

# INSPECTION REPORT

**KITA Limited**

**11 February 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 **learndirect** 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

Kent Industrial Training Association Limited, established in 1967, is a registered not-for-profit training organisation, based in Sittingbourne. It provides national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and foundation and advanced modern apprentice training programmes in engineering, business administration, information and communications technology, and customer services. There are currently a total of 189 learners on training programmes.

### Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, work-based learning in engineering is good and is satisfactory in business administration and information technology, but is unsatisfactory in customer service and call handling. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

### GRADES

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

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

- good links with local employers
- good support from employers
- very frequent workplace visits by assessors

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- poor updating of individual learning plans
- ineffective use of initial assessments

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better use of ongoing support for learners in equal opportunities

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 28 days at the administration centre of Kent Industrial Training Association Limited (KITA) in February 2002. Inspectors visited 30 employers, interviewed 65 learners, visited 30 work placements and interviewed 21 staff. Fifty-eight individual learning plans were reviewed and a total of two training sessions were observed and graded. Off-the-job training and assessment were also inspected at the premises of the training provider, employers and subcontractors. Additional evidence was also examined, including progress review documents, assessment records, external verifiers' reports, minutes of meetings, and KITA's plans, policies and procedures. Inspectors studied KITA's self-assessment report and development plan, which were produced in July 2001.

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. KITA, which is based in Sittingbourne in Kent, was established in 1967 as a shared membership resource by a number of engineering employers in the Maidstone area. It is a registered not-for-profit training organisation. There are currently around 50 member organisations, covering a range of occupational sectors. Training is also provided to organisations which are not members of the association. The company chairman is elected from the member companies, along with two other representatives who make up the board of directors. The board of directors has appointed two operational directors responsible for the day-to-day activities of the company.

3. Training is carried out on- and off-the-job, by KITA staff, through local colleges and by employers. KITA employs 12 full-time staff and four contracted assessors. There are a total of 194 learners, of whom 166 are modern apprentices and 28 are working towards NVQs. All learners are employed and are recruited from throughout the county. Training is funded by the Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Commercial training is also provided, although this was not inspected.

4. In September 2001, the unemployment rate in Kent was 2.2 per cent, compared with 1.5 per cent in the Southeast, and the national average of 2.9 per cent. Kent has seen a steady decline in engineering and manufacturing industries, but employment is improving in the distribution and administration industries. The proportion of the population of Kent who are from minority ethnic groups is 1.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. Parts of Kent have recently seen a dramatic increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees, particularly on the south-eastern coast. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers in Kent achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 52.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.



## Work-based learning for young people

5. There are good retention and achievement rates in engineering, technology and manufacturing. In business administration, management and professional, there is slow progress by some learners towards completing the full framework and internal verification does not identify learners who are not making good progress. Achievement rates are poor in information and communications technology with no advanced modern apprentices achieving the full framework. Only two foundation modern apprentices have achieved their framework in this occupational area. Achievement and retention rates are also poor in customer service and call handling.

6. On-the-job training is good in engineering, technology and manufacturing. There are frequent progress reviews, which are attended by the training officers, learners and workplace supervisors. Learners are able to work towards additional engineering qualifications. There is no assessment by direct observation of learners in the workplace and target-setting is poor. Employers provide good learner support in business administration, management and professional. Assessors carry out frequent workplace visits to carry out progress reviews and assessment. There is good use of action-planning with good targets set for learners. Key skills training is good. Employers provide good learner support in information and communications technology and training programmes are well-planned. There is a good selection of work placements to meet individual learners needs. Progress reviews are poor and do not provide sufficient detail on learners' progress. Assessment practices are weak and learners who leave the training programme early receive insufficient recognition for the work that they have done.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

7. KITA has a board of directors which meets quarterly. Operational management is the responsibility of two directors. The organisation employs 16 staff. KITA is accredited with the Investors in People standard, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. It also holds an international standard for quality assurance. Between April and May 2001, KITA was asked by the local LSC to provide training to over 50 learners from training providers unable to continue to provide training. Additional staff were taken on to provide this training. Most of the new learners were on training programmes in information technology (IT), customer services and administration, training programmes that were new to KITA. The current self-assessment report was produced in July 2001.

