

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	7
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement	7
Main findings.....	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality Of Opportunity	9
What learners like.....	11
What learners think could improve	11
Sector subject areas	12
Construction, planning and the built environment.....	12
Preparation for life and work	15
Business, administration and law.....	19
Learners' achievements	22

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on:

- LSC-funded provision
- Jobcentre Plus co-financed European Social Fund (ESF) provision
- Work-based learning provision in construction, planning and the built environment, preparation for life and work and business, administration and law

Inspectors also examined evidence from programmes in oral health care and in engineering, which were not reported on separately, to support judgements in leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce (DNCC) is a company limited by guarantee. It was formed by the merger in November 2006 of Derbyshire Chamber and Business Link and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce. The company's training division operates from the head office in Chesterfield and from offices in Bolsover, Derby, Glossop, Nottingham, Shirebrook and Swadlincote. It contracts with Derbyshire LSC for the provision of work-based learning and with Jobcentre Plus for a programme co-financed by the ESF to help adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into employment. DNCC is a subcontractor for another training provider for the delivery of New Deal programmes for adults. All programmes are government-funded.
2. The company offers programmes in oral health care, engineering, construction, information and communications technology (ICT), preparation for life and work and business administration and law. There are 110 Entry to Employment (E2E) learners, 101 apprentices, 53 advanced apprentices, three learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) only programmes and 47 participants on ESF programmes. In addition, there are 90 key stage 4 pupils who attend a range of vocational programmes.
3. DNCC's director of member services is formally responsible for the work of the training division. The head of training has day-to-day operational responsibility for all aspects of the division's performance. She is supported by managers responsible for learning and support, vocational qualifications and work-based learning. The division employs 45 staff.
4. The population of Derbyshire is around 976,200 and is expected to grow by 4.14% by 2013 with a significant proportion of this growth occurring in the South Derbyshire district. The number of young people, aged 15-19, is projected to fall by 1.3% between 2003 and 2013, and those aged 45 to 59 to increase by 11.3% over the same period.
5. According to the 2004 indices of deprivation, Derbyshire has 44 of the most deprived areas in England. The proportion of minority ethnic groups is low across the county at 1.4%, according to the 2001 census, although greater concentrations are found in Bolsover and Derby.
6. The area has a wide range of socio-economic profiles with pockets of affluence and deprivation. For example, the district of Bolsover has seven of the most deprived areas in the country and Chesterfield has six. The current unemployment rate is 2.4%, with the boroughs of Chesterfield and Bolsover exhibiting the highest levels. Unemployment disproportionately affects young people. Nearly a third of the unemployed are aged under 25. In addition, more than 1,940 young people aged 16 to 18 are not in education, employment or training.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
ESF	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
Capacity to improve		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
ESF	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
Quality of provision		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
ESF	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
Leadership and management		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
ESF	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
Equality of opportunity		Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Construction, planning and the built environment	Inadequate: Grade 4
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning
ESF

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Success rates in work-based learning are satisfactory overall but good in business, administration and law and poor in construction. Progression into further education, training or employment for learners on E2E programmes is satisfactory. The rate of progression into jobs for participants on ESF programmes is low. Learners on apprenticeship programmes develop good occupational skills which they apply effectively in their work. E2E learners and those on ESF programmes develop good personal and social skills, which help them to become more employable.

8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Tutors make good use of session plans and schemes of work. They encourage learners to complete work on time and give good verbal feedback on written work. Classroom management is good and learners participate well. Tutors use a range of learning resources and activities appropriate to the needs and interests of learners.

9. DNCC's response to social inclusion and the extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs of learners are both good. The company provides learning opportunities for many learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The company has good links with employers and is able to offer work placements for most learners and participants. Learners on many programmes can attend during the evening or weekends or study by distance learning.

10. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Learners generally have a good understanding of the provision and careers guidance is satisfactory. Staff generally monitor learners' progress well and plan effectively to meet any additional support needs. Pastoral support is satisfactory. Learners can attend additional workshop sessions and receive additional visits from assessors.

11. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Senior managers have developed a clear strategic business plan, which all staff understand. Links with employers are good. Training and development for staff is closely tied in with business and curriculum priorities. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall. Quality improvement is satisfactory but monitoring of provision subcontracted to colleges is weak.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. The provider has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve. The inspection in 2002 and partial reinspection in 2003 found the overall quality of provision to be generally satisfactory. This position has been maintained. Provision in business, administration and law has improved significantly. Most weaknesses in leadership and management have been successfully resolved. The quality improvement plan clearly identifies the company's strengths and areas for improvement and actions are monitored well by the continuous improvement group. However, timescales for actions to improve provision for construction learners have lapsed and few improvements have been made.

13. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. All staff contributed to the judgements in the self-assessment and the views of learners, employers and subcontractors were taken into account. Information about learner recruitment and success rates was used well to arrive at judgements. The report was moderated by the company's continuous improvement group. Most of the judgements in the self-assessment are sound but, with the exception of business, administration and law, the company gave higher grades for all aspects of its provision than those given by inspectors.

Key strengths

- Good development of workplace skills
- Good employer engagement
- Wide range of activities to promote learning
- Accessible and supportive staff

Key areas for improvement

- The poor success rates on some apprenticeship programmes
- The low job outcomes on ESF programmes
- The weak target-setting for learners
- The poor management of subcontractors

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning
ESF

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. Achievement of work-related skills is good in all programmes. Business administration learners take on additional responsibilities at work and can work effectively on their own initiative. Preparation for life and work learners gain in confidence and develop good team-working and problem-solving skills.

15. Overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes have improved steadily over the past three years and are now generally satisfactory. Learners on business administration programmes perform particularly well. However, success rates in construction are poor. The proportion of learners who complete within the planned period of study is mostly satisfactory but good in business administration and very poor in construction. Progression into education, employment or training for E2E learners is satisfactory.

16. Job outcome rates for participants on ESF programmes are poor. DNCC has made significant progress in implementing procedures for recognising and recording progress and achievement for participants on ESF programmes. However, it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these procedures.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning
ESF

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Arrangements for induction and initial assessment are satisfactory. Learners complete diagnostic tests to determine their level of literacy and numeracy and their preferred learning style. Most learners on apprenticeship programmes also receive an assessment of their job-related skills. Participants on Jobcentre Plus programmes receive an assessment of their previous achievements and their personal skills.

18. Learning sessions are generally satisfactory. Inspectors found most teaching to be satisfactory or good but none that was outstanding or inadequate. Sessions are generally planned and taught well and learners are encouraged to participate actively. Good use is made of a range of learning resources. Less effective sessions do not pay sufficient attention to learners' individual needs.

19. Assessment and progress reviews on apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory except in construction, where they are poor. Assessors generally visit learners in the

workplace every four weeks and use an appropriate range of assessment methods. Training officers carry out effective and supportive progress reviews with learners in the workplace. Employers are actively involved in this process. Construction learners do not receive enough assessment visits and many make slow progress towards unit completion.

20. DNCC offers an appropriate range of sector subject areas and qualification levels to meet the needs of learners and employers. Preparation for life and work learners have the opportunity to participate in work experience or taster programmes in a good range of trades. DNCC has well-established links with a large number of employers across the region and meets their needs well. Programmes with flexible modes of attendance and delivery are offered in oral health care, business administration and preparation for life and work.

21. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Assessors and monitoring officers in oral health care and business administration monitor learners' progress rigorously and plan effectively to meet any additional support needs. Preparation for life and work learners receive satisfactory pastoral support. Learners in construction receive appropriate additional support from the subcontractor, but DNCC's monitoring of this support is weak. Learners can attend extra workshop sessions and receive additional visits from assessors.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning
ESF

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality Of Opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

22. DNCC's senior managers have developed a clear strategic business plan, which all staff understand. A comprehensive three-year development plan is closely tied in with the quality improvement plan and with priorities set by the funding body. Managers review the provision carefully and in the light of performance in individual sector subject areas. Since the previous inspection, some provision has been cut and growth planned in new areas. There is clear ownership of the plan by staff at all levels. All staff were involved with the development of the business plan and they understand how their role in the organisation contributes to business objectives.

23. DNCC has developed successful strategies to engage a wide range of local businesses in training. The company is highly regarded by employers. Three full-time staff work well with local companies to promote and market DNCC's training programmes. Several companies have been persuaded to offer work placement opportunities for learners with a range of personal and social problems.

24. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced, as are assessors and internal verifiers. Staff training sessions on health and safety, classroom management and equality and diversity are built into the company's annual training calendar. There are four well-qualified subject learning coaches who identify and disseminate good practice in the use of teaching strategies and learning resources.

25. Management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. All learners receive an appropriate initial assessment to identify their needs. Appropriate support is given by assessors or training officers in the workplace or at the training centre. Literacy and numeracy support is particularly good for participants on ESF programmes. However, there is insufficient focus on literacy and numeracy for many E2E learners.

