

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TTE Training Limited**

**11 March 2002**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learn**direct provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

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

## Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

TTE Training Limited is a private training provider based in Ellesmere Port in Cheshire. It provides work-based learning for young people in engineering and laboratory operations. There are currently 128 learners, comprising 115 on engineering advanced modern apprenticeships and 13 on laboratory operations advanced modern apprenticeships.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training in engineering and laboratory operations is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but equality of opportunity and quality assurance are unsatisfactory.

### GRADES

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

### KEY STRENGTHS

- open and consultative style of management
- particularly good health and safety management
- good resources for off-the-job training
- good personal development for learners

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate promotion of equal opportunities
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- clearer linking of staff appraisal to business objectives
- better collection and analysis of data on equal opportunities
- better promotion of training to under-represented groups
- better integration of national certificate and NVQ programmes
- more involvement of employers in planning off-the-job training

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at TTE Training Limited (TTE). They visited eight workplaces, and held 121 interviews with learners and 11 with workplace supervisors. They held 25 interviews with training provider staff and observed reviews, assessments, and training sessions. They visited the subcontractor, holding interviews with staff and learners. They examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios and records, progress review documents, assessment records, external verifiers' reports, minutes of meetings, plans and policies. The most recent self-assessment report was completed in October 2001 and revised in February 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	4	2	3	0	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. TTE was established in 1990 by Ineos Chlor (formerly ICI), Shell UK and Associated Octel. TTE offers advanced modern apprenticeship training in engineering and laboratory operations. From September 2001, TTE has also been accredited to provide its own national certificate in engineering. Learners are employed by TTE and are all in sponsored work placements within companies. Recruitment and selection is carried out jointly by TTE and the sponsoring companies. During the first two years of the apprenticeship, most training is off the job. During the on-the-job phase, the sponsoring companies provide training. TTE provides mentoring and support, assessment and progress reviews, together with help in portfolio-building. The TTE management team comprises a chief executive, an education and quality assurance manager, a training manager, and a sales and marketing manager. The training manager is responsible for nine training officers, one of whom is also the designated safety officer.

3. There are currently 128 learners, of whom 115 are on an engineering advanced modern apprenticeship and 13 on a laboratory operations advanced modern apprenticeship. The training is funded by the Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The unemployment rate in Ellesmere Port and Neston in September 2001 was 2.5 per cent, compared with 1.9 per cent for Cheshire and 2.9 per cent for England. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grades C or above was 44 per cent, which was below the Cheshire figure of 56 per cent and the national figure of 47.9 per cent. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic backgrounds is 0.6 per cent, which is below the Cheshire figure of 0.9 per cent and significantly below that for England of 6.2 per cent.



## Work-based learning for young people

4. There are good retention rates on both the engineering and laboratory skills programmes, and learners' achievements are maintained at a good level. The average retention rate over the past five years is 75 per cent, and is increasing. Achievement of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2, averages 86 per cent. Because of the relatively long duration of engineering modern apprenticeships, and the number of learners still in training, it is difficult to make judgements on modern apprenticeship framework completion rates, but the average achievement rate is approximately 70 per cent and increasing. The portfolio evidence of learners currently in training shows that good progress is being made.

5. The quality of training is good, with off-the-job training taking place in a well-designed and purpose-built training centre. Engineering modern apprentices have well-structured, intensive, off-the-job training during the first two years of their apprenticeship. During this time, learners experience very broad-based engineering training incorporating electrical, mechanical and process disciplines. A national certificate in engineering is also studied one day per week. Lesson plans are clear and specify learning objectives, training methods, and resources. Employers are very supportive of the learners. The laboratory operations modern apprenticeship is equally well structured, with the first year being spent at a subcontractor further education college, where learners achieve a national certificate qualification. The remainder of the programme is spent on the job at the sponsoring company and attending college for higher national certificates. TTE staff are well qualified and experienced and TTE staffing is supported by staff from the sponsoring companies who act as training officers. There is insufficient use of learners' previous experience and qualifications in developing their individual learning programmes. Key skills training has not been integrated with the vocational training programmes except with more recent learners.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

6. TTE is a private training organisation limited by guarantee. It has a chief executive who was appointed 18 months ago. There is a staff of 26, which includes an education and quality assurance manager, training manager, and sales and marketing manager. The training manager is responsible for nine training officers, one of whom is also the designated safety officer. The safety officer reports directly to the chief executive on matters relating to health and safety. The sales and marketing manager is responsible for a sales team, three training service managers, and a recruitment manager. Three administrators and three accounts assistants provide administrative support. Off-the-job training is provided at TTE's purpose-built training centre in Ellesmere Port. There is one subcontractor who provides training for the laboratory operations programme. TTE received re-accreditation for the Investors in People standard, a national standard for improving an organisation through its people, in February 2002. TTE has an equal opportunities policy and is developing new quality assurance procedures. The self-assessment report used for the inspection was produced in October 2001 and revised in February 2002. It was the second produced by the organisation, the first being produced for the Training Standards Council inspection in 1998.