### STRENGTHS

- good operational and resource management
- good links with local employers
- good operational management of learners
- good use of partnerships with employers

### WEAKNESSES

- ineffective use of initial assessments
- no system for updating individual learning plans
- poor development of key skills training in some areas
- no input from employers and learners in the self-assessment process
- poorly planned internal verification

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of ongoing support for learners in equal opportunities

8. Operational and resource management is good. There is good open management style and there are good working relationships between managers and staff. All staff are aware of the organisation's short- and long-term targets and corporate objectives. Staff meet monthly to review current issues and performance and budgetary data. All staff are encouraged to participate and contribute to the development of the company. Staff fully understand the operational structure and respond well to the changing needs of the organisation. There are good management systems and protocols to guide staff through most procedures. Staff work well as a team. Staff are encouraged to work towards further training and personal development. Staff are set individual training and performance targets, which meet the corporate needs of the company and are reviewed at regular staff meetings. All assessment staff hold vocational assessor qualifications.

9. There are good links with local employers. Staff frequently provide additional training and development programmes for employers. Courses include equality of opportunity, first aid, personnel, management, and health and safety training. These courses often improve the working environment for learners based with the employers.

10. There is good operational management of learners. Training and assessment are managed across a large number of sites and are achieved through good internal and external communications, regular workplace visits, staff meetings and regular contact between staff and learners. Staff meet monthly to discuss training and record assessment needs across all occupational areas. The organisation's resources are managed effectively and are made available for the continuation and improvement of training and assessment. Staff are consulted in decision-making and are involved in regular performance management sessions. The roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly defined. Information on the quality of training is collected from a range of sources, and the information is reviewed through regular, recorded team meetings. Action plans from meetings show issues are quickly responded to and dealt with.

11. There is effective use of partnerships to promote participation in training. Partnerships are maintained through regular contact with members and other businesses that want to provide training and assessment for employed young people. The board members all bring significant work-based skills to the management of the organisation and provide an additional source of partnership for a business. For example, one operations director is on the board of a local training governing body and shares good practice to and from this governing body.

12. Initial assessment is not used effectively. All applicants are tested for number and communication skills, but there is no assessment of skills or knowledge. All learners carry out the same test, with no distinction made between those applying for advanced or foundation modern apprenticeships. Learners with a good level of prior achievement are not set challenging targets and are not provided with a fast track route through the training programme. In the customer services and information technology (IT) training programmes, there is no formal link made between the on- and off-the-job training for the NVQ.

13. Individual learning plans are not regularly updated or revised. Learners' records are maintained centrally. Details of additional training courses are often attached to existing learning plans. There are procedures to control the accuracy and currency of learners' progress review information, which is stored on a database and regularly reviewed by a senior manager. New learners joining the company from other training providers to complete apprenticeship frameworks, do not have their learning plans routinely reviewed or updated. Many of these learners did not receive a full induction into the organisation and are not receiving key skills training. For these learners, the management made a decision to provide key skills training at the end of the training programme.

14. There is a clear policy and procedure for learners to complete their key skills

training, but these procedures have not been adopted in all occupational areas. In engineering and business administration, an integrated key skills training programme is in place. Other occupational areas have not yet fully introduced key skills training. Most key skills training is provided by training staff off-the-job. Learners are invited to key skills training workshops, but attendance is poor. Some learners and employers do not understand the key skills process and do not see it as a relevant part of the training. Some employers are not fully aware of the relationship between training, NVQs, key skills and the modern apprenticeship frameworks. When employers identify learners' specific training needs, support is provided by the training provider's staff. The organisation decided to provide key skills training for those learners transferred from other training providers as an add-on to their training programme, as none of the learners had begun key skills training before the transfer.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

15. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity. Learners receive an effective introduction to equality of opportunity and are given assignments to complete at work to ensure their understanding. Learners are able to comment on equality of opportunity issues during progress reviews. The organisation deals effectively with harassment in the workplace. There is no further training planned to increase learners' awareness of equality of opportunity issues.

