

# Seetec

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## 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](http://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](http://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 specialist provision in:

- Engineering and manufacturing technologies.
- ICT.
- Retail and commercial enterprise.
- Business administration and law.
- Marketing and sales.

## Description of the provider

1. Seetec was founded in 1984 as an Information Technology Centre (ITeC). It is a private limited company owned by six employees, three of whom are directors. It provides training and Employment Services both privately and through programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The LSC funded provision includes apprenticeships, entry to employment (E2E) and Train to Gain programmes. For the Train to Gain provision Seetec is the lead contractor in a consortium of five other providers. In addition to Seetec, only two of these providers: Norfolk Training Services and West Suffolk Training Services, currently have learners in training. The company also supplies computer systems and software services to General Medical Practitioners. Seetec operates from 25 centres throughout the country but its LSC funded provision is concentrated in Essex where the head office is in Hockley. Thirty four Seetec staff are directly involved in the LSC provision but are also supported by staff from other departments. At the time of the inspection, 544 learners had enrolled on the various programmes funded by Essex LSC including those undergoing training with the two subcontractors. LSC contracts represent about 20% of turnover on government funded programmes. Seetec receives a further 80% from its DWP contracts.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Sector subject area

Engineering and manufacturing technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ICT	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Retail and commercial enterprise	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business administration and law	Good: Grade 2
Marketing and sales	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

2. The effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The extent to which Seetec's programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Support is good. Leadership and management are good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Provision in business administration and law, as well as in marketing and sales, is good overall. Provision in retail and commercial enterprise, ICT and engineering and manufacturing technologies is satisfactory.

### Capacity to improve

#### Good: Grade 2

3. Seetec has demonstrated that it has good capacity to make further improvements. The organisation has made good progress to improve its programmes since the previous inspection. Many of the previous weaknesses identified have been rectified and there are plans to rectify those remaining within reasonable timescales. Subcontract arrangements, previously a weakness, are now strong. Work-based learning overall and timely success rates show a steady rising trend. The organisation gained valuable experience from its successful Employment Training Pilot contract, which it is applying to the Train to Gain provision.
4. The provider's development plans, identified through self-assessment, have realistic targets to improve weaknesses. Senior management monitors progress against actions closely. The self-assessment process is well established and thorough. The process enables Seetec to differentiate between the LSC and other government funded provision as well as its wider activities. Learner and employer input to the process is obtained through analysis of evaluation and satisfaction questionnaires and through learner forums. Staff involvement is built up from individual self-assessment through team and departmental input into the final report. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and matches closely the findings of the inspection.

## Key strengths

- Clear strategic direction.
- Good staff development.
- Very effective links between operational management and quality improvement arrangements.
- Good development of learners' personal and vocational skills.
- Good support for learners.

## Key areas for improvement

- Some ineffective target-setting.
- Insufficient monitoring of learners' progress.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Good: Grade 2

5. Achievement and standards are good. Seetec has made good progress in improving overall success rates. Over the three-year period to 2005/06, the overall success rates increased from 44% to 57%, just above the national rate. Data for 2006/07 indicates the trend is likely to be maintained. Timely success rates have improved substantially from 16% to 45% over the same three-year period.
6. Overall success rates on advanced apprenticeships over the same three-year period have also increased from 33% to 59%, 15 percentage points above the national rate. Over the three-year period to 2005/06, timely success rates have improved significantly from 33% to 42%.
7. Success rates in most sector subject areas have also improved and most are at or above national rates. For example in customer services, the overall success rates are high at 71%, 28 percentage points above the national rate. Pass rates on technical certificates are satisfactory at 62% and low in key skills at 54%.
8. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills. They significantly improve their self-confidence, self-esteem, teamwork and communication skills in addition to their vocational skills. Many apprentices in estate agency and warehousing and logistics progress to Level 3 qualifications.
9. On the Train to Gain programmes, learners make satisfactory progress towards their qualification. It is too early to make judgements on achievements. The provider did however, run successful Employer Training Programme (ETP) programmes in many of the same areas with good achievement in retail and commercial enterprise and business administration and law, including marketing and sales. Retention on the Train to Gain programmes is good so far. Train to Gain learners' confidence and self-esteem increases and they benefit from good additional learning support.
10. Learners on the E2E programmes make satisfactory progress. Data for 2006/07 indicates the number of learners who successfully achieved their key objectives to be steadily improving. In 2006/07, 61% achieved their main objectives. One hundred per cent of those entered for entry level literacy, Level 2 literacy and entry level numeracy and a first aid at work certificate were successful. Pass rates for levels 1 and 2 numeracy were also high at around 90%.