### STRENGTHS

- open and consultative style of management
- good strategic and business planning
- good staff training
- effective internal communication
- particularly good health and safety management

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate promotion of equal opportunities
- insufficient updating of staff in equal opportunities issues
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient analysis and use of feedback from employers and learners

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer linking of staff appraisal to business objectives
- better collection and analysis of data on equal opportunities
- increased promotion of training to under-represented groups
- more structured communication with sponsoring companies

7. There is an open and consultative management style. Members of staff were fully involved in all aspects of the move to the new purpose-built training centre in Ellesmere

Port. Involvement of learners is formalised through a well-established learners' council that meets monthly, with elected representatives from each group of first- and second-year learners. The council members elect a chairperson who is responsible for recording the minutes of these meetings. Learners are encouraged to lobby their council member to raise issues of concern, and matters from the training team's meetings are also fed back to learners. This system enables learners to influence decision-making and, at the same time, develops their team-working, negotiation, leadership and communication skills. When a policy was being introduced to fine learners for late attendance, the council was able to propose an alternative structure and gain agreement on a revised policy. As a result of feedback from the learners' group representatives, staff have identified alterations that can be made to minimise noise levels, and senior management are implementing these suggestions. The minutes of board and management meetings are made available to all staff on the organisation's intranet.

8. Strategic and business planning is good and leadership is effective. Each year all members of staff attend an away day, when they are involved in identifying corporate goals and objectives for TTE. Once agreed, the objectives are given a high priority and groups of staff are identified to monitor progress. The plan is revised and updated as necessary. The business plan objectives form part of staff appraisal discussions, but the links between the staff appraisal personal objectives and the business plan objectives are not made clear enough. Since the appointment of the new chief executive, the main strategic objective has been the relocation to the new premises.

9. Staff training is good. Through the staff appraisal system, individual staff development needs are agreed. TTE staff are undertaking a wide range of activities. Core staff development activities have been identified, including health and safety awareness, using information technology (IT), and personal development, and there is a well-structured record of staff progress. For training officers, there has been a strong focus on gaining key skills practitioners' awards and other training and assessment qualifications.

10. Internal communication is effective. There is a good range of meetings throughout the organisation. Training officers meet every Monday morning to discuss operational matters and more formal meetings take place monthly. The chief executive routinely attends these monthly training officers' meetings. There is also a monthly meeting for all staff. Regular features of these meetings are staff presentations on their role in the organisation. This is raising staff understanding of the overall running of TTE and the characteristics of different job roles. Minutes from board and management meetings are made freely available to all staff over the intranet. Staff feel well informed and involved in the operation of the organisation.

11. There is particularly good management of health and safety issues. Safety bulletins are regularly submitted to the board, giving details of any accidents or near misses in the preceding month, with details of corrective actions taken. If there is an accident, a full photographic record of the circumstances and injury sustained is made, to accompany

the entry in the accident log. Some of these photographs are displayed in the workshops to reinforce the need for health and safety vigilance. During practical workshop sessions, 'job freeze' is regularly used, where all activity stops and potential health and safety risks are identified and discussed. In an observed chemistry lesson, the learners checked that the tutor had carried out a risk assessment of the activity. There is regular monitoring of sponsoring companies by the health and safety adviser. In 2001, TTE received a sector award from a national accident prevention organisation for education and training services. Health and safety standards were also rated as excellent in a recent LSC review.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 4**

12. TTE has developed a range of equal opportunities policies and procedures, including those for harassment, bullying and grievance. These meet legal and contractual requirements. Learners and staff are given copies of these documents at induction and sign to confirm that they have received and read them. The policies and procedures have been revised in the past, but there is no systematic programme of review, and equality of opportunity is not a regular agenda item at meetings. There are satisfactory arrangements to allow disabled persons access to the premises and resources.

13. There is inadequate promotion of equal opportunities. There is very little discussion of equality of opportunity during the induction process and no system to check the understanding of staff or learners. An LSC review identified poor awareness of equal opportunities issues on the part of learners and recommended further training. A training event for all learners was organised by TTE, but the materials used were unclear and did not emphasise practical measures to promote equality of opportunity. There has been no staff training in equal opportunities for over two years. There is insufficient information about equality of opportunity in the materials supplied by TTE to local schools and careers libraries. No reference to equality of opportunity is made during progress reviews, although these are being revised to rectify the problem.