26. Quality improvement arrangements are generally satisfactory. The quality improvement plan clearly addresses the company's strengths and areas for improvement and actions are carefully monitored by the continuous improvement group. DNCC carries out regular observations of teaching and learning. The supporting paperwork is sound and covers the key teaching and learning processes. However, too many records of observation of teaching and learning do not clearly identify areas for improvement. The grade given by the observer is often too generous and not well supported by the written comments.

27. All staff contributed to the judgements in the self-assessment. Information about learner recruitment and success rates was used well to arrive at judgements. The views of learners, employers and subcontractors were taken into account. The company's continuous improvement group effectively moderated the self-assessment report.

28. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The company reviews its equal opportunities policy every year. Procedures are in place for dealing with bullying and harassment, complaints and discriminatory treatment. Tutors challenge inappropriate behaviour. Learners have a good understanding of employment rights and responsibilities. Staff receive regular updates on equality and diversity. The company regularly analyses trends in learners' achievements according to gender, ethnicity and disability.

29. DNCC's management of the college subcontractors that provide apprenticeship training in construction and engineering is poor. This is recognised in the company's self-assessment report. Staff do not receive regular communication from the colleges about the progress that learners are making. Colleges do not always make the results of observations of teaching and learning available to DNCC in a timely way. Staff visit colleges regularly to obtain this information, but this has not proved to be an effective means of quality assuring the subcontractors' work.

What learners like:

- 'We enjoy doing our qualifications'
- 'The pre-apprenticeship programme really gives us a kick start'
- 'We get loads of support'
- 'That everyone is really helpful'
- 'That we are happy'

What learners think could improve:

- The noise levels in the jobsearch room - they can be too high
- The amount and frequency of off-the-job training in accounts

Sector subject areas

Construction, planning and the built environment

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

30. DNCC subcontracts with four colleges of further education for the provision of programmes in construction, planning and the built environment. At the time of inspection there were 50 apprentices and 11 advanced apprentices, of whom all but one were men. Learners follow programmes in general construction, plastering, plumbing, wood occupations and trowel occupations. All learners are employed, mostly in small and medium-sized companies. Most are referred by Connexions or by their employer, while a few progress directly from the company's E2E programme. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every eight weeks.

Strengths

- Wide range of construction site experience for learners

Areas for improvement

- Poor success rates for apprentices
- Poor assessment practice
- Very poor reviews of progress
- Poor management of the learning process
- Slow progress to resolve previously identified weaknesses

Achievement and standards

31. Learners benefit from a wide range of construction site experience. They develop good, practical skills which employers value. Employers support apprentices effectively and help them to gain a wide range of experience on the construction site. One learner had worked on every aspect of a large house extension and was very confident. His bricklaying skills were good and he had a good understanding of all other aspects of the project.

32. Apprenticeship success rates are poor. This area for improvement is not recognised in the self-assessment report. The overall success rate in 2004-05 was just 33%. Of the eight apprentices who were due to complete their framework in 2004-05, only two did so within the planned period of study. Overall success rates improved to 48% in 2005-06 but the proportion of learners who completed within the planned period had declined to 19%.

Quality of provision

33. Resources in the subcontractor colleges are mainly satisfactory and good in one. Off-the-job training is satisfactory. All colleges have sufficient qualified assessors, tutors and internal verifiers. Three colleges have recently built new workshops to support training in construction. Learners speak very positively about the resources available to them. Resources at employers' sites are satisfactory. Learners use a good range of tools and equipment which meet current industrial standards.

34. Employers support learners well but few are aware of the progress that apprentices are making towards their NVO. They do not have sufficient information to support learners' progress by making relevant assessment opportunities available to them. For example, employers are not always aware of the subjects covered during off-the-job training sessions. Learners work in a safe and healthy environment. DNCC regularly monitors employers' risk assessment processes. Health and safety issues are discussed with learners at each progress review.

35. Support for learners is satisfactory. All apprentices receive an initial assessment to identify their additional learning support needs and most learners receive appropriate support if required. However, one dyslexic learner received support with reading in only one test session, despite his requests for more. Induction is satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate information about employment rights and responsibilities.

36. Assessment practice is poor. Insufficient use is made of on-site assessment, despite learners often working in situations where there are good assessment opportunities. Most bricklaying and carpentry apprentices have not received an on-site observation visit or assessment from their assessor. Many have collected some photographic evidence, but few had completed any NVO units after the first year of their two year programme. Many apprentices do not have an action plan or an assessment plan. Most are making slow progress with their NVO. They are not sufficiently encouraged to make timely progress or to complete units early.

