitored on a computer database. If learners are progressing more slowly than expected, reasons are identified, and actions are agreed to improve the situation. Assessors' performance is discussed, and they are given guidance on how to improve if necessary. Staff value the contract review meetings, and see them as a useful means of managing the training process. They are clear about the contractual targets for the organisation as a whole, and the more detailed targets for each programme or area of learning.

26. The staff appraisal system is well-structured and comprehensive. It involves a self-evaluation and an extremely detailed and well-recorded discussion of strengths, achievements and areas for development. Appraisals result in clear personal targets, and the identification of development needs which are quickly and effectively dealt with.

27. TES has a clear focus on respecting and valuing each learner, and give them appropriate individual support. The arrangements for supporting learners are well-designed and effective. Over 40 per cent of TES's learners come from wards with a high deprivation index, and senior managers have identified that retention rates for these learners are poor. While actively recruiting from deprived wards, TES has implemented a series of strategies to improve the retention rates. A more detailed initial assessment process has been introduced, which accurately identifies learners' barriers to achievement and employability. Support workers have been employed to give structured personal support for learners whose needs are identified through initial assessment. They work closely with learners to help them with a range of difficulties,



including homelessness, financial hardship, low self-esteem and problems with timekeeping. There has been a significant improvement in retention rates across most areas of learning since the introduction of the support workers. TES has a good strategy for the provision of literacy and numeracy support. Appropriately qualified staff provide well-structured help with basic skills, and learners' progress is closely monitored and thoroughly recorded.

28. TES has a sound strategic planning process, which focuses on the needs of the learner. In addition to contributing to Stockton Borough Council's overall strategic plan, and writing its own development plan for the LSC, TES devises and carries out a range of strategic initiatives with partner organisations. Staff are clear about the strategic aims of the organisation and support them. TES has a sound system for managing information, which is used appropriately. The organisation is self-financing and generally makes good use of resources, but some of the teaching accommodation is poor. Staff are appropriately deployed, and staff absence is well covered in most areas of learning.

29. Internal and external communication are thorough. Staff participate in regular meetings which are minuted and there is regular informal communication and effective use of email. TES's employees are consulted and informed. Managers network effectively with a range of external organisations, including local providers, and referral organisations such as Connexions and Jobcentre Plus. Despite TES's close and regular liaison with Jobcentre Plus, important information about learners is often not always passed on by Jobcentre Plus staff to TES. There is close liaison with work-placement providers, who have responded positively to initiatives such as the provision of training for employers on equality of opportunity, and health and safety. TES has particularly cordial relationships with its subcontractors, with whom it develops and shares good practice across a range of topics. There are appropriate service level agreements with subcontractors, which clearly state TES's expectations on training and assessment.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

30. Staff value diversity and respect the needs of individuals. They develop and maintain good working relationships with local community groups, and with external partners such as international learning centres who deal with refugee and asylum groups. There is good promotion of TES's commitment to equality throughout its training centres. Marketing and promotional materials contain an equal opportunities statement, although the visual images on some materials do not sufficiently challenge stereotypes. The current learners come from diverse backgrounds. In particular, TES focuses on recruiting disadvantaged learners with low prior achievement, and has developed effective strategies to support them, and to help them succeed. Ex-offenders, and learners with a range of personal difficulties, are also welcomed and supported.

31. Equality is thoroughly monitored in the workplace during progress reviews and discussions with employers. Employers are required to have an up-to-date equal opportunities policy, but if they do not, they are offered help to write one. All employers are invited to attend the staff training sessions on equal opportunities, and some have taken up the offer. There is effective monitoring of subcontractors' practice on equality.

32. The equal opportunities policy and procedures are clear, up to date and appropriate. Learners have a good introduction to the policy during their induction and understand their rights and responsibilities. TES responds promptly and effectively to complaints. It recognises that some buildings are not accessible to those with restricted mobility, but has appropriate strategies to enable access for all, by using alternative premises.

33. All new staff have a satisfactory induction which covers all the main legislation relating to equality and includes information on diversity, stereotyping and acceptable practices. Staff training takes place twice a year and includes topics on equal opportunities. The training is evaluated effectively and analysed by managers to determine the outcomes. A small number of staff use inappropriate language.

34. TES's managers gather a range of data on equality and they have used them to focus on learners from deprived wards. However, they have not made effective use of data on gender, ethnicity and disability. Although managers have a general awareness of under-representation, they do not identify trends in recruitment, progress or achievement for these groups. They have set realistic targets for disadvantaged learners, but have no internal targets for other groups.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 3**

35. TES has a comprehensive quality assurance system, which is understood by staff. There are clear policies and procedures for all key aspects of training and assessment which are regularly audited and updated, and staff are informed of any changes. Individual learning plans, progress reviews and other documents are regularly audited to ensure that they are being completed to a consistent standard, and useful feedback and support is given to staff in each area of learning. Documents which are often poorly completed are revised. Staff are regularly observed carrying out a range of activities, including training, assessment, induction and progress reviews. They are given constructive written and verbal feedback and, when appropriate, a list of actions to carry out to improve. Although the quality assurance system is thorough, it is not fully effective. There is inconsistency between areas of learning in the training overall, in the quality of completion of documents and in the effectiveness of activities such as progress reviews.