16. The organisation has an effective policy and strategy for equality of opportunity. Data are collected relating to learners' gender, age, disability and ethnicity. Equality of opportunity is promoted in the workplace. Guidance documents specify that employers should protect learners from discrimination and harassment, that learners promote equality of opportunity to everyone, and that recruitment and selection procedures should be free from bias. There has been no specific action to encourage employers to recruit learners from under-represented groups.

17. The company has a policy statement which supports openness and fairness in all working environments. The policy does not contain an explicit statement about bullying. All staff and learners receive a copy of the statement at their induction. Staff receive and also provide equal opportunities training to other agencies. Staff have a good understanding of all aspects of equality of opportunity. The organisation's documents, advertising and teaching materials contain positive equality of opportunity messages. All staff attend regular in-house training courses on equality of opportunity. There is an appeals and complaints procedure and complaints are responded to promptly and effectively. One of the operational directors is a member of a local equal opportunities forum and regularly attends meetings.

18. Access to the training rooms at the organisation's head office is difficult for people with restricted mobility. Measures are in place to provide alternative venues for interviews and training.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 3**

19. There are clearly written quality assurance policies and procedures. Comprehensive annual audits have been completed, which cover both management and training programmes. All revisions to paperwork are clear and recorded. A director is responsible for quality assurance procedures throughout the organisation. Only some of these procedures refer directly to the modern apprenticeship training programmes. Regular meetings are held with all staff to review learners' progress, but the outcomes of these meetings are not linked to the quality assurance process. Learners on engineering training programmes attend off-the-job training at local colleges. This training is not monitored, but learners' progress and development are regularly reviewed with college staff. Learners' views on the training and assessment are regularly collected and formally recorded. Regular review meetings are held with assessors and learners. The results of these meetings are recorded on a database and monitored by the operational director on a regular basis. Any appropriate remedial action is taken.

20. Planning and management for internal verification are poor and unsystematic in some areas. Since May 2001, when learners were taken on from other training providers, sampling has been used to plan internal verification. The internal verification process involves the sampling of portfolios. Internal verification is not planned across the NVQ levels and units. There is no planned internal verification of assessment methods and assessors performance. No provision is made in the policy for monitoring assessors. New internal verification processes have recently been introduced, but are not yet fully in place. In many cases, internal verification is recorded. It does not, however, take place on a regular basis, and is not planned or used to contribute to the development of assessors. Assessors regularly hold meetings, but these are not used to share good practice.

21. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and is an integral part of the quality assurance process. Self-assessment reports are produced and revised annually. The self-assessment report produced in July 2001 was the third prepared by the organisation. The self-assessment process involved staff, but did not include employers or learners. The self-assessment report made some clear judgements about performance.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	87	2

22. There are 87 learners on work-based learning programmes in engineering, technology and manufacturing. Of these, 27 are advanced modern apprentices, 33 are foundation modern apprentices, and 27 learners are on other work-based learning programmes working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. All modern apprentices spend their first year at college, where they complete a foundation level NVQ before beginning their work-based learning programme. They then attend a further education college for one day each week for background knowledge and practical training skills. Learners on other work-based learning programmes are employed by one of 29 local employers. There are six unemployed learners who attend an engineering training programme run at a local community college and are working towards foundation modern apprenticeships. Some employers carry out their own recruitment and selection process, while others use the training provider for all or part of the recruitment process. Employers generally inform the training provider of job vacancies. The training provider then informs jobcentres of vacancies, and in some cases, advertises in the local press or through other media. Key skills training is provided as part of the college training programme for modern apprentices, and is generally an integral part of the training programme for the other learners. Learners receive a key skills booklet with exercises to complete. Additional IT and communications training is provided at the training provider's Sittingbourne offices. Revision days are provided to prepare them for key skills tests. Training officers regularly visit learners at work to monitor training and to carry out NVQ assessment.