37. Progress reviews are very poor. Individual learning plans do not reflect or accurately record learners' progress. The plans are not informed by the outcomes of initial assessment. Timescales recorded in the individual learning plans are determined by the college academic year, rather than each learner's needs and abilities. Learning plans do not identify timescales for achievement of individual units or other short-term targets and are not regularly updated. Individual units are not accredited as learners achieve them. Learning plans do not help staff to make any judgement about learners' progress. The identified completion date for many apprentices is simply the date that funding for their programme comes to an end. Progress reviews are planned to take place every eight weeks, but about 20 have been missed this year.

Leadership and management

38. Equality of opportunity arrangements are satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate information about equality and diversity during their induction and policies are in place to tackle bullying and harassment. Learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work is satisfactory. Progress reviews are effectively used to question and reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity.

39. Management of the learning process is poor, as is recognised in the self-assessment report. Communication with the subcontractor colleges is poor. Information is not shared. Staff are not aware of the progress that learners are making at college. Planning of assessment and training is inadequate. There is insufficient co-ordination of work-based activities and off-the-job training. Individual learning plans are incomplete. Monitoring of learners' progress is poor. Managers have introduced a number of initiatives to improve success rates for learners but it is too soon to assess the effectiveness of these measures.

40. DNCC has made slow progress in resolving previously identified weaknesses. Staff accurately identified key areas for improvement in the quality improvement plan and produced an appropriate action plan. However, the dates for most of the required actions have lapsed and little progress has been made. Inspectors gave a lower grade than that in the self-assessment report.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 3

Context

41. DNCC contracts with Derbyshire LSC and Jobcentre Plus for the provision of preparation for life and work programmes. The LSC funds training for 110 learners on E2E programmes, 74 of whom attend one of DNCC's five training centres. Three subcontractors deliver training for 36 learners at other centres in Chesterfield, Derby and Ripley. Seventy-three learners are men and seven are from minority ethnic groups. Learners attend the centre for 16 hours a week for 26 weeks. They participate in work placements, centre-based learning activities and educational visits. They have the opportunity to work towards key skills qualifications and a nationally recognised youth achievement award.

42. ESF programmes provide employability training for unemployed adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Participants are referred to DNCC by a Jobcentre disability employment adviser. Nearly all are based in Chesterfield. Participants attend the centre for 16 hours a week and can stay on programme for a maximum of 20 weeks. Learning sessions cover jobsearch activities, personal development, life skills, literacy and numeracy and ICT skills.

Strengths

- Good development of personal and vocational skills
- Good participation in work placements on E2E programmes
- Wide range of activities to develop skills on E2E programmes
- Good literacy, numeracy and ICT provision for ESF participants

Areas for improvement

- Low job outcome rates for ESF participants
- Poor target-setting and recording of progress
- Insufficient attention to the individual needs of participants
- Insufficient focus on literacy and numeracy in subcontracted provision for E2E learners

Achievement and standards

43. There is good development of personal and vocational skills for learners and participants. Learners work confidently on their own and in groups. They develop respect for others, speak positively about the new skills they have acquired and take pride in their achievements. Learners improve their time management, communication and listening skills. Participants develop good personal and social skills in the realistic work environment at DNCC's training centre in Chesterfield or in their work placement.

44. The proportion of E2E learners who progressed into further education, training or employment in 2005-06 was satisfactory at 55%. However, provisional data for 2006-07 shows a slight decline in positive outcomes.

45. Job outcome rates for ESF participants are low at 13%. Most participants have significant barriers to employment and DNCC has found it difficult to offer suitable work placements for everyone. The provider has links with local sheltered employment agencies, but these opportunities are generally limited.

Quality of provision

46. Learners' participation in E2E work placements is good. DNCC arranges work placements with a good range of employers for about 40% of E2E learners. There are also realistic work environments in light assembly processes, print production, catering and business administration at the provider's training centre in Chesterfield. Employers are very supportive. They work effectively with learners to develop time-keeping skills and to promote safe working practices. Learners are able to use power tools and machinery confidently. They develop significant work-related skills such as good attendance, punctuality and team-working.

47. DNCC organises a wide range of activities to develop E2E learners' skills. Learners regularly attend outdoor pursuit centres to participate in team-building activities such as rock climbing and caving. They also benefit from educational visits to industrial and commercial premises and participate in art and media workshops. Staff set challenging and interesting practical tasks which learners enjoy. They visit surrounding towns and cities to develop their confidence in travelling independently.