36. The organisation evaluates training thoroughly. Learners' views are gathered and analysed after their induction, and towards the end of their training programme. Employers' views are sought each year, as are those of referral agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and Connexions. The efficiency of TES's reception staff is regularly evaluated through customer satisfaction questionnaires. Confidential interviews are held twice a year with randomly selected learners. They are detailed, and encourage learners to give objective feedback on a wide range of issues. The data from questionnaires and interviews are analysed, and actions are identified to improve the quality of training.

37. Internal verification is satisfactory in most areas of learning, with appropriate

sampling, and useful feedback to assessors. In horticulture, retailing, and health, care and public services, internal verification has been ineffective in identifying weak assessment practice. Reports from external verifiers are generally positive, and corrective actions are promptly dealt with.

38. Self-assessment takes place each year, and is an important part of TES's quality assurance process. The most recent self-assessment report was written by the LSC operations manager in close consultation with staff and managers. The views of learners and employers were used for the report. The self-assessment report is detailed and objective and it identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. It is supported by a detailed action plan which is regularly updated. The action plan contains realistic targets, milestones and timescales.

39. TES does not have a system for observing the learning which takes place on the job. Staff who visit placements make an informal evaluation of the quality of the training given by workplace supervisors, but this is not systematic, and does not result in the provision of developmental feedback. TES's staff do not observe the training by subcontractors, but rely on subcontractors' internal records of teaching observations. Although helpful, this is not a fully effective method of assuring the quality of training provided off-site.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Land-based provision

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good work placements
- thorough support for learners

#### Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates on youth programmes
- inadequate resources
- some poor assessment practice
- insufficiently challenging targets for learners

### Achievement and standards

40. Learners develop a wide range of practical skills, and demonstrate a good level of competence, especially as most of them have poor prior achievements. Most of the current learners are making satisfactory progress through their qualification. However, there are poor rates of retention and achievement on LSC-funded training programmes. None of the foundation modern apprentices who started since 2001 have completed the full framework, and only two have achieved an NVQ. Only 22 per cent of the NVQ learners in horticulture have achieved their learning goals since 2001. Retention rates remain poor for NVQ learners, but are showing a significant upward trend for foundation modern apprentices. Retention and achievement rates for the New Deal full-time education and training option are better than on other horticulture programmes. Of the four learners who have started since 2001, two have gained a qualification, and one has found a job.

41. Learners make good progress in improving their personal development skills to achieve and maintain employment. Their self-esteem and confidence are also improved. All learners are able to carry out their own research and work independently on assignments and projects in horticulture and key skills. Learners are making satisfactory progress through the key skills units.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	9		5		5											
Retained*	1		1		3												
Successfully completed	0		0		2												
Still in learning	7		1		1												

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>NVO Training</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	13		14		17											
Retained*	1		5	36	1	6											
Successfully completed	1		5	36	1	6											
Still in learning	2		0	0	0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>Jobcentre Plus funded programmes</b>																	
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	2		2		2											
Retained*	1		2	100	1	50											
Planned learning completed	1		2	100	1	50											
Gained job	0		1	50	1	50											
Still in training	0		0	0	0	0											

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

42. Work placements are carefully selected and well matched to learners' needs and include public parks and gardens, and golf courses. They give learners the opportunity to develop their practical skills in a commercial environment. Learners are treated as

## STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

part of the workforce and quickly improve their teamworking skills, as well as their ability to deal with members of the public. They gain confidence in their ability and are soon able to work independently.

43. Learners are very well supported by TES's staff and workplace supervisors. Their individual needs are thoroughly assessed and recorded, and systematically met. Specialist support is available for a range of additional needs, including dyslexia and hearing impairment. There are good arrangements for the provision of basic skills support, and additional training in literacy and numeracy is set in a clear occupational context. Induction is thorough and appropriate.

44. TES's horticulture programmes meet the needs of most learners and local employers. For example, one learner has combined a mixture of landscaping and nursery units to make up the NVQ. This combination meets his interests, and the requirements of his employer, who runs a local nursery and landscaping business. Learners are moved between sites on some of the larger work placements to widen their experience. Learners are given satisfactory advice and guidance on the employment and progression opportunities available to them.

45. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced to teach their subjects and to carry out assessment and internal verification. The resources in the workplace are varied and to industry standard. However, the resources used for off-the-job training are inadequate. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. The centre used for off-the-job training is in need of maintenance and modernisation. The teaching room is new, but is too small for some of the larger groups. Learners are uncomfortable during background knowledge sessions and there are very few educational materials on display in the room. The training centre has only two computers, which do not meet the learners' needs. The computers are not connected to the internet and there are no CD-ROMs. The written resources are inadequate, comprising only a small collection of trade magazines and books, most of which are aimed at amateur gardeners.

46. Some aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory. In some cases, assessments are poorly planned, with insufficient input from the learner. Sometimes, assessments are cancelled, but the learner is not informed. Poor performance by the learner is not always recognised by the assessor. Insufficient use is made of the full range of evidence from the workplace such as witness statements, tasks carried out under supervision and the use of job sheets. Some of the evidence in learners' portfolios has not been assessed. In one case, a portfolio contains unassessed written work which was completed five months ago.

47. The targets which are set during progress reviews have insufficient detail, and do not give enough guidance to learners. Most ask the learner to complete a unit of the NVQ, without detailing the specific tasks needed. The NVQ units in the individual learning plans all have the same date.

## **Leadership and management**

48. The operational management of land-based programmes has been unsuccessful in resolving weaknesses in the planning of learning and assessment. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and are appropriately deployed. Targets for retention and achievement rates are set, but managers and staff have not identified strategies to improve performance.

49. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements, but is insufficiently thorough to identify the weaknesses in assessment.

**Construction****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	55	3
New Deal 18-24	1	None

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good job outcomes on adult and New Deal programmes
- good practical skills development by learners
- particularly good personal support for learners
- good workplace assessment

**Weaknesses**

- poor retention rates for NVQ programmes
- poor achievement rates for NVQ and modern apprenticeship programmes
- some unsatisfactory specialist resources

**Achievement and standards**

50. The proportion of learners gaining employment during their training is good. Over 40 per cent of learners have already gained a job. Overall, of those on work-based learning for adults and New Deal programmes, 43 per cent have moved into employment. This is in line with the targets set by Jobcentre Plus. Retention and achievement rates for advanced and foundation modern apprentices are poor. Only 17 per cent of those starting since 2000 have completed the framework. However, there has been a significant improvement in retention rates, and in the progress of modern apprentices, in 2003. Forty-one of the 49 learners who started their training in 2002-03 are still in learning, and are making steady and satisfactory progress. There has been a similar upward trend among NVQ learners, with 41 per cent still in learning.

51. Learners develop good practical skills during their training programmes, and increase their self-esteem. Learners' portfolios are satisfactory, but there is sufficient use of diverse evidence such as time and job sheets, site plans, work specifications, and photographs to record skills gained on site and in the training centre.



The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	9		1		11											
Retained*	0		1	100	4												
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2												
Still in learning	8		0	0	1												

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	40		37		34											
Retained*	0		11		11	32											
Successfully completed	0		11		9	26											
Still in learning	33		6		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	17		34		39											
Retained*	1		10	29	11	28											
Successfully completed	1		8	24	11	28											
Still in learning	7		0	0	0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 18-24																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	17		7		15											
Retained*	7		5	71	6	40										
Planned learning completed	3		2	29	2	13										
Gained job	6		5	71	5	33										
Still in training	1		0	0	0	0										

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		2		1											
Retained*	2		1	50	0	0										
Planned learning completed	1		1	50	0	0										
Gained job	2		1	50	1	100										
Still in training	0		0	0	0	0										

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

52. Learners gain a wide range of good on-the-job practical experience and this was identified in the self-assessment report. Most learners are placed with small to medium-sized companies which convert older houses, build new ones or take on repairs and projects. When a workplace does not provide opportunities for learners to develop all the competences required for the NVQ, training officers make alternative arrangements such as organising projects with another employer or at the training centre. Teaching sessions are well structured and interesting, and are supported by well-designed teaching materials. Key skills teaching is satisfactory and effective steps have been taken recently to make key skills more occupationally relevant, and to draw more of the evidence for them from the workplace and the NVQ. Some poor practice in the workshop goes unchecked, for example, carpentry and joinery learners chop mortices in vice-held timber, rather than cramping the timber above the bench leg. Some carpentry and joinery learners are offered appropriate additional skill development in the safe handling and hoisting of materials.

53. Many learners are from areas of deprivation, have poor prior achievements or need additional support to develop their social skills. They are given particularly good personal support during their training. TES's staff, employers, and workplace supervisors work well together to support individual learners. There are regular reviews in the workplace and they are thorough. Learners and supervisors value the reviews and the level of support received. Training officers respond quickly and effectively to learners' and employers' concerns. Recruitment and selection strategies are appropriate and the induction is detailed. Initial assessment is thorough and effective. The arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are good. Learners have their literacy and numeracy needs diagnosed during induction and a specialist team provides a range of suitable additional support for individual learners.