### Quality of provision

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3



11. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners benefit from access to good resources, realistic work environments, well-qualified staff and a wide range of support services.
12. Assessment is well planned. Learners have access to a suitably wide range of assessment opportunities. Assessment for business administration and customer service learners is very effective. Learners receive satisfactory feedback from their assessors. The use of electronic assessment portfolios is widespread and motivates ICT and customer services learners well. Internal verification is thorough and ensures the consistency of assessment.
13. There is insufficient monitoring of progress for learners on the larger programmes. Target-setting is ineffective with targets for many learners lacking sufficient detail on what is to be achieved and by when. Insufficient consideration is taken into account of individual learners' prior experience or ability.
14. The extent to which Seetec's programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The large Train to Gain contract, for which Seetec is the lead contractor, is well targeted at groups of workers who would not otherwise have the opportunity to gain a qualification. Consortium members have been chosen well to provide the necessary geographical spread and expertise to deliver the contract effectively.
15. Overall, induction is effective and prepares learners well for their programmes. Programmes adequately meet the needs of most employers. However, some learners do not know that they are working towards an apprenticeship framework.
16. Support is good. Most learners receive good support from staff and assessors. Staff provide very good advice and guidance including pastoral, practical and vocational support. Assessors frequently visit learners at work. Visits suit the needs of learners and employers. Learners can contact their assessor at any time. Retail and commercial enterprise and estate agency learners receive very good support from employers.
17. The provision for additional learning support is satisfactory. Initial and diagnostic assessment is effective. However, some business administration and customer service learners do not receive sufficient additional support to help them overcome their language, literacy and numeracy needs.

## **Leadership and management**

**Good: Grade 2**

**Equality of opportunity**

**Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3**

18. Leadership and management are good. Seetec's senior managers provide clear strategic direction. Business planning is particularly thorough and well documented and serves both the business as a whole and the LSC funded provision. Three-year strategic and

development plans clearly set out the organisation's values and mission statements. These are reviewed annually and detailed objectives with appropriate targets and indicators set. All the organisation's owners, including the directors, are directly involved in the management of the company and assist in the dissemination of strategic direction to the staff. Information is shared efficiently through a series of regular meetings at all levels, through line management and through the company's own intranet.

19. Staff development is good. The organisation has a good history of internal promotion and staff recruitment from among its own former learners. Staff attend a wide range of in-house training, which includes annual equality and diversity training and has also included disability and mental health awareness training. Seetec encourages staff to gain relevant qualifications and supports staff financially by allowing time off work and, where appropriate, through mentoring. The organisation also supports the more general personal development of its staff.
20. Links between operational management and quality improvement arrangements are very effective. Line managers and quality managers regularly observe all dealings with learners. In addition to grading observations of teaching and learning, they also score assessments and reviews. This scoring is weighted according to priorities in the business plan which are derived from identified areas for improvement. Managers use the scores in setting staff salary and performance bonuses and to assist in the setting of individual targets and development and training plans. Staff are well motivated to deal with the areas for improvement awarded the highest priority. The processes are supported by an effective management information system, which senior staff use to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the provision closely.
21. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Staff awareness of equal opportunities is good. Brochures and other material use images that represent the diversity of the local population and so promote equality of opportunity. Equal opportunities policies are satisfactory. The arrangements for dealing with complaints are thorough. The use of data to monitor the performance of various groups is good. However, equality of opportunity coverage at learners' induction lacks sufficient detail. On some programmes, understanding is not subsequently monitored and reinforced sufficiently. Although Seetec has devised a set of equality of opportunity topics to be covered during the year and uses a bank of standard questions to encourage discussion and debate, some learners still have little understanding or awareness of equality of opportunity.