48. Literacy, numeracy and ICT provision for ESF participants is good. Participants are taught individually or in small groups with a good mix of stimulating and challenging activities to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Assessment of participants' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is used very effectively to plan daily activities. All participants work towards an externally accredited qualification. Participants' preferred jobs are taken into account to develop these skills in a meaningful way.

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors encourage learners to complete work on time and give good verbal feedback on written work. Classroom management is good and learners participate well. Tutors use a range of learning resources and activities appropriate to the needs and interests of learners. Question and answer techniques are used effectively to check learners' understanding.

50. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Information, advice and guidance provided to learners on entry are adequately linked to individual needs. Work tasters help learners make decisions about their future. Induction is satisfactory. Staff regularly support learners at their work placement. Many learners have significant barriers to learning.

51. Target-setting and recording of learners' and participants' progress are poor. Targets are not always realistic, achievable or timebound. Most targets are general, such as 'continue with...', 'improve...' or 'complete...'. Review paperwork is poorly filed and does not allow tutors to monitor the journeys of learners or participants. Work completed by E2E learners is not always marked, and the E2E activity plan and diary sheets are not always completed. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed and do not make adequate reference to the results of initial assessment. Learners' progress reviews often lack detail and do not include contributions from all relevant staff. Progress reviews for ESF learners are not always private and confidential.

52. Staff pay insufficient attention to the individual needs of participants. Tutors do not always use a sufficient range of participant-centred activities. Some participants have difficulty concentrating when tutors talk for long periods during learning sessions. Some training resources contain language that is too complicated for participants. Tutors do not always show sensitivity to participants' physical limitations. Some participants are inhibited from participating fully in learning sessions.

53. There is insufficient focus on literacy and numeracy in the subcontracted E2E provision. Learners do not have the opportunity to work towards a qualification in literacy and numeracy or develop literacy and numeracy skills according to individual need. There are no taught sessions in literacy or numeracy and no reference is made to literacy and numeracy in the vocational training or personal development sessions. Learners identified during initial assessment as possessing skills at entry level do not have the opportunity to develop further their literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

54. Internal communications are satisfactory, as is DNCC's communication with subcontractors. Staff responsible for ESF provision meet regularly to share good practice. Staff are adequately inducted and supported into their role.

55. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners and participants are aware of their rights and responsibilities and know who to contact if they have problems. Staff receive appropriate training on equality and diversity. They have a good understanding of disadvantages experienced by learners and participants. DNCC has a clear commitment to widening participation for those with significant barriers to learning. Staff make good use of links with external partners to reach prospective E2E learners.

56. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Learners' feedback is regularly collected and used to make improvements. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are sound. Tutors receive good feedback which helps them to improve. Self-assessment is an inclusive process. The views of staff, learners and subcontractors were sought and used effectively to make judgements about the quality of provision. The self-assessment report identifies most of the

strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors, but inspectors gave a lower grade.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

57. DNCC provides training programmes in business, administration and law for 49 apprentices and 30 advanced apprentices. Of the apprentices, 29 are following programmes in administration, 12 in accountancy and eight in customer service. Three learners are studying for an NVQ only in accountancy at level 4. Of the advanced apprentices, 13 are studying accountancy programmes, nine customer services and eight administration. About 75% of learners are women. Training for technical certificates and office skills is carried out at the company's centres in Chesterfield, Glossop and Swadlincote. Off-the-job training for accountancy is subcontracted to FTC Kaplan, which delivers the training in DNCC's training centres. Induction takes place in the training centre and at the workplace. Learners receive an initial assessment and a skills scan to help determine their suitability for the programme and to identify any additional support needs. Assessment and review visits are carried out in the workplace every four weeks.

Strengths

- Good success rates for advanced apprentices
- Good development of workplace skills
- Good progression
- Particularly good teaching and learning resources for additional ICT training
- Good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning of learning for accountancy learners

Achievement and standards

58. Success rates for advanced apprenticeships are good. They improved significantly from 34% in 2003-04 to 74% in 2004-05 and 75% in 2005-06. The proportion of learners who complete their programme within the planned period of study also shows an improving trend. Success rates for apprentices are generally satisfactory at 56% in 2003-04 and 2004-05 and 67% in 2005-06. All level 2 accountancy learners who completed the programme in 2005-06 achieved within the planned period of study.