14. Data relating to gender and ethnicity are collected and analysed by TTE. This indicates that during the period from 1999 to 2001, 5 per cent of applicants were women and 0.3 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Of the successful applicants, 5 per cent were female and none were from minority ethnic groups. There is insufficient gathering of data on recruitment in comparable industries, both locally and nationally, to enable more effective monitoring of all equal opportunities issues. Training is promoted to women by sending information packs to single-sex schools and by arranging talks to groups of young women in mixed schools. A representative of TTE also attends local Women Into Science and Engineering (WISE) events. Promotion of training to minority ethnic groups is less well developed, although information packs have been sent to representatives of local minority ethnic groups, and visits have been made to city centre schools, where there is a relatively higher proportion of pupils from these groups. New marketing materials are being developed to encourage applications from under-represented groups.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 4**

15. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Until 18 months ago, TTE used ISO 9002, an international quality assurance standard, as its quality assurance system, and the procedures developed did have a clear focus on the learner. The organisation chose not to be re-accredited for ISO 9002. Although still in use, TTE recognises that these procedures are no longer appropriate. New procedures have not yet been developed.

16. Self-assessment is not integrated with a system of quality assurance, and the self-assessment report completed for this inspection is only the second produced by TTE, the first being for the Training Standards Council inspection in 1998. TTE tried to involve interested parties in the development of the self-assessment report through questionnaires, but there was insufficient briefing about the process to make the results of any real value to the process. Members of TTE staff were not fully involved in identifying the strengths and weaknesses for the self-assessment report. TTE recognised the weaknesses in its self-assessment report by proposing a grade 4 for quality assurance. Work to rectify the weaknesses has already started with the appointment of an education and quality assurance manager as part of management restructuring.

17. Internal verification is incomplete. While the verification of learners' portfolios is a thorough and well-recorded process, it only happens at the end of a learner's NVQ programme. The internal verification procedure includes the learners' portfolios, but does not include observation of assessment in order to verify the assessment process.

18. There is good informal communication between TTE training officers and their contacts at sponsoring companies. However, there is insufficient analysis and use of feedback from learners and sponsoring companies, to guide decision-making. TTE does not collect feedback from sponsoring companies in a structured way for developing the curriculum. Learners' feedback has been collected on a regular basis, but not in a structured form to enable systematic analysis of the results. The new education and quality assurance manager has very recently introduced new questionnaires for collecting feedback from both sponsoring companies and learners, but it is too early for any results to have been analysed.

Good Practice
<p><i>There is a Safety League competition. Points are awarded for good practice and the reporting of hazards and near misses. The winning group of learners is awarded £500, to donate to a charity of their choice. The idea for the award came from suggestions in learners' surveys.</i></p>

## AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	128	2

19. TTE offers advanced modern apprenticeship training in engineering and laboratory operations. There are currently 128 learners, of whom 115 are engineering advanced modern apprentices and 13 are laboratory operations advanced modern apprentices. Learners are employed by TTE and are all in sponsored work placements within companies. Recruitment and selection by interview are carried out jointly by TTE and the sponsoring companies. The engineering apprenticeship is delivered in three phases. Phase 1 consists of a 12-month period of broad-based off-the-job workshop training, combined with year one of a national certificate in engineering. Phase 2 combines off-the-job and on-site experience, leading to the completion of two NVQs at level 2 and the completion of the national certificate. Phase 3 can be between 12 and 24 months' duration, depending on the sponsoring company, and learners work towards a level 3 NVQ. Those who are able, and wish to, are encouraged to proceed to relevant higher national qualifications or convert the certificate into a national diploma. The laboratory operations programme takes place over 31 months, and comprises two phases. Phase 1 is of 12 months' duration, with the learners based at a subcontractor further education college. Learners can gain a national certificate in applied science and key skills qualifications. Phase 2 is for 19 months, with a combination of college and sponsoring company work. Learners gain a level 3 NVQ in laboratory operations, and higher national certificates in chemistry and applied biology. During the on-the-job phase, the sponsoring companies provide training for the learners. TTE provides mentoring and support, assessment and progress reviews, together with help in portfolio-building.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	44		32		43		52		78							
Retained*	0		0		0		44	85	58	74						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		27	52	53	68						
Still in learning	43		29		34		17	33	5	6						