## What learners like:

- The very supportive tutors - 'my assessors are knowledgeable and explain things to me clearly'.
- Being able to work at their own pace.
- The close match between their qualification and their job roles.
- The opportunity to improve their self-esteem – 'this qualification will help me prove that I am capable of achieving goals'.
- The support they receive from their work colleagues to help them achieve their qualifications – 'everyone getting involved to help you achieve'.

## What learners think could improve:

- Fewer forms to complete – 'too much duplicate paperwork and not enough time to complete the written work'.
- The number of teaching and training sessions – 'access to more group training sessions'.
- The number of practical activities for the Information technology qualification (ITQ) learners.

## Sector subject areas

### **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

#### **Satisfactory: Grade 3**

##### **Context**

22. This Train to Gain provision is subcontracted to Norfolk Training Services Limited (NTS) as a member of the consortium for which Seetec is the lead contractor. It was not included in the previous inspection of NTS. Currently 35 learners are on performing manufacturing operations (PMO) and eight learners follow motor vehicle courses, all at NVQ Level 2. All learners are employed and the training and assessment takes place in the workplace and is conducted by NTS assessors. This is a new contract, with most learners having been on their programme for a maximum of two months.

##### **Strengths**

- Good support for learners from employers and subcontractor.
- Well planned management of subcontracted provision.

##### **Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient reinforcement of learners' awareness of equality and diversity.

##### **Achievement and standards**

23. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Most learners have been on a programme for less than two months. They make satisfactory progress towards the mandatory units of the qualifications. The planned length of training for the Train to Gain programme is 12 months.
24. The learners on the PMO programme are experienced and most have been employed by their company for many years. Very little additional training is anticipated. They make good progress.

##### **Quality of provision**

25. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. The learners have a clear understanding of their achievement on the programme. A matrix for achievement, including evidence type and each performance criteria, with a textual description, is used to identify each performance criteria requirement and is marked off when achieved. Graphical representation of percentage completion of the qualification is also included in the portfolio. This identifies each learner's progress towards their completion targets well.
26. Assessment is satisfactory. A new assessor, employed by NTS, is based in the main employer, Williams Refrigeration. Other assessors visit learners on a regular, predetermined basis. Observations recorded are clearly identified and cross-referenced to units and performance criteria. Questions are asked to check knowledge and

understanding. Clear and positive feedback is given to the individual learner, with information on elements not covered, how this will be assessed on the next visit and where information could be found to complete outstanding work. Accreditation of prior learning is appropriately used where learners on the PMO programme have qualifications which can be aligned to some of the unit performance criteria. Communications between assessors, internal verifiers, learners, supervisors and employers are good. Internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verification of portfolios is planned at least three times during the programme.

27. The Train to Gain programmes satisfactorily meet the needs of both the learners and employers. Each learner has an individual learning plan containing the units most appropriate to their current work to facilitate evidence gathering. The choice of units is agreed by negotiation with the learner, from a selection already agreed with the employer. Learners in a supervisory role in this area follow appropriate programmes in leading teams.
28. Learners are fully aware of the specialist support available from NTS staff for language, literacy and numeracy. At the start of the programme however, initial assessment of learning support needs was not systematically carried out. Learners who have started more recently, have completed a full basic skills assessment, while others have completed a fast monitor assessment. Learners with an identified support need are offered support but few take it up, preferring help from their assessor or colleagues. No learners have taken up the offer to complete adult basic skills qualifications.

### **Leadership and management**

29. Leadership and management is satisfactory. The management of the subcontracted provision to meet the Train to Gain contract is well planned. The subcontractor has a detailed service level agreement. Seetec only considers subcontractors who can demonstrate that their leadership and management is good. Monthly visits are planned to monitor specific topics. Issues raised regarding learner satisfaction feedback are dealt with promptly. The working relationship between contractor and subcontractor is good.
30. The reinforcement of learners' awareness of equality and diversity is insufficient. The topic is introduced during induction, but, unlike health and safety, which is discussed at every visit, there is little further monitoring until the first three-month progress review.

## **ICT**

### **Satisfactory: Grade 3**

#### **Context**

31. Currently 13 learners are on Train to Gain programmes, working towards an Information Technology Qualification (ITQ). Employers range from small organisations to medium-

size enterprises. All learners receive an initial assessment to identify their language, literacy and numeracy needs. There is one assessor and one internal verifier.