54. There are particularly good arrangements for assessment in the workplace. Assessments are frequent and are thorough and well planned. Training officers clearly record the competences gained by learners in the workplace and test their job knowledge and understanding thoroughly. Learners are making increasingly good use of photographic evidence. Employers are given good information which identifies their obligations to learners, but their understanding is not checked throughout the programme. While most workplace supervisors offer good support to learners, some do not fully understand their role, particularly relating to the provision of witness testimony. Some employers sign to confirm that learners are competent in a range of tasks without fully understanding the process. The internal verification process is clear and operates effectively.

55. The breadth of provision is sufficient to meet the needs of learners and employers. There are adequate progression opportunities for learners. Staff make energetic efforts to promote construction programmes to women, but the response has so far been poor.

56. Staff are well qualified occupationally and technically. Staff development is good. Most trainers are qualified assessors and verifiers and have teaching qualifications. The training centre is well furnished and has digital projection facilities. However, there are a number of deficiencies such as no windows or mechanical ventilation in the classrooms, joinery benches are in poor condition, the joinery and brickwork practical areas are adjacent and the dust and grit drifts into the joinery area, inadequate storage of hand and power tools, a pugmill for mixing mortar is sited too near the near joinery area, and the outside project area is poorly maintained and overgrown.

### **Leadership and management**

57. The lead training officer for construction oversees the development of the construction training programmes well. Staff are enthusiastic and work well together to support learners. Communication is good. There are regular staff meetings and much informal discussion about the wellbeing of learners and the training programme. Training programmes are well organised. Staff are set specific targets for improvement which are monitored regularly. Health and safety is well managed. Employers are assessed for health and safety and learners are aware of their rights relating to this and equality of

#### STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

opportunity. A lot of effective work has been carried out to improve the retention and achievement rates.

**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	48	3
New Deal 18-24	6	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4	None

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good job outcomes on New Deal programmes
- good leadership, responsive to change and focused on improvement
- well-planned, effective observation of learners' performance
- particularly good support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- poor achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes
- over-emphasis on written evidence in portfolios
- insufficient involvement of employers in NVQ process

**Achievement and standards**

58. Learners' achievement of practical skills, and their understanding of background knowledge are good. The achievement rates over the past three years have been satisfactory for modern apprentices with only 24 per cent completing the programme. However, 39 per cent of the learners who left early, did so to go into employment, and a further 44 per cent are still in learning. Achievement rates for NVQ learners are adequate. Fifty per cent of learners who have started the New Deal full-time education and training option during the past three years have gained employment. Retention rates are satisfactory on New Deal and adult programmes. Although historically poor on youth programmes, retention rates have improved significantly since 2002, and those currently in learning, are making satisfactory, and in some cases, good progress through their qualification. Many of the learners have had poor prior attainment, and are showing significant personal commitment to learning.

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts			3		5											
Retained*			1		2	40											
Successfully completed			1		1	20											
Still in learning			1		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	36		31		26											
Retained*	0		12		16	62											
Successfully completed	0		8		9	35											
Still in learning	26		9		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	17		20		24											
Retained*	3		10		13	54											
Successfully completed	3		10		13	54											
Still in learning	9		3		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 18-24																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	19		29		22											
Retained*	10		20	69	16	73										
Planned learning completed	3		12	41	7	32										
Gained job	7		12	41	13	59										
Still in training	6		0	0	0	0										

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	37		42		3											
Retained*	29		27	64	2	67										
Planned learning completed	22		14	33	0	0										
Gained job	5		11	26	1	33										
Still in training	4		0	0	0	0										

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

59. Learners are given flexible and well-structured support to meet their individual needs. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. TES's staff work effectively to help learners overcome a range of personal difficulties, and use their good links with external agencies to provide specialist support. Learners value the support and guidance they are given by TES's staff and in the workplace, and are confident that they will receive the help they need. Learners have a thorough initial assessment and the results are used to identify individual needs and to adapt learning programmes to meet those needs. Induction is satisfactory. Individual learning plans are sufficiently detailed, but learners do not have a copy of their plan. However, individual learning plans are used during progress reviews and other meetings with TES's staff, and learners are familiar with their content. There are good arrangements for basic skills support by qualified and experienced staff. Two learners attend literacy and numeracy support sessions, and consider them to be stimulating and fun. The range of programmes and courses on offer is not extensive but is adequate to meet the needs of learners. There are satisfactory progression opportunities.

60. The assessment of learners' practical skills through observation is frequent, thorough and well organised. Assessment is carefully planned during discussions between the learner and the assessor, and assessment plans are clearly written. Assessors give detailed, constructive and developmental feedback after each observation. They explain how to make the best use of evidence generated by cross-referencing it to a number of NVQ units. Learners have a clear awareness of the progress they are making. A system of unit accreditation is in operation and over 60 per cent of administration learners have achieved units towards their NVQ. Other aspects of the assessment process are less well managed. In particular, assessors ask learners to produce an unnecessary amount of written evidence. They sometimes ask learners to produce supplementary written work where work products and a brief written account would be enough to demonstrate competence. This over-emphasis on written evidence is inappropriate and sometimes results in learners carrying out unnecessary work.