The following tables show 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		1996-97					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	8		4		24		3		8		9				
Retained	0		0		0		0	0	5	62	9					
Successfully completed	0		0		4		0	0	3	38	6					
Still in learning	8		3		14		2	67	0	0	0					

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	9		31		11											
Retained	0		0		5												
Successfully completed	0		0		2												
Still in learning	9		21		3												

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97		1995-96				
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	10		15		23		31		22		15		8			
Retained	0		11		15	65	18	58	10	45	8	53	7	88			
Successfully completed	1		3		10	43	11	35	7	32	8	53	4	50			
Still in learning	8		9		5	22	4	13	1	5	0	0	0	0			

## STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- good on-the-job training
- frequent progress reviews
- good progress to additional qualifications

## WEAKNESSES

- no assessment by direct observation
- poor target-setting

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better knowledge of training programmes by learners

23. Retention and achievement rates are good, a strength not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Retention rates on the modern apprenticeship training programme

have been satisfactory or good for all the training programmes which started after 1996. All learners who started their training programmes in the past two years are still in training. In 1997, the company recruited four modern apprentices and took over the management of 21 learners from other training providers who were at various stages of their training programmes. Some of these learners have completed their training programmes while others still have a year until they complete the programme. All learners who started their training programmes in 1997 and who completed their training programme, achieved their NVQ. Three learners did not successfully complete the college course. Most learners on other work-based learning programmes are working towards an NVQ at level 3. Retention rates for the past four years have been good. Although retention rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship are satisfactory, in 1999-2000 the retention and achievement rates for this training programme were poor.

24. There is good on-the-job training, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. All employers provide their learners with good engineering foundation training. In the early stages of their training programme, learners work alongside, or under the close supervision of, an experienced workplace supervisor. All learners are employed and are expected to be active members of their company's workforce. Most learners produce work of a high standard long before they complete their training programmes.

25. There are frequent progress reviews. Training officers visit learners' every four weeks to carry out progress reviews. During these visits, training officers discuss learners' progress since the previous visit. Portfolios of evidence are also monitored during these visits. The learners' manager or workplace supervisor attends, and contributes to, most progress reviews. All learners' portfolios are well maintained and of a good standard.

26. Most learners attend college to complete additional engineering qualifications, a strength not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Some employers consider these additional qualifications to be the most important outcome of learners' training programme. When learners have achieved the main engineering qualification, they are encouraged to progress to the next stage. Most modern apprentices have achieved a higher national certificate and some have achieved an engineering degree. Learners on other work-based learning programmes also attend college and work towards either engineering craft or technician qualifications. Most employers continue sponsoring learners' attendance at the college after their initial training has finished.

27. There is no assessment by direct observation of learners in the workplace. All engineering learners work for employers where training is fitted around the engineering and manufacturing process. Training programmes are well structured and learners develop and acquire good skills. It is not always possible for assessments to be carried out during training officers' visits. Training officers rely on workplace supervisors and managers to advise them of learners' competences. This is often done without witness statements, photographs or other evidence to support their decisions. In some portfolios of evidence, workplace supervisors have signed off portfolio records but have



not given any indication of the standard of the work produced or whether the learner has demonstrated the necessary levels of competence. Some employers have qualified work-based assessors and internal verifiers. Internal verification of learners' portfolios takes place at the end of the training programme. Internal verifiers have recently started to regularly visit learners with the assessors to carry out continuous internal verification.

28. Target-setting is poor. Learners are not always set targets to be achieved by the time of their next progress review. During progress reviews, training officers are expected to set an agreed action plan for learners to achieve before their next review meeting. In most progress review records, targets refer only to requiring learners to cross-reference the work in their portfolios with the NVQ handbook. Targets to improve performance or standards are not set. During progress reviews, few targets are set which relate to progression on the training programme.

29. Some learners, particularly those working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3, are not sure about which NVQ training programme or college course they are working towards. There is no clear information about learners' training programmes in the individual learning plans. Individual learning plans are not kept up to date and do not include changes to the training programmes or college courses. All learners have an individual learning plan, but many do not remember that they have one or understand its purpose. Some learners do not remember having seen their individual learning plan. Most of the plans do not contain details of the college course that the learner is following.