### **Strengths**

- Good support for new learners.
- Good use of electronic assessment.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient planning to meet learners' individual training needs.
- Insufficient target-setting.

### **Achievement and standards**

32. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners achieve appropriate practical skills and are able to produce basic spreadsheets, useful word-processed documents and presentations. Learners apply their new ICT skills at work well. However, some learners take too long to achieve their NVQ units. Of the 13 learners on programme, three are making slow progress towards achieving their NVQ. Ten of the 13 learners have recently joined the programme. It is too early to judge their progress.

### **Quality of provision**

33. Support for learners is good. Staff contact learners regularly through visits and email. Staff are effective in engaging learners and have good rapport with them. Staff respond promptly and effectively to feedback from learners. Employers provide good levels of support to enable learners to complete their qualifications within the agreed timescale.
34. The use of electronic assessment is good. All learners use electronic portfolios. Learners benefit from reduced paperwork, the accessibility and flexibility of the system and are well motivated. Digital video cameras are used very effectively for NVQ observations to record learners' performance.
35. Learning resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately experienced and are qualified to support learners in their practical work and background knowledge.
36. The needs of employers are appropriately met. Employers provide learners with good training opportunities and sufficient time for the learners to work on their ITQ.
37. All learners have an appropriate induction, which includes an introduction to the ITQ programme, the use of the electronic portfolio system and their rights and responsibilities. Learners receive clearly written information on appeals, complaints and equal opportunities procedures. However, some learners are not sufficiently informed of what they need to do to complete the qualification.
38. The assessment of learners' language, literacy and numeracy skills during induction is satisfactory. The arrangements for assessment and internal verification procedures are not fully developed. NVQ assessment by observation in the workplace is insufficient for some learners. Records of direct observations are not completed at the time of the assessment.

Feedback to learners is not explicitly related to the NVQ standards. The internal verifier makes good use of the electronic portfolio system to sample learners' work. However, internal verification feedback to the assessor is not sufficiently effective and does not clearly identify areas for development.

39. Some learners' individual training needs are not sufficiently met. Learners are not sufficiently aware of the programme structure. The arrangements for group and individual training and the plans in place to meet the individual training needs of these learners are insufficient.
40. Target-setting is insufficient. Learners' progress reviews are appropriately planned. However, targets are not sufficiently challenging and short term targets do not motivate learners to complete their pre-assessment activities quickly. Individual learning plans adequately identify learning goals, but the short term goals are not always clearly defined and not specific enough to enable learners to make better progress.

### **Leadership and management**

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is satisfactory. The sharing of good practice between staff across the range of NVQs is effective. The management of resources is satisfactory. The ratio of trainers to learners is good. The use of data to monitor the overall performance of learners is effective. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners feel safe and are clearly aware of their rights and responsibilities.

## **Retail and commercial enterprise**

### **Satisfactory: Grade 3**

#### **Context**

42. Currently 305 learners are on retail and commercial enterprise courses. Of these, 238 learners are working towards a NVQ Level 2 and six learners are working towards a NVQ Level 3 in warehouse, distribution and storage operations. A further 32 learners are completing a NVQ Level 2 and four adult learners are working towards a NVQ Level 3 in retail skills on Train to Gain programmes. Three advanced apprentices and 17 apprentices are completing frameworks in warehouse and distribution. Five apprentices are also completing a framework in retail skills.
43. All apprentices are employed in warehousing and distribution businesses of different sizes. The adult learners complete all aspects of their training while at their place of work. Apprentices can access off-the-job training sessions to cover the technical knowledge element of their framework. Six assessors and two internal verifiers work in this area of learning.

#### **Strengths**

- Good development of personal and professional skills.
- Good support for learners.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient planning of individual learning.

