

Pertemps Learning Education Alliance

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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.

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 specialist provision in:

- Information & communications technology (ICT) in work-based learning and information technology (IT) courses in **learndirect**.
- Preparation for life and work in entry to employment (E2E) employment training within work-based learning, and skills for life courses in **learndirect**.
- Business administration, management and law in work-based learning and business and management courses in **learndirect**.

Description of the provider

1. Pertemps Learning and Education Alliance (PLEA) is a privately owned limited company. It delivers work-based learning in South Yorkshire funded by South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Entry to Employment (E2E) in the West Midlands, funded by Coventry and Warwickshire LSC, and **learndirect** courses in the North East, North West, Hereford and the West Midlands under a contract with the University for Industry (Ufi) Limited. Eighty seven per cent of PLEA's work is funded through the government. At the time of inspection, PLEA had 149 work-based learners, 70 E2E learners and 970 **learndirect** learners. Since September 2006, PLEA has had 9,443 enrolments on its **learndirect** courses. There are nine **learndirect** centres, two E2E centres and three employer sites where work-based learning takes place.
2. PLEA was formed on 31 March 2007 when Pertemps Training provision, including **learndirect** provision, was transferred to Three A's Pertemps Training. Three A's Pertemps Training was renamed as Pertemps Learning & Education Alliance. PLEA is part of a larger group called Pertemps People Development Group (PPDG) which owns three other companies: Pertemps Coachright, Pertemps Employment Alliance and Pertemps Disability Equality Limited. PPDG has a contract for Welfare to Work where learners are supported into jobs through Advancement Centres around the country. **Learndirect** centres for PLEA are based in the Advancement Centres. The centres are in urban and rural areas with high unemployment and low levels of skills. PLEA has an additional mobile centre in Hereford.
3. PLEA is led by a managing director and supported by the area operations director for learning and development and 65 local centre staff. In addition PPDG supports PLEA with various functions including human resources, training, marketing, communications, quality and continuous improvement. The managing director is accountable to PPDG's operational board. The head office for PLEA and PPDG is in Edgbaston in Birmingham.
4. Pertemps Training work-based learning was inspected in 2003, and reinspected in June 2004 and judged satisfactory. Three A's was inspected in June 2006 where E2E was judged as good. Some of the **learndirect** provision was inspected during the Employment Zone inspections in 2005 and 2006; in Teesside and Liverpool where provision was judged as outstanding and good respectively.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision		Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning learndirect		Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
		Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards		Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning learndirect		Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
		Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision		Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning learndirect		Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
		Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management		Outstanding: Grade 1
Work-based learning learndirect		Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
		Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
Equality of opportunity		Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

ICT	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
Business administration, management & law	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
learndirect

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates in work-based learning are high in customer service where most learners study and low, but improving, in administration. Progression rates in E2E are good and almost half of learners who gain employment go into jobs with further training. Success rates in **learndirect** are satisfactory and at the national average. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills.
6. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Observations of teaching and learning are thorough. Lessons in E2E are well planned and referenced to the national curriculum for skills for life. However, for some learners, literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently integrated in lessons and mistakes in learners' work are not corrected at the appropriate time.
7. PLEA is very socially inclusive. **Learndirect** learners come from areas of high unemployment and low skills. **Learndirect** centres are mostly situated in welfare to work centres with support for seeking jobs, increasing self-confidence, childcare and credit union facilities. E2E learners overcome a range of barriers to learning including school exclusion, offending, low skills and health problems. Good partnerships exist with support agencies, national training providers, employers and local communities.
8. Guidance and support is good particularly in E2E. Learners receive good advice and have their own key worker to monitor their progress. Trainers, tutors and assessors support learners well in work-based learning and **learndirect**. Assessment is frequent and learners make good progress. The monitoring of learners' progress is particularly good. PLEA has developed a very good management tool in **learndirect** which helps staff to produce a range of reports which are well used by managers.
9. Leadership and management are outstanding. PLEA has established very clear aims and values in supporting its learners to obtain jobs and improve their skills. Performance management is very good. Targets and performance measures are widely disseminated to staff and closely monitored each week. Staff demonstrate very high levels of motivation and the turnover of staff is very low. Staff training is very good. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Success rates have improved for most learners but some have yet to benefit fully from the impact of PLEA's continuous improvement developments in teaching and learning, management information systems and resources.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