61. Off-the-job training sessions are well planned and maintain the interest of learners. A range of teaching methods are used and tutors give effective tutorial support. Resources are varied and appropriate, and learners use industry-standard software. If learners are unable to attend the off-the-job sessions, individual coaching sessions are arranged in the workplace. Employers are pleased with the learners in their organisations. Employers are very supportive of learners and provide effective training on the job. However, they have insufficient involvement in their learners' NVQ. They are not involved in assessments, and do not contribute to the assessment planning process. They are not told how their learner has performed during assessments. Although employers are generally involved in progress reviews, not enough use is made of their in-depth knowledge of the workplace to identify additional training and assessment opportunities.

62. Staff have relevant qualifications. Training rooms are adequate and of an appropriate size, with good natural light. However, the décor is dull and unstimulating. Teaching materials are satisfactory. Key skills are an integral part of the learning programmes.

### **Leadership and management**

63. The management of learning is very effective. Good leadership is provided by the lead training officer, and staff share a common goal which is to give the learner a positive and successful experience. Recent changes have substantially improved the provision, particularly the structured off-the-job learning sessions which have been introduced, linked directly to the requirements of the technical certificates. Trainers and assessors liaise effectively with employers to ensure that learners are able to attend off-the-job sessions. Communication between staff is good, and staff are aware of their own and their learners' progress. Internal verification is adequate, but it has not identified the excess of written evidence in portfolios.



**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	30	3
New Deal 18-24	26	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3	None

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- effective development of learners' skills
- good celebration of learners' success
- good individual support for learners
- very good relationships between TES's staff and employers

**Weaknesses**

- poor achievement and retention rates for youth programmes
- some weak assessment practice
- weak use of individual learning plans

**Achievement and standards**

64. Learners increase their self-esteem and confidence during the training programme. They develop skills which help them to seek and gain employment. Rates of retention and of progression into employment for New Deal 18-24 clients are satisfactory. However, retention and achievement rates are poor on youth programmes. The self-assessment report recognises this weakness. Over the past three years, only 13 per cent have achieved the qualification, and 34 per cent are still in learning. Retention rates were very poor for those who started in 2000 and 2001, but they have improved in 2002-03, with over 75 per cent of learners still in learning, and making appropriate progress.

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	20		20		11											
Retained*	0		1		1	9											
Successfully completed	0		1		0	0											
Still in learning	15		2		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>NVO Training</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	13		32		21											
Retained*	0		10		3	14											
Successfully completed	0		10		3	14											
Still in learning	10		3		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>Jobcentre Plus funded programmes</b>																	
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	56		48		50											
Retained*	17		35	73	31	62											
Planned learning completed	6		22	46	17	34											
Gained job	12		13	27	15	30											
Still in training	26		0	0	0	0											

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	32		38		3											
Retained*	22		30	79	3	100											
Planned learning completed	15		8	21	3	100											
Gained job	12		16	42	2	67											
Still in training	3		0	0	0	0											

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

65. Learners benefit from good opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge during on- and off-the-job training. Some learners attend additional training which is provided by their employer, such as telephone techniques, and lift truck operator training. Learners enjoy their job roles, and carry them out with increasing confidence and competence. They carry out complex and responsible tasks, work well on their own initiative, and learn how to be effective team members. Off-the-job training sessions are satisfactorily planned and taught.

66. TES has good strategies for the celebration and promotion of learners' success. Colour photographs of learners in retailing are displayed in the training centre with details of their employment or qualification achievements. Learners' successes are reported in the local press and in the council's internal bulletin. This positive promotion encourages and motivates learners, especially those who have been out of employment for some time.

67. Learners are very well supported by TES's staff and by employers. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report. Employers provide effective practical help and guidance, as well as moral support and encouragement to progress. TES's staff make frequent visits to the workplace and arrange individual coaching sessions when they are required. They work effectively with employers to help learners resolve personal difficulties which may hinder their progress and performance. The initial assessment of learners, and the provision of support for basic skills needs are satisfactory. All learners take an initial assessment test for literacy and numeracy at the beginning of their programme and when additional learning support needs are identified, it is provided by well-qualified specialist staff at TES.

68. TES staff work hard to build and develop effective working relationships with employers. They maintain frequent communication to ensure that employers understand

## STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

their roles and responsibilities and that they are clear about their learner's progress. Employers speak highly of TES, and value the responses to queries and problems. TES's close links with employers enables them to select appropriate work placements for learners. The good involvement of employers is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

69. Programmes meet the needs of learners. They are socially inclusive and are positively promoted to learners from disadvantaged communities. There are suitable progression opportunities for learners.