#### **Achievement and standards**

44. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Learners develop good personal and professional skills. The training programmes increase their confidence and self-esteem. They improve their teamwork and written communication skills. Learners improve their knowledge of business operations and add value in the workplace by suggesting efficiencies. They further develop their knowledge of all health and safety issues relevant to working in busy industrial warehouses. Learners demonstrate a keenness to progress further in their careers.
45. Retail and wholesaling apprentices make satisfactory progress. Success rates for warehousing and distribution apprentices in 2005/06 fell by 10 percentage points to 40%. However, advanced apprenticeships, with similar volumes, had a framework achievement rate of 63% in 2005/6. According to Seetec's own data, in-year success rates for 2006/07 have improved. It is, however, too soon to judge fully the impact of Seetec's actions on learners' achievements.
46. The Train to Gain programme started in October 2006. All learners are still on programme. Two have already achieved their NVQ and the rest are making satisfactory progress towards achieving their qualification. Before the beginning of the delivery of the



new programme, the provider delivered an Employment Training Pilot where achievement rates were high over the last three years.

47. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Portfolios contain a sufficient range of evidence and provide an accurate record of each learner's development.

### **Quality of provision**

48. Learners receive good support from their employers. Many employers have incorporated the qualifications into their own training programmes and they actively encourage their employees to take the qualification. In many cases, employers are involved in the initial skill assessment of the learner. Most learners are given time off work to complete their qualification and some employers organise group sessions for portfolio-building. Employers plan their tasks effectively to enable learners to access opportunities that will develop and improve their skills.
49. All learners receive satisfactory initial assessment at which language, literacy and numeracy needs are effectively identified. Learners who require support receive regular visits from the skills for life co-ordinator, who effectively supplies the appropriate level of support.
50. Comprehensive induction is delivered in the workplace. Learners receive information on their qualification, health and safety and equality of opportunity, however, it is not memorable and some learners have a poor recall of what is covered. Most learners receive adequate information, advice and guidance about their progression options and further training opportunities.
51. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessment relies mostly on observations and is further supported by paper-based evidence obtained in the workplace and by witness testimonies.
52. Programmes adequately meet employer and learners' needs. Seetec has changed its provision to respond better to local needs.
53. The planning of individual learning is insufficient. Individual learning plans do not sufficiently reflect the experience of learners. In some instances, learners' specialist qualifications are not taken into account when planning learning. In others, learners' prior attainment has not been recognised until they have been in the programme for several months. Predicted end dates are often standardised regardless of prior achievement. Many learners and their employers are unsure about the expected length of their programme. Individual learning plans are not updated appropriately to reflect any changes in progress or to capture learner training. Achievement is often recorded late rather than against planned timescales. The provider partially recognises this weakness in its self-assessment report and has begun to address it but it is too early to assess the effectiveness of these actions.

### **Leadership and management**

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessors receive frequent and timely communication. They hold standardisation meetings and share best practice effectively.
55. The management information system is used effectively, mostly by senior managers who highlight poor learner performance to the assessors. However, individual assessors measure learners' performance in different ways, which are not moderated to ensure consistency across the organisation.
56. The internal verification system is adequate and meets the awarding body criteria. However, portfolios are mainly verified once they have been completed. The provider plans to increase the amount of internal verification of portfolios throughout the programme.
57. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Policies are shared with staff and learners and a booklet has been designed recently to develop the reinforcement of equality and diversity with learners further.
58. Staff involvement in quality improvement is satisfactory. They contribute to the annual self-assessment report, which is generally accurate but predates the Train to Gain programmes. The report correctly highlights most strengths and areas for improvement. This is reflected in the quality improvement plan. Some of the actions have not yet been completed.

## **Business administration and law**

### **Good: Grade 2**

#### **Context**

59. Currently 145 learners study in this sector subject area. All are employed. Twenty-one females and seven males are working towards an apprenticeship framework in customer service. Twenty two learners are working towards an apprenticeship framework in administration, of whom 15 are female. On Train to Gain programmes, 41 learners, of whom nine are male, are working towards a Level 2 qualification in administration. Twenty nine female and nine male learners are on a Level 2 programme in customer service and 13 male and one female learner are working towards a Level 2 team leadership qualification. Seetec staff visit learners in the workplace to carry out assessment and progress reviews.

#### **Strengths**

- High overall success rates in customer services.
- Good development of vocational and personal skills.
- Very effective assessment practice.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Poor progress reviews for some learners.
- Insufficient arrangements to support learners with additional support needs.