#### Good Practice

*A learner nearing the end of his training programme is responsible for supervising the initial training of a newly appointed learner, helping him to develop additional interpersonal and management skills.*

## Business administration, management &amp; professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	47	3

30. There are 47 learners on work-based learning programmes in business administration, management and professional. There are 24 advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3 and 23 foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2, in business administration. All learners are given key skills training at an appropriate level. All learners are employed. Many learners are recruited in August or September, but learners can join the training programme at any time. Some learners are recruited to the training programme by the careers service on behalf of employers. Some businesses carry out their own recruitment and selection processes, providing training to new staff through the training provider. Between April and May 2001, additional learners were transferred to KITA from other training providers, which doubled the number of learners originally on the business administration training programme. Additional staff have recently been appointed to help manage the additional learners. All new learners are given an interview and receive an initial basic skills assessment. Applicants' previous qualifications, learning and experience are accredited. All learners are able to attend the training provider's training centre for off-the-job key skills training. Three full-time and three part-time staff provide training in business administration. All are qualified assessors and four are qualified internal verifiers. Staff visit learners in the workplace to carry out progress reviews and assessments.

The following tables show 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							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	12		21		4		12						
Retained	0		15		3		7	58						
Successfully completed	0		4		0		4	33						
Still in learning	12		9		3		0	0						

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	9		17		4		2									
Retained	0		13		3		2	100									
Successfully completed	0		0		2		2	100									
Still in learning	9		13		1		0	0									

## STRENGTHS

- good learner support by employers
- frequent workplace visits by assessors
- good use of action-planning
- good key skills training

## WEAKNESSES

- slow progress by some learners towards completing their full framework

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater involvement of workplace supervisors in learner reviews

31. Employers provide good learner support, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Employers fully understand the requirements of the NVQ framework. Good support is given to learners at each stage of their apprenticeship. In most workplaces, learners carry out a wide range of tasks and are able to develop the competences they need in order to achieve their NVQ. In some cases, learners gain additional experience in the workplace to fulfil their NVQ requirements. There is effective off-the-job training. Most employers provide well-planned on-the-job training. Some learners are able to work on their portfolios of evidence during work time.

32. Assessors make good use of frequent visits to the workplace to carry out progress reviews and assessments. On the first visit, learners receive a good individual induction, which includes information on health and safety, equality of opportunity, and an explanation of the NVQ framework. Learners' progress reviews are scheduled to take

place at least every six weeks. When additional support is required, visits are scheduled every two weeks. Of the new learners transferred from other training providers, most had been on their training programme for at least six months, but had made insufficient progress towards achieving their NVQ. Few of these learners had started their key skills training. These learners have now been provided with additional support from assessors and more frequent progress reviews. Assessments in the workplace are thorough and are carried out adequately. Work-based observations of learners are comprehensive. There is good cross-referencing of work used for NVQ evidence to the key skills specifications. New paperwork for recording progress reviews and assessments has recently been produced but has not yet been fully introduced.

33. Good, detailed action plans are negotiated with learners at each workplace visit, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The action plans help learners identify what they have to do to achieve their qualification. These have relevant achievable targets, which specify what the learner has to achieve before the next visit. Progress made is recorded at each visit. Learners' portfolios of evidence are well organised. Learners are enthusiastic and motivated.

34. There is good key skills training which is introduced at the start of the training programme. Trainers carry out key skills training as an integral part of the vocational training. Good learning materials relate key skills activities to work carried out in the workplace. For example, one learner used an equal opportunities handout as evidence of communications skills. All learners have a good understanding of what is required of them in order to complete their key skills training. Several learners have produced good projects as evidence for their communications key skills.

35. There is slow progress toward the completion of the full framework. Initial assessment is not used effectively. There is no assessment of learners skills or knowledge to inform individual learning plans. Internal verification does not identify learners who are not making good progress. All foundation and advanced modern apprentices recruited since September 2001 are still on their training programmes. Sixty-two per cent of the advanced modern apprentices who started their training programme in 2000-01, have either completed their framework or are still on the training programme. Of the four advanced modern apprentices who started in 1999-2000, none has completed their framework and three are still in training. One foundation modern apprentice who started in 1999 is still in training, and of the 17 foundation modern apprentices who started in 2000-01, none has completed their framework, with thirteen still in training. Workplace supervisors are kept informed of the review process but are not directly involved and do not attend progress review meetings.