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

## STRENGTHS

- good resources for off-the-job training
- well-structured off-the-job training programmes
- good achievement of additional qualifications by learners
- good personal development for learners
- good achievement and retention rates
- very supportive employers

## WEAKNESSES

- no integration of key skills training with the vocational programme for some learners
- insufficient use of previous learning achievements

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of employers in planning off-the-job training
- better integration of national certificate and NVQ programmes

20. There are good resources for off-the-job training. New premises have been

specifically designed so that each workshop has direct access to classrooms and staffroom facilities. The design makes staff easily available to the learners. There are further classrooms away from the workshop areas. Classrooms are well equipped with audio-visual resources. Equipment and materials for maintenance projects are kept in large, centrally stored containers, and brought in and out of the workshop as required, helping workshop areas remain safe and tidy. Training officers have relevant experience and are well qualified. A new computer suite, providing access to industry-standard hardware and software, has recently been completed. Facilities for laboratory work at the subcontracted college are good.

21. Off-the-job training programmes are well structured to enable the best use of workshop and the training officers' resources. Learners are typically in groups of 10. The groups rotate through six engineering specialisms, spending three to four weeks at a time in each. There are clear and well-developed lesson plans identifying objectives, training methods, and learning resources for both practical and background knowledge training. Training officers develop good-quality course materials. Workshop sessions are lively and the training officers can relate the subject to the workplace. In some background knowledge sessions, tutors were not using the new audio-visual resources. Learners spent a lot of time copying diagrams from the board. Some sponsoring companies would like the opportunity to be more involved in the development of off-the-job training programmes.

22. There is a good achievement level of additional qualifications. All the modern apprentices study to national certificate level. Those who are able, and wish to, are encouraged to proceed to relevant higher national qualifications or convert the certificate into a national diploma. Other additional training courses taken by learners include health and safety, fire fighting, first aid, scaffolding, and abrasive wheels.

23. The personal development of learners is a high priority for both TTE and its sponsoring companies. Learners are encouraged to work in teams in both vocational skills and background knowledge training sessions. Team members are changed regularly to develop skills in working with others. Learners spend a week at an Outward Bound centre in both first and second years, accompanied by their training officers and sponsoring company representatives. At the end of each week, learners use IT to give a presentation to their peers, training officers and sponsors. As well as developing their personal skills, they collect evidence for key skills. Many companies give their learners projects aimed at enhancing personal skills. Learners spend a week at a time as a team leader for their group in support of their training officer, with delegated supervisory responsibilities.

24. There are good retention rates on the engineering and laboratory skills programmes, and learners' achievements are maintained at a good level. The average retention rate over the past five years is 75 per cent, and is increasing. The achievement of NVQs at level 2 averages 86 per cent. The average achievement rate for the full apprenticeship framework is around 70 per cent and increasing. The evidence in the portfolios of learners currently in training, show that good progress is being made.



25. Training for the national certificate qualification was until recently provided by a subcontractor, but since September 2001, it has been provided by TTE on their own premises. There is insufficient linking of the national certificate to NVQ and key skills training, in order to reduce any duplication of training.

26. Sponsoring companies are very supportive of learners. Staff from sponsoring companies are regularly seconded to act as training officers, usually for periods of two to three years. Some have become full-time TTE staff, others have returned to the sponsoring company at the end of the secondment. These secondments help to ensure that current industrial practice is taught to the learners. Employers attend the learners' progress review sessions while they are on off-the-job training. In most workplaces, learners work in a variety of sections to allow them to develop a wide range of skills and collect evidence for their portfolios. Learners are encouraged to take ownership of their training through the flexibility of this process. One company provides e-mail accounts for its entire staff. This allows easier access to the training officer for a learner who works shifts. A lot of good-quality equipment has been donated by companies to help underpin the training at TTE, some of it being very up to date, fully operational and of considerable value.

27. TTE has started to integrate key skills training with the vocational training programme for those learners on phase 1 or 2. Their understanding of key skills requirements is good. However, learners who have been on the programme for more than two years show insufficient knowledge of key skills. Key skills evidence is being collected through IT training and assignments, but there is no integration of key skills training with the core learning programme of these learners. TTE has begun to use the information collected from learners through application forms and interviews to determine their key skills levels and to identify, where appropriate, key skills training exemption. This information is not used, however, to develop individualised training programmes for learners whose previous achievements demonstrate that they already meet some programme requirements, and there is no flexibility to enable them to omit elements of the training which they have already achieved.

#### Good Practice

*All learners attend a 'drive and survive' training course run by the local constabulary. This initiative is aimed at developing a safe and responsible attitude towards driving.*