10. PLEA demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve. It has made very good progress since the previous inspections of the two separate providers. The merger was managed particularly successfully with very good support from PPDG staff. The amount and variety of work-based learning has reduced and PLEA has strongly focused its provision on that which best meets its values and goals and complements the welfare to work provision of PPDG. PLEA has maintained the good quality of its E2E programme. It has further strengthened its quality assurance arrangements. Success rates have improved significantly over the three years to 2005/06 in work-based learning. **Learndirect** success rates have improved substantially over the last year. PLEA benefits from an excellent performance management system with a strong focus on continuous improvement.
11. The self-assessment process is thorough, comprehensive, evaluative and accurate. The self-assessment process is central to PLEA's quality improvement. A culture of continuous improvement pervades PLEA. Staff make very good contributions to the report. Learners' feedback, through questionnaires, is used very well to identify areas for improvement. Before the inspection and following the merger of the two providers, PLEA developed a summary self-assessment report which collated feedback, strengths and areas for improvement from the local centre self-assessment reports. Staff discuss self-assessment frequently at their regular team meetings and celebrate strongly the success of their learners. The development plan is particularly comprehensive and its implementation is closely monitored and quality assured.

Key strengths

- Outstanding leadership and management.
- Strong performance management.
- Very good pastoral support for learners.
- Very good monitoring of progress.
- Wide variety of good quality partnerships.
- Good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Good development of learners' skills.

Key areas for improvement

- The low and satisfactory success rates on some programmes.
- The need to further integrate skills for life in E2E programmes.
- The low number and lack of variety of work tasters in E2E.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
learndirect

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in work-based learning are high in customer service, which has most learners, and low but improving in administration. Learners develop good employment skills and demonstrate increased levels of motivation and achievement. Progression rates are good on E2E and above both regional and national averages. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills in catering and construction but have few opportunities for work experience with employers. Half of those learners going into employment gain jobs with further training. Over two-thirds of learners achieve their key objectives but the number of learners taking entry level literacy and numeracy qualifications is low.
13. In **learndirect**, success rates are satisfactory and at the national average. Success rates are high for business and management learners. Most learners use **learndirect** to help them find a job. The withdrawal rates and rates for not completing in the agreed time for IT and business and management learners are above the national average as some learners gain a job before completing their **learndirect** course.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
learndirect

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The observation of teaching and learning is comprehensive. Learners in the call centres receive individual tuition and make good use of electronic portfolios. Lessons for E2E learners are planned well and cross referenced to the national curriculum for skills for life. Some lessons do not integrate literacy and numeracy sufficiently well. Key objectives for E2E learners are sometimes too broad. Many **learndirect** learners who have had negative experiences of learning demonstrate much enjoyment in their studies.
15. Work-based learners' progress is monitored very effectively. Assessors visit learners frequently and regularly and provide comprehensive feedback. Tutors and trainers use the PLEA management information system very effectively to record and monitor progress. **Learndirect** learners are monitored closely using a newly developed and highly effective management information system. Assessment is thorough. Target-setting is good in work-based learning and **learndirect** provision. Internal verification is thorough.
16. The range of courses and programmes meet the needs of learners and employers well. The use of learning champions provides a very supportive link between learners, employers and PLEA staff. The apprenticeship programme has helped learners to manage challenging customers effectively. In **learndirect**, learners make satisfactory progress in achieving literacy and numeracy qualifications.

17. Guidance and support is good particularly for E2E learners. Learners receive good advice and training on healthy living, drug misuse, health and safety and equality of opportunity. A wide range of partnerships with support agencies meets learners' needs well. **Learndirect** learners are referred to other training and specialist providers if PLEA cannot help them. Initial assessment is satisfactory. However, some **learndirect** learners in IT were poorly matched to technical training modules rather than practical modules. Arrangements for reviewing learners' progress are very good.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