70. Resources are satisfactory. The training room is furnished and equipped to a good standard, including electronic presentation facilities. Written materials are appropriate and well presented.

71. Some aspects of the assessment practice are weak. Assessment planning is often left until immediately before the assessment takes place, and is sometimes not formally recorded. Some portfolios contain a narrow range of evidence. They focus heavily on observed assessment of performance, and make insufficient use of diverse evidence such as personal reports, work documents or witness testimony. Assessors do not use oral questioning effectively to confirm learners' background knowledge.

72. Individual learning plans often contain insufficient detail or inaccurate information. For example, information on learner support is sometimes missing. The plans are not always updated after a progress review and are not made sufficiently aware of the content and importance of their individual learning plans.

### **Leadership and management**

73. The management of this occupational area is satisfactory. There are adequate contingency plans to cover for staff sickness and these have proved effective during the recent, long-term absence of a member of staff. Opportunities for staff training and development are generally good, but plans for the occupational updating of assessors are not yet fully in place. Internal verification is satisfactory. Sampling and verification activity records are detailed and up to date.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	10	3
New Deal 18-24	1	None

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- effective development of practical skills
- particularly thorough assessment
- very effective liaison with employers
- strong support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- poor retention rates
- poor completion rates for foundation modern apprentices
- uninspiring training for background knowledge

**Achievement and standards**

74. Learners develop good practical skills, and demonstrate a good level of competence in preparing and cooking dishes. They are confident in their approach, and give appropriate consideration to food hygiene and safe working practices. Some learners have made particularly good progress in developing learning and organisational skills.

75. Retention rates are poor on all programmes, but display a clear upward trend for those starting in 2002-03. Achievement rates are satisfactory for NVQ learners, but are poor for foundation modern apprentices, with only 20 per cent of learners completing the framework since 2000. Those still in learning are making good progress towards their qualification. Of the adults in catering programmes since 2000, 50 per cent have achieved a qualification, and 25 per cent have entered employment. The weaknesses in achievement and retention rates are recognised in the self-assessment report.

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	10		10		10											
Retained*	0		2		4	40											
Successfully completed	0		2		4	40											
Still in learning	5		2		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>NVO Training</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	8		12		14											
Retained*	1		9	75	6	43											
Successfully completed	1		9	75	6	43											
Still in learning	3		0	0	0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>Jobcentre Plus funded programmes</b>																	
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	6		8		12											
Retained*	1		4	50	4	33											
Planned learning completed	1		1	12	1	8											
Gained job	0		4	50	2	17											
Still in training	1		0	0	0	0											

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults																
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			1		6		1									
Retained*			0	0	6	100	1	100								
Planned learning completed			0	0	5	83	1	100								
Gained job			0	0	1	17	0	0								
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0								

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

76. The assessment process is well managed and assessments are well planned and thorough. Assessment procedures are clearly defined and are strictly adhered to by assessors who ensure that learners and employers understand the process and their role in it. Learners' portfolios are well maintained and assessment evidence is well organised and diverse, including photographs, records of observation and witness testimony. Internal verification is regular and thorough and internal verifiers give good, developmental feedback to assessors.

77. Trainers maintain regular contact with learners and give them very effective support. This is identified in the self-assessment report. Learners' individual needs are thoroughly assessed at the start of the training programme and appropriate additional support is made available to them. Induction is well structured and learners remember the key issues. Progress reviews are well managed and involve a detailed and constructive discussion about the learner's performance in the workplace and through their qualification. Employers are involved in the reviews and their contributions are valued. TES's staff and employers offer sensitive and practical help for learners who have a range of personal and practical problems. There are good arrangements for support with literacy and numeracy.

78. TES's staff maintain positive and productive relationships with employers. They make frequent visits to the workplace, and ensure that employers are well informed about their learner's progress. They are flexible in their approach. For example, when work commitments prevented some employers from attending a meeting called by TES, staff met with them individually, and ensured that their views were recorded. Feedback from employers is regularly sought, and is acted on. Employers think highly of TES, and welcome the effective liaison which takes place. The self-assessment report identifies this strength.

## STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

79. Trainers have appropriate vocational qualifications and good occupational experience. A realistic work environment has not been available since the end of May 2003 when the lease expired. However, moving training and assessment to work placements has worked well, and learners have access to appropriate resources and equipment in the workplace. There are appropriate written materials for learners, and specialist resources for basic skills and key skills support.

80. The range of provision in hospitality and catering is narrow and only covers the food preparation NVQ at level 2. Those who achieve the level 2 are unable to progress to level 3 with TES. However, learners are given appropriate advice and guidance on the other options available to them locally.