### Good Practice

*Training provider staff worked with one employer to arrange a series of five workshops for managers to raise their awareness of the requirements of NVQs, key skills and apprenticeship frameworks. This enabled managers and workplace supervisors to help learners collect workplace evidence and resolve problems quickly in the workplace, without the need to call upon an assessor.*

## Information &amp; communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	28	3

36. There are 28 learners on work-based learning programmes in information and communications technology (ICT). Learners are working towards NVOs at levels 2 and 3 in using IT, installing and supporting IT systems, and operating IT systems. There are currently 13 foundation modern apprentices, 14 advanced modern apprentices and one learner is on another work-based learning programme, working towards an NVO at level 3. Of the 28 learners, 20 are men and eight are women. Twelve learners started their NVOs with other training providers and were transferred to KITA between April and May 2001. All learners are employed. Employers include small companies involved in web design and marketing, medium-sized engineering companies making parking meters, refurbishing commercial refrigeration units or reconditioning heavy plant vehicles, and large enterprises such as a major pharmaceutical company, a further education college, and the local constabulary. Learners are recruited directly by employers, who then refer them to the training provider. Learners carry out an initial assessment, which involves an interview and a test. An induction programme, provided by a member of the training provider's staff, is given to learners in employers' premises. Progress reviews and assessment are carried out in the workplace every two to four weeks. Off-the-job key skills training is provided at the training provider's premises.

The following tables show 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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	18		2												
Retained	0		2													
Successfully completed	0		0													
Still in learning	12		2													

Work-based learning for young people															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	9		7											
Retained	0		0												
Successfully completed	2		0												
Still in learning	6		7												

Work-based learning for young people															
NVQ Training	2001-02														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	1													
Retained	0														
Successfully completed	0														
Still in learning	1														

## STRENGTHS

- good learner support by most employers
- well-planned training programmes
- good selection of work placements to meet individual learners' needs

## WEAKNESSES

- poor progress reviews
- weak assessment practices
- poor achievement rates

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better availability of existing background knowledge resources

37. There is good learner support by most employers. Frequent training sessions are carried out in the workplace, with time allocated for private study. Some learners have

study areas away from their workstations, where background knowledge resources can be used. All learners have good computing equipment. There was little disruption to the training for those learners who transferred from other training providers. All learners are employed, and many have permanent contracts. Some employers intend to offer learners permanent contracts when they complete their training programmes. Learners are encouraged to progress to a higher-level qualification, where these are available. Many employers pay for additional relevant vocational training.

38. There are well-planned training programmes. Most employers select the IT qualification which best suits the learner's job. Options are carefully chosen to meet the needs of learners. Employers discuss the selection of the most suitable qualification with training provider staff. This was particularly important when learners were transferred from other training providers. Some of these learners had previously been placed on unsuitable training programmes or on training programmes at an incorrect level. These learners were placed on more appropriate training programmes.

39. There is a good selection of work placements to meet individual learners' needs. Learners are recruited by a wide variety of employers, including a local college, the county constabulary and a variety of smaller companies. The occupations followed by learners cover many different aspects of the computer industry, such as accountancy, computer support, telecommunications, networking, software development and database management.

40. Progress reviews are poor. Quarterly progress reviews stopped in the summer of 2001 and were replaced by monthly reviews. These reviews concentrate solely on vocational skills and contain insufficient reference to learners' personal development. Employers are not encouraged to contribute to progress reviews. Progress reviews do not inform employers of learners' progress and do not provide sufficient detail on learners' progress. Many action plans do not concentrate on the core aspects of the training plan. Undemanding targets are set for the learners. Learners commented on the low level of attainment expected of them by assessors and reviewers. In one case, poor recording of the tasks accomplished by a learner resulted in a completed unit not being signed off. No discussion took place between training provider staff and employers to produce a training plan. Training generally reflects the requirements of employers rather than the needs of the learner. No attempt is made to meet both the learners' training needs and the employers' business needs. One learner did not receive the standards for his NVQ until six weeks after starting training. No attempt has been made to find a temporary measure to enable the learner to start collecting evidence. Key skills training is not provided alongside the vocational training. Key skills training is introduced towards the end of the training programme. A series of key skills workshops for this current year's learners was organised but none of the learners responded to an invitation to attend these workshops. Learners and some employers do not understand the importance of key skills training and do not see it as relevant to the vocational training.

41. Assessment practices are weak. Few NVQ units have been assessed and



completed. Learners who leave the training programme