learndirect

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

18. Leadership and management are outstanding. PLEA has a very clear strategic plan to support disadvantaged learners to gain skills and jobs and to work with employers to meet their skills needs. Performance management is excellent. Management information tools are robust with good business analyst and technical staff continually supporting improvements and innovation from centre managers. Targets and performance measures are conveyed clearly to staff with a focus on the quality of results. Staff use the management reports competently to manage their work with learners. The managing director keeps a very close watch on performance and works effectively with senior staff to identify issues and raise success rates.
19. PLEA makes good use of the very productive partnerships at national and local levels to benefit learners. It works well with employers, support agencies, 14 to 19 providers, community organisations and funding bodies to create opportunities for learners to progress and to share ideas on improving programmes. The **learndirect** centres are particularly well integrated with the Employment Zone and New Deal centres.
20. The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. PLEA has a clear and well articulated policy. The focus on staff and learner training is strong. Staff receive good initial training and updating. Their knowledge of equality and diversity issues is good. Training materials for learners are particularly good. PLEA has a good range of different materials for different groups of learners. They are clear and make good use of diagrams and simple explanations of equality and diversity topics. The materials for E2E learners are particularly good.
21. The monitoring and reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity is good. Work-based learners complete a well-designed equality assignment which requires them to carry out an equality audit at their company. Learners complete these in detail. Feedback to learners is good. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues is good.
22. PLEA makes good use of data to monitor learners' performance by ethnicity, gender and disability. It has a good understanding of the profile of its learners at different locations and works effectively to include those not traditionally involved in learning. Regular Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) audits are carried out and PLEA has a clear policy of improvements. Good arrangements for procuring adaptive and assistive aids when needed are in place.

23. The management of work-based learning programmes and the sector subject areas is particularly good. The support and direction from PPDG is excellent. The merger of the two previous providers was managed successfully. PLEA places great emphasis on continuous improvement by focusing on accurate data management, raising standards of teaching, learning through regular observation, systematic assessment and verification and good partnerships which support learners to gain skills and jobs.
24. Resources are satisfactory. Work-based learners benefit from good materials to support assessment. There is a shortage of resources and realistic practical activities in E2E to fully engage learners. **Learndirect** centres are very well resourced and venues are attractive and well maintained. Some computer desks are too small with limited space for writing and holding documents. Many staff have been promoted through the organisation. Tutors move between **learndirect** centres to share good practice. Staff development is very good with an emphasis on consolidating learning. The appraisal process is thorough. PLEA offers good value for money.

What learners like:

- The e-NVQ portfolio – ‘it is fantastic’.
- Training – ‘it helps me to deal with angry customers’.
- Training staff – ‘they are always available and friendly’ – ‘they are helpful and make you feel comfortable’.
- Achievements – ‘helping me to improve my mathematics’.
- Preparation for interviews and jobs – ‘it is very helpful’.
- ‘What we learn’ – how to do CVs, application forms, letters and all about equality.
- Doing jobsearch and working with others on jobsearch.

What learners think could improve:

- Work tasters – ‘there should be more’.
- The amount of activities – ‘there should be more football, physical education lessons and trips’.
- Space and materials in construction – ‘there should be more’.
- Some of the spaces – tight working space in **learnndirect** and more common room facilities.
- Timekeeping of the assessors – ‘they are sometimes late’.

Sector subject areas

ICT

Good: Grade 2

Context

25. Seven learners are on the first year of a contact centre apprenticeship in South Yorkshire. They are supported by two assessors and an internal verifier. The staff form part of a larger team which provides training for 149 learners in three call centres in the region. In **learndirect** there have been 1500 enrolments in IT since September 2006. Learners follow a range of IT courses including national qualifications. Most centres are based in areas of high unemployment where learners' priority is to find a job. Two of the centres in Hereford and West Bromwich are used by learners in the community.

Strengths

- Good development of workplace skills.
- Good progress by learners.
- Very effective monitoring of progress.
- Good partnerships.
- Successful performance management.
- Good understanding and practical use of equality of opportunity training.

Area for improvement

- Insufficiently accurate assessment of learners' specific training requirements in **learndirect**.

Achievement and standards

26. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates in **learndirect** are satisfactory at 58%. Withdrawal rates are high at 23%. Many learners obtain a job before completing their course. The work-based learners are on the first year of their programme and have yet to achieve. They are meeting their short and medium targets effectively. Work-based learners develop a wide range of workplace skills. Employers value their motivation and achievements and give them greater responsibility at work. Supervisors intervene less in difficult calls as learners demonstrate more knowledge and confidence in managing challenging customers. Learners evaluate their performance regularly and clearly explain to managers how they can further improve. Most learners have improved their written and oral skills.

27. Learners on both programmes make good progress and gain in confidence and self-esteem. Work-based learners produce a good range and standard of evidence. All seven learners have completed the relevant employees' rights and responsibilities training. Many have half of the work for the NVQ completed and assessed. Sixty-seven per cent of **learndirect** learners start on skills for life courses and progress to commercial computer programmes. Eighty-seven per cent of the learners in the Midlands take qualifications at Level 2 or above. Nineteen per cent of learners who join **learndirect** without

qualifications go into sustainable employment. Many of these learners had not previously used a computer.