#### **Achievement and standards**

60. Achievement and standards are good overall. Overall success rates in customer service are high. In 2005/06, 71% of leavers on advanced apprenticeship and 72% on apprenticeship programmes completed the full framework. The overall success rate for customer services in the current year so far is 65%. Learners still on programme make very good progress.
61. Learners exhibit good vocational and personal skills. Many have responsible job roles, which require them to meet targets, manage time effectively and demonstrate team skills.
62. On the Train to Gain programme, learners demonstrate increased levels of confidence. Train to Gain learners gain a better understanding of their job roles and receive formal recognition of skills and knowledge acquired in the workplace. The training programmes also contribute to the increased self-esteem of many learners.
63. Apprentices in administration make satisfactory progress. In 2005/06, 52% of leavers completed the full framework. In the current year 69% of business administration leavers have already completed the full framework.
64. The standard of current learners' work is satisfactory. Many learners complete their portfolios on-line and those with immediate access to computers in the workplace welcome this opportunity. Portfolios contain a wide range of evidence clearly recorded

and appropriately referenced. Evidence towards the technical certificate and key skill components of the framework qualification is clearly identified.

### Quality of provision

65. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Assessment is very effective. Seetec staff visit learners very frequently in the workplace to carry out assessment. Visits are normally made every two weeks but as learners near completion, more frequent visits are arranged. Assessment plans are agreed with learners and appropriate short term targets identified. The completion of assessment plans is closely monitored by assessors on workplace visits, and also as part of monthly meetings of all Seetec assessors, to identify learners at risk of non-completion. Action-planning to retain these learners and identify and overcome barriers to completion is good. A good range of assessment methods is used to confirm learner competence. This includes professional discussion and observation. Good use is made of digital recording. However, some feedback following observation is too general and does not sufficiently inform improvement.
66. Off-the-job training is satisfactory. Training to support the achievement of the technical certificate and key skill framework elements is available on Seetec premises and is attended primarily by learners on administration programmes. Training is carefully planned. Lesson plans and content aim to ensure that clear links exist between off-the-job training and the experience of the learner in the workplace.
67. Resources are satisfactory. Training staff hold appropriate qualifications and have relevant commercial experience. Staff are encouraged to attend training aimed at updating their skills and knowledge. Learners have access to current text books and learning is further supported by handout material. Examples of this material include a handbook on equal opportunity legislation.
68. Internal verification is satisfactory. There is a clear and appropriate verification strategy and sampling plan. Internal verification is ongoing and this includes the observation of assessment practice. All internal verification activity is fully recorded and written feedback provided to assessor staff following any observation.
69. Support for learners is satisfactory. Seetec staff are responsive to learner requests for changes to their programme. Examples include learners on Train to Gain changing from on line to paper based portfolios. Advice and guidance on the selection of optional units on both apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes is thorough and appropriate. Such advice is often given following consultation with employers. Employers are supportive of training and many allocate time within the working week for the completion of the target qualification. A number of employers have a sound knowledge of NVQ programmes including one who holds NVQ assessor qualifications.
70. Progress reviews are poor for some learners. Assessor staff complete the contractual review of learners' progress and in most cases the employer is present. Many of the progress targets recorded at review however, are imprecise or too general. Some reviews do not identify any targets. The checking of health and safety and equal opportunity understanding is not always carried out. Some learners do not understand the difference between assessment and review processes.

71. Seetec has insufficient arrangements to support learners with additional support needs. Well qualified and experienced staff work in this area. However, initial assessment is not fully implemented for all learners and not all those with additional support needs are identified.

### **Leadership and management**

72. Leadership and management are good. Staff are clear about their job roles and responsibilities and all have written job specifications. There are monthly meetings of training staff to discuss learner progress and to share examples of best practice and standardise procedures. Staff feel well supported and informed. Each has an annual appraisal with their line manager where staff development needs are identified and agreed. Managers make good use of observations and the scoring of many aspects of the staff's work to motivate them and drive continuous improvement.
73. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and identified the key strengths. However, it did not identify all the areas for improvement.