59. Development of learners' workplace skills is good. Learners are matched well to employers. Level 2 learners are able to work on their own initiative. For example, some learners have prioritised their own workload and others have improved their company's purchasing systems. Some level 3 learners have been given additional responsibilities at work and many act as mentors for their level 2 colleagues. Programmes help to improve learners' confidence and self-esteem. Some apprentices

had achieved few qualifications at school but now take pride in the good progress they are making towards their career goals.

60. Progression for learners is good. DNCC recently launched a 10-week pre-apprenticeship programme. Learners study the background knowledge elements of the level 2 NVQ in business administration and customer service and are offered one-week work placements. Eleven learners have completed this programme and are now on the apprenticeship programme. Progression from level 2 to 3 is also good. Many accountancy learners progress from level 3 to 4 and a few go on to study higher level programmes.

Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning resources for additional ICT training are particularly good. Well-qualified and experienced staff ensure that sessions meet learners' individual needs. Most learners take the opportunity to develop their ICT skills further than that required by their programme. They make good use of the wide range of learning materials available, such as software, practise papers and some tailor-made materials produced by DNCC's staff. All learners have the opportunity to achieve additional recognised qualifications in word processing, keyboarding, legal text, medical text, document presentation and audio text and to study for an examination-based qualification in information technology.

62. Employers and DNCC's staff support learners well. DNCC's staff communicate effectively with employers to ensure that learners receive sufficient time to attend off-the-job training sessions. DNCC's training centre in Chesterfield is open on Wednesday evening to provide access to workshops for learners who are unable to attend courses during the day. Support for learners with disabilities is particularly effective. Many have been helped to find suitable employment. They develop confidence and take particular pride in their achievements. Assessors, tutors and monitoring officers share their mobile phone numbers and email addresses with learners, which learners appreciate.

63. Assessment and review processes are satisfactory. Assessors visit learners every four weeks and use an appropriate range of assessment methods. Communication between assessors and training officers to support learners' progress is effective. Assessors record information about learners' progress and achievements and share this with the monitoring officer, who follows up any identified concerns.

64. Arrangements for meeting learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory. Apprentices receive an interview and an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy. Additional support needs are identified and structured help is provided to those who need it. Assessors apply appropriate accreditation of prior learning.

65. Apprentices receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance when they begin their studies. They also receive further advice during the programme about the range of available progression opportunities. Learners nearing the end of their

current programme discuss the options available for the next level and future career paths with their assessor and workplace supervisor.

66. There is insufficient planning of learning for accountancy programmes. Level 2 learners are required to achieve three administration units as part of their framework. Learners who should have completed the administration units before Christmas, but have not done so, are now struggling to complete work for administration targets set for May in addition to having to revise for accountancy examinations in the summer. Learners attend teaching and revision sessions at the Chesterfield training centre. These sessions are normally run regularly but have recently become irregular and less frequent.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management have been successful in raising success rates over the past three years. Internal and external communications are effective. Staff meet regularly to review progress and to discuss areas for improvement. DNCC has developed good links with employers, many of whom have supported learners on a range of training programmes for many years.

68. Staff are occupationally competent and well qualified. They receive good support to develop their skills further. There is a well-qualified health and safety advanced practitioner who ensures that all employers' premises are safe. Employers receive regular updates on health and safety matters. Learners have a very good interactive induction which makes good use of games and quizzes to engage their interest.

69. The promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners have a good awareness of their rights and responsibilities and understand how to make a complaint. Assessors and monitoring officers regularly discuss equality of opportunity with learners during visits to the workplace.

70. Internal verification is satisfactory. An appropriate plan has been produced to ensure that all aspects of the assessment process are monitored. Assessors and staff have a good understanding of the self-assessment process and report. They are fully involved in the company's quality improvement strategies. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and correctly identifies most of the strengths and the area for improvement. Inspectors gave the same grade as that in the self-assessment report.

Learners' achievements

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the provider 2004 to 2006

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
04-05	277	46%	40%
05-06	221	67%	55%

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period

Success rates on work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes managed by the provider 2003 to 2006

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	47	49%	46%	34%	28%
		timely	36	25%	30%	19%	18%
	04-05	overall	27	78%	47%	74%	32%
		timely	24	63%	34%	58%	23%
	05-06	overall	28	86%	59%	75%	51%
		timely	26	77%	44%	65%	37%
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	57	60%	51%	56%	38%
		timely	49	39%	25%	39%	18%
	04-05	overall	62	60%	56%	56%	46%
		timely	69	43%	35%	42%	29%
	05-06	overall	58	67%	63%	67%	58%
		timely	92	48%	44%	48%	41%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'