Quality of provision

28. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and consists of individual sessions with tutors or small group work. Learners value the tutors and the support staff highly. Learners are monitored very effectively. Work-based learners receive two-weekly assessment visits and weekly skills for life support visits where necessary. Additional visits are arranged where learners' progress is slow. **Learndirect** learners are monitored each time they attend a centre and they are encouraged to attend frequently. The tutor uses the recently developed PLEA learner monitoring system to record their progress effectively. Learners' work is accurately checked and marked. Target-setting is good for all learners.
29. PLEA has good partnerships with employers. Work-based learners make good use of learning champions who work with the learner, employer and PLEA staff and manage problems of attendance, incomplete assignments or personal problems. They work in close partnership to provide effective training for the learners and employers. Supervisors receive copies of assessment reports and take an active role in progress reviews. In **learndirect** an employer liaison team works with local employers to identify training courses that will benefit their company and their staff.
30. Learning resources are generally satisfactory. **Learndirect** centres are well positioned in the community or local high street. They are welcoming, clean, and tidy and are part of a larger Employment Zone centre. Some centres have a crèche and local credit union facilities. Equipment and connectivity is satisfactory, but work stations are cramped, with little space to write notes or refer to documents. Separate work tables are available away from the computers.
31. Support for learners is satisfactory. Staff possess a wide knowledge of specialist agencies and training providers to whom learners can be referred if PLEA is unable to help. Arrangements for testing and providing additional support in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory.
32. The initial assessment for some learners in **learndirect** is insufficiently accurate. A number of learners have been enrolled on to theoretical technical modules rather than practical modules and have withdrawn before completion. In one centre, nine out of 24 learners left as a result. PLEA acknowledges this area for improvement and has already produced clearer guidance on initial assessment.

Leadership and management

33. Leadership and management are good. Performance management is successful and contributes to continuous improvement. Throughout the provision a strong focus is placed on performance management. Staff development is strongly promoted. Staff appraisal is very effective, with quarterly meetings to monitor and revise action points and identify personal development needs. Communication is good. Internal verification is thorough and comprehensive and quality assured by PPDG's regional support team. The self-assessment process involves all staff and is discussed at work-based learning team meetings. **Learndirect** staff are aware of the self-assessment report but few were directly involved in its preparation. The report is accurate overall but lacks detail in some of the strengths and areas for improvement.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

34. There are 70 work-based learners on the E2E programme at two centres in the Midlands. Learners are supported by 15 staff, two of whom are part-time and include a construction trainer. Learners enrol and leave the programme throughout the year. In **learndirect**, learners follow literacy and numeracy courses. Since September 2006, there have been 7,707 enrolments on to skills for life courses which represent 80% of total enrolments for the year.

Strengths

- Good progression rates for 2006/07.
- Good development of personal and vocational skills.
- Very good pastoral support.
- Good management of E2E.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently clear and detailed key objectives.
- Too few opportunities for work sampling.
- Insufficient integration of skills for life for some learners.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are good overall. Progression rates are good for E2E. In 2006/07, 57% of learners progressed into further education, work-based learning or employment, which is above regional and national averages. Two thirds of learners who progressed gained jobs and almost half of the jobs were jobs with further training. Pass rates for literacy, numeracy and job-seeking skills are good. The achievement rate for IT at entry level is low. Success rates for skills for life learners in **learndirect** are satisfactory and near the national average. Most learners take longer than planned to complete their course. Many **learndirect** learners progress from literacy and numeracy courses to vocational courses.

36. Learners' development of personal and vocational skills is good. They develop good interpersonal and team-working skills. E2E learners' knowledge and awareness is significantly increased through sessions on equality and diversity, healthy eating and the dangers of misusing drugs and alcohol. Learners in Nuneaton have good practical experience in planning menus, preparing and cooking food and serving to other learners, staff and customers. Learners in Coventry gain good basic skills in bricklaying, plastering and joinery in the multi-purpose construction workshop.