81. On-the-job training sessions are frequent, well managed, and useful in helping learners prepare for assessment. However, the background knowledge training is uninspiring. Teaching relies too heavily on input from the trainer and learners are given insufficient opportunity and encouragement to participate. Opportunities to use learners' everyday tasks for assessment are not taken.

### **Leadership and management**

82. There is effective teamwork and good communication in hospitality. Staff are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. Team targets and learners' performance are closely monitored during monthly meetings. The closure of the area's realistic work environment was well managed by the lead training officer and a suitable contingency plan was put into place quickly and effectively.



**Health, social care & public services****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	96	3
New Deal 18-24	10	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	5	None

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good progression to employment by adults
- very effective individual support for learners
- clear leadership focused on improvement

**Weaknesses**

- poor rates of achievement on most programmes
- some poor assessment practice
- ineffective internal verification

**Achievement and standards**

83. There is good progression into jobs on adult programmes, with nearly 50 per cent of learners finding employment since 2000. Adults' achievement of qualifications has improved from 8 per cent in 2000-01 to 43 per cent in 2001-02. Rates of achievement are poor on other programmes. However, there has been a significant rise in retention rates for those who started in 2002-03, and those still in learning are progressing well. Approximately 35 per cent of those currently in learning have achieved the NVQ and key skills, and are awaiting external verification. There is an improving trend for New Deal 18-24 clients, with achievement rates rising from 15 per cent in 2000-01 to 25 per cent in 2001-02, and job outcomes from 23 per cent to 33 per cent in the same two years. The self-assessment report identifies the strengths and weaknesses in achievement rates.

84. The overall standard of learners' written work is satisfactory. All learners develop a satisfactory level of practical skills. On early years programmes some learners display a good level of creative ability and apply this to games and other activities for children. All learners, particularly those on New Deal 18-24 and work-based learning for adults, show a significant increase in confidence and in employability during the programme.

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	10		13		16											
Retained*	0		0		2												
Successfully completed	0		0		1												
Still in learning	10		12		5												

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	27		33		27											
Retained*	1		5		12												
Successfully completed	1		3		6												
Still in learning	18		16		1												

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	29		34		39											
Retained*	1		6		12	31											
Successfully completed	1		6		12	31											
Still in learning	24		10		0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 18-24																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	23		24		13											
Retained*	4		12	50	6	46										
Planned learning completed	4		6	25	2	15										
Gained job	4		8	33	3	23										
Still in training	10		0	0	0	0										

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		7		12											
Retained*	0		5	71	7	58										
Planned learning completed	0		3	43	1	8										
Gained job	0		4	57	7	58										
Still in training	5		0	0	0	0										

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

85. There is well-structured individual support for learners. Assessors make regular workplace visits, which are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of learners and employers. Visits are sometimes made in the evenings to accommodate learners' shift patterns. Learners are given help with their qualification, and with any problems during individual coaching sessions. There is well planned, specialist help for learners who have numeracy and literacy needs, and a specialist support worker who helps learners with a wide range of personal support needs. Learners have good support from their employers. Most are allowed time to work on their portfolios of evidence. Workplace supervisors and managers are available to listen to learners' personal and work-related problems and often suggest constructive solutions. There is good communication between TES and employers. Employers play an active and useful part in progress reviews.

86. Off-the-job training is well planned and trainers use a range of methods to sustain the learners' interest. Good use is made of learners' work experience, and appropriate

## STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

attention is paid to equality of opportunity and health and safety. Learners participate well and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the topics covered. Trainers offer support to learners when they have difficulties but do not have sufficient alternative tasks or materials prepared for those who need additional challenges. Handouts are good and are used well in the sessions. The teaching of key skills is occupationally relevant and adequately linked to the NVQ with a range of appropriately written resources. The teaching accommodation varies. For example, the training room for early years is spacious with appropriate posters and information. The care training room is very small and inadequate. Staff are vocationally qualified and experienced and attend occupational updating each year.

87. There is a suitable range of programmes to meet the needs of learners. Staff have good links with local agencies, which extend the opportunities for learning and widening participation. Progression routes are adequate, and more are being developed in conjunction with social services, local further education colleges, and health organisations.

88. Assessment planning is adequate for early years qualifications, but there is insufficient detail in care programmes. In general, there is an over-reliance on written questions to demonstrate background knowledge. Feedback after assessment is insufficient in care and early years programmes. Written and oral feedback after observations is often too brief and does not fully inform learners of their achievement. Some learners in care programmes are not given written feedback by their work-based assessor after observation of performance. In a few instances, assessment is late.

89. Internal verification is ineffective and does not identify the weaknesses in assessment practice. Some feedback to assessors is too brief and does not help them to improve. In some cases, internal verification reports do not contain any feedback. The use of different versions of sampling plans and other documents does not help internal verifiers to standardise their practice. There has been no standardisation meeting for internal verifiers since July 2002.