## **Marketing and sales**

### **Good: Grade 2**

#### **Context**

74. Seetec currently has 33 learners working towards qualifications in estate agency. Of these, 22 are advanced apprentices and 10 are apprentices. One learner is on a Train to Gain programme. All the learners are employed and are supported in the workplace by experienced colleagues or supervisors who provide mentoring and training. Before starting their programme, all learners are interviewed to establish their interest in estate agency work. Most employers provide the training in practical skills related to the learners work. Tutors provide all the background support for learners, visiting them in their workplaces either weekly or bi-weekly according to learners' needs. Visits provide opportunities for informal coaching and assessment.

#### **Strengths**

- High overall success rates for advanced apprenticeships.
- Good development of vocational skills.
- Good employer involvement in learning.
- Good operational management.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient training for some units of the technical certificate.

#### **Achievement and standards**

75. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates for advanced apprenticeships in estate agency are high. In both 2004/05 and 2005/06 they were 71%. In the previous year, the success rate was 100%. Timely success rates are satisfactory.

76. On apprenticeship programmes the framework success rate has declined over the last three years, but it remains satisfactory at 61%. Timely success rates have improved from 30% to 56% in the last two years. All success rates exceed the national average, timely success rates significantly so.

77. All learners currently in training make good progress towards completing the framework. Learners gain confidence, usually working in small estate agency teams where good individual performance contributes to team success. Many take on considerable responsibility in producing accurate property details within the scope of current legislation. Many obtain promotion within the period of the apprenticeship.

#### **Quality of provision**

78. Employers' involvement in learning is good. Learners benefit from the practical experience of supervisors and other team members. They are quickly introduced to the essential skills needed to be valuable employees. Learners' and employers' needs are considered when choosing optional units, together with anticipated length of programme and frequency of assessment. The highly experienced tutors, all themselves former estate agents, effectively structure the learning experience to ensure very good training. The background knowledge and understanding of estate agency practice, particularly relating to legal and regulatory practices are well developed and related to each learner's own estate agency business. Employers value the tutors' up to date knowledge of the law and recent developments such as home information packs.
79. Seetec staff manage individual learning effectively through reviews, feedback and target-setting. However, the full review documentation is not always transferred to the learners' portfolio. Assessment is satisfactory. Assessors employ an appropriate range of assessment methods to meet learners' needs across all aspects of the framework. Staff use open questions well to test learners' knowledge and understanding. Some assessments are digitally recorded. Electronic portfolio software allows comprehensive feedback on each piece of evidence. This enables learners to monitor their own progress very clearly and see what they have achieved and helps in the setting of effective future learning targets. Learners are provided with adequate time during working hours to compile NVQ portfolios and meet with supervisors, assessors and tutors.
80. Additional learning support is good. Learners receive one to one tuition and progress well. The support is closely linked to their work needs. Those in receipt of this support also gain confidence in other aspects of their work.
81. Training for some of the technical certificate units is insufficient. Elements of the legal and building construction units of the technical certificate are not reflected in the daily work of many estate agents and some learners who do not take up the good off-the-job training in these areas fail these elements at the first attempt.

### **Leadership and management**

82. Leadership and management are good. Performance management is effective. The team workload is well distributed with individual staff targets set for framework completions. Monthly team meetings review learners' progress towards individualised learning targets. Issues that affect the successful completion are highlighted and appropriate action taken. These team meetings are monitored effectively by senior management responsible for the quality assurance of provision and the team support needs.
83. Staff development is good and is well targeted towards weaknesses that have been identified by the quality assurance process or by individual staff or the team.
84. Equality and diversity understanding is good. Specific examples are discussed in depth during progress reviews as part of developing learners' vocational skills. Examples of good and unacceptable practices are highlighted and help to inform learners well of their responsibilities with respect to colleagues and customers.

85. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and correctly identifies most of the strengths and the area for improvement. The grade in the self-assessment report matched that awarded by inspectors.



## Annex A

## Learners' achievements

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	9	33	48	33	31
		timely	9	33	30	33	19
	04-05	overall	11	82	48	64	34
		timely	12	50	31	33	21
	05-06	overall	34	62	54	59	44
		timely	33	42	34	42	27
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	70	59	47	44	32
		timely	56	21	24	16	16
	04-05	overall	107	61	50	56	38
		timely	107	43	29	40	22
	05-06	overall	99	59	58	57	53
		timely	99	48	38	45	33

\* 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'