Quality of provision

37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The observation of teaching and learning is thorough. Learning support in the **learndirect** centres is good. E2E lessons are satisfactorily planned to respond to the needs of a diverse range of learners. Tutors engage learners well. Key objectives for E2E learners are insufficiently clear and accurate. Too little attention is paid to setting realistic and challenging, objectives that learners can achieve while they are on the programme. These learners have insufficient resources and realistic practical activities to enrich their programme.
38. Learners receive very good pastoral support, as identified in the self-assessment report. Tutors are particularly helpful and offer very good support to all learners and particularly to those for whom they act as a key worker. There are very good links with external agencies, such as those specialising in offending, drugs and alcohol misuse and homelessness. Very good relationships have also been developed with Connexions personal advisers. These organisations offer good advice to learners. **Learndirect** learners receive good support in the centres through individual coaching or small group work.
39. E2E learners' progress is satisfactorily reviewed every four weeks. They receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance on a range of issues, including opportunities to progress to other training providers and into employment. In **learndirect**, learners' progress is monitored well. Staff make very good use of Ufi and PLEA software to record progress. Records are very detailed and clear and they provide a complete history of the learners' journey. For some learners, skills for life are insufficiently integrated in the E2E programme. Although lesson plans are cross-referenced to the national curriculum for skills for life, there is insufficient reinforcement of literacy and numeracy. For example, too little importance is placed on the need to preview and review spellings, sentence construction and grammar in non-literacy sessions. Some work is poorly marked.
40. Learners do not have enough opportunities for realistic work sampling on employers' premises. The catering section provides good work experience for learners in a realistic working environment. The construction workshop enables learners to test and develop their skills but it does not provide a real taste of the workplace. Between August 2006 and July 2007 approximately half the learners did not have any work tasters. Where learners have part-time jobs, too little use is made of this experience in their E2E programme. A business development adviser is shortly moving from one of the Employment Zone centres to E2E with the remit of finding work placements.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good. The management of E2E is good. **Learndirect** centres are well managed and particularly well integrated with the Employment Zone and New Deal centres. Internal communications are good. Staff meetings are held regularly

and tutors are well informed about learners' progress. Quarterly personal development reviews provide good opportunities for staff to review their targets and identify personal training needs. Staff development opportunities are good. There are strong working relationships with external agencies, such as youth offending teams and the Connexions service. Learners derive considerable benefit from their services. Tutors demonstrate a good knowledge of equality and diversity. Quality improvement is good. Tutors are regularly observed and they receive detailed written feedback. The self-assessment process is inclusive and reflects the **learndirect** provision well. However, for the E2E provision, some strengths and areas for improvement did not match fully inspectors' findings.

Business administration, management and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

42. There are 142 learners in work-based learning of whom 128 are in customer service. Seventeen are advanced apprentices working towards a Level 3 qualification in customer services and 111 are working towards Level 2. There are two advanced apprentices working towards Level 3 qualifications in business administration and 12 working towards Level 2. Most learners are female. Ten learners have declared a physical disability. Learners are employed full time. Since September 2006 there have been 206 enrolments in business and management at the nine **learndirect** centres which represents 2% of enrolments.

Strengths

- High framework success rates for customer service apprentices.
- Good development of workplace skills.
- Very effective monitoring of progress.
- Thorough and flexible assessment practice.
- Productive working relationships with employers.
- Strong focus on performance management.

Areas for improvement

- Poor framework success rates for business administration apprentices.
- Insufficient preparation of some learners for key skills and technical certificate tests.

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are good overall. Success rates for framework completions in customer service are higher than the national average. In 2005/06, 59% of advanced apprentices completed the full framework. In 2006/07, 56% of leavers have already completed. Apprentice success rates are also high with 51% gaining the full framework in 2005/06 and 68% so far in 2006/07. Learners make satisfactory progress and the standard of work is satisfactory. The first-time pass rate for achieving the technical certificate is high at 95%. The success rate for business administration advanced apprentices, which represent less than 10% of learners, is improving but remains poor. In 2005/06 the success rate was eight percentage points below the national average. In 2006/07, the success rate remains very low. The success rate for apprentices was low at seven percentage points below the national average in 2005/06. In **learnirect**, the success rate for the small proportion of business and management learners was high and almost 40 percentage points above the national average.
44. Work-based learners develop good workplace skills. Many perform important roles in their call centres and are skilful in responding to customers and working effectively in a team. Line managers value the learners' increased self-confidence and willingness to take responsibility for tasks.