### **Leadership and management**

90. The leadership of the occupational area is strong, and focuses clearly on improving the learner's experience. Trainers and assessors respond very positively to this direction, and are keen to reflect on their practice and implement change. Retention rates, and the achievement of qualifications and jobs, are discussed in detail during team meetings. Problems related to poor achievement rates have been identified and appropriate actions have been planned, particularly for assessment practice. The structure of the training for level 2 learners on early years programmes has recently been reviewed and changed to provide more formal training sessions. There are signs that the changes are impacting positively on retention and achievement rates.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	84	2
Life Skills	12	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good retention rates for adult programmes
- good teaching of work preparation skills
- effective work placements for adult programmes
- very effective personal support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate feedback to learners
- insufficient resources for Life Skills learners

**Achievement and standards**

91. Retention rates for adult programmes are particularly good, and range between 71 and 89 per cent overall. On Life Skills, retention rates are satisfactory, at 40 per cent. Achievement rates are satisfactory on all programmes, particularly on BET, where 34 per cent of all starters since 2000 have achieved their learning aims and 17 per cent are still in learning. Job outcomes are also satisfactory, at around 25 per cent overall, and over 35 per cent on the Life Skills programme. Learners on BET and Life Skills programmes gain qualifications such as first aid and manual handling which improve their employability. Learners' confidence and self-esteem increases during the programme and they also considerably increase their skills in seeking and gaining employment.

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Life Skills	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	51		60		41											
Retained*	16		25	42	29	71											
Successfully completed	4		16	27	19	46											
Still in learning	12		0	0	0	0											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	286		307		38											
Retained*	134		220	72	33	87											
Planned learning completed	94		134	44	19	50											
Gained job	46		81	26	13	34											
Still in training	84		0	0	0	0											

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## Quality of education and training

92. The teaching of work preparation skills for adults is well planned and effective. There are clear lesson plans and schemes of work. Teachers employ a wide range of teaching and learning techniques including role-play, practical activities, video, group and individual work. They make good use of research activities to help learners gather information on the local labour market while developing their independent learning skills. Learners participate well, and are clearly interested in what they are being taught. Learners on the Life Skills programme enjoy a range of learning activities which engage and stimulate them, including outdoor teamwork events, community projects and healthy lifestyle activities at leisure centres. Learners on all programmes work towards nationally recognised qualifications which increase employability and job-seeking skills. All training staff are experienced and appropriately qualified.

93. Adult learners benefit from particularly well-organised work experience. Placements are identified by specialist employer liaison staff, who ensure that learners are placed in

work placements which are appropriate to their individual needs, and which meet their career aims. Employers use the placements as a method of direct recruitment, and most placements become employers. Employers are very positive about the skills and attitudes of learners, and about their links with TES. Some of them visit TES to participate in jobsearch sessions.

94. TES's staff and employers provide particularly good personal support to learners. Initial assessment is thorough, and staff have a good understanding of learners' barriers to employment, and their personal issues. Staff have developed productive working relationships with a range of external agencies, such as drugs, alcohol and substance misuse referral units, and organisations which help homeless people. They respond quickly and effectively to learners' problems. Learners who have left the programme continue to receive good support with job seeking and other issues, through a drop-in facility. Those who have left early are encouraged to return to finish the programme. Induction arrangements are satisfactory.

95. Staff give inadequate feedback to learners on their work and progress. The targets set during progress reviews are not clear enough, and do not give enough detail about what learners need to do. Some targets are repeated at subsequent reviews without any sign of progression, or any explanation as to why the target has not been met. Some of the documents used in reviews do not prompt discussion of relevant issues such as basic skills. Individual learning plans are satisfactory, and contain appropriate targets. Learners have appropriate and well-planned support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, but their work is not routinely corrected. There is no written feedback to learners to highlight the progress they have made. However, clear verbal feedback is given on all the work carried out.

96. The premises for the Life Skills programme are shared with other user groups, and are not as good as those used for other foundation programmes. This weakness is identified in the self-assessment report and a new building is currently being converted for use by Life Skills learners. Information technology facilities are inadequate, and Life Skills learners are sometimes unable to use them as there is insufficient supervisory staff. There is no employer liaison specialist on the Life Skills programme, and work placements are not always found for all the learners who need them.

### **Leadership and management**

97. Foundation programmes are generally well managed. However, there is some inconsistency of provision, with adult learners benefiting from better resources than those on Life Skills. TES has made good use of subcontractors to extend the breadth of its provision, and has appropriate service level agreements with its subcontractors. However, there are some areas where the subcontractors do not match TES's standards, such as in their systems for the monitoring of learners' progress.

98. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, and learners, employers and subcontractors have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

STOCKTON TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Communication within the area of learning and between TES's staff, employers and subcontractors, is good.