Quality of provision

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners receive good individual tuition and make good progress. Progress is monitored very effectively for work-based learning. Each month the assessors are accompanied by an internal verifier for one day, who observes their practice in supporting, advising and assessing learners. Additional visits take place when appropriate to increase progress or support learners whose progress is slow. Formal progress reviews are completed by training staff every 12 weeks and line managers are involved in agreeing the results. Learners' work is thoroughly checked with good oral and written feedback. **Learnirect** learners are monitored thoroughly at each visit using the Ufi and PLEA databases. Some learners are not sufficiently prepared for the key skills and technical certificate tests and there is no central record of when learners are entered for tests.
46. Assessment practice is thorough and flexible. Learners are observed frequently in the workplace and judgements made on their competence in performing work tasks. Detailed written feedback is provided and a copy placed in the learners' portfolio. Staff have been trained effectively to use 'professional discussion' as a method of assessment. Learners appreciate being able to record evidence easily through the electronic portfolio. Assessors adapt their work patterns to meet learners' needs.
47. Working relationships with employers are productive. Regular meetings are held with companies at which information is exchanged and issues affecting training raised and remedied. In a number of companies, a member of staff has been identified as a learning champion to work closely with PLEA staff in supporting learners and reducing the number

of learners who leave before completion. PLEA has been involved in an innovative pilot programme with one company, designed to motivate and prepare school leavers to undertake formal NVQ training when in employment. Line managers are made aware of learners' progress and encouraged to contribute to the assessment and review processes.

48. Resources are satisfactory. Good use is made of learning materials to underpin learners' awareness and understanding of NVQ units, key skills and the technical certificate. Training staff hold appropriate assessor qualifications, and all have relevant commercial experience.
49. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. There is a clear internal verification policy and sampling strategy. Feedback to assessors is detailed with a strong focus on continuous improvement.
50. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Learners enjoy a good rapport with training staff and are well supported by the frequent visits and accessibility through telephone and email contact. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners complete an assessment of their numeracy and literacy needs. The results are recorded on individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are good. Staff receive good support and have a clear understanding of their job roles and responsibilities. New staff complete a thorough induction to the company and have a mentor for the first few weeks of employment. Communication is good. Staff meetings take place monthly with clearly recorded action points. Staff also meet each month to standardise and share training and assessment practice.
52. There is a strong focus on performance management. Each member of staff has an annual appraisal at which process performance measures are agreed. These measures, expressed as qualitative targets, are reviewed quarterly between staff and line managers. There is good management support for staff training linked to improved performance. Recent staff training includes updates on equality and diversity and assessor and internal verifier qualifications.
53. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. Each member of staff completes the same equal opportunities assignment as the learners which helps to raise awareness and consolidate learning. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of the self-assessment process but are not fully involved in producing the report. Self-assessment is a regular item at the monthly staff meetings. **Learndirect** staff are aware of the self-assessment report but few were directly involved in its preparation. The report reflects the provision well but it failed to identify the poor success rates in administration.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on **work-based learning Business administration and law 'apprenticeship' programmes** managed by the provider 2004 year to 2006 year

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/c college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	13	23%	46%	11%	28%
		timely	34	12%	30%	3%	18%
	04-05	overall	22	41%	47%	23%	32%
		timely	16	38%	34%	25%	23%
	05-06	overall	26	46%		42%	
		timely	29	31%		31%	
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	350	49%	51%	37%	38%
		timely	326	17%	25%	10%	18%
	04-05	overall	214	67%	56%	43%	46%
		timely	168	29%	35%	20%	29%
	05-06	overall	339	55%		50%	
		timely	311	32%		30%	

* 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'

Table 2

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

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
04-05	282	4%	36%
05-06	168	38%	61%
06-07	172	68%	57%

* 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

Table 4

Outcomes on **learndirect programmes** for all centres

Q4 2007	Enrolments	Counted for data	Success rate (%)	Withdrawal rate (%)
All sectors	9,443	8,229	67.9	9.9
ICT	1,509	1,120	58.4	23.3
skills for life	7,707	7,015	69.2	7.7
Business and management	226	93	87.1	11.8

Equality and diversity

Q4 2007	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese/Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	9,443	1,469	1,705	171	279	104	5,715
Completion rate (%)	90.4	89.5	90.7	91.9	86.3	82.6	90.9
Achievement rate (%)	72.7	71.7	70.4	63.5	69.2	62	74.2
Success rate (%)	67.9	66.5	66.1	62.1	61.4	56.4	69.6
Withdrawal rate (%)	9.9	10.9	9.7	8.6	14.1	19.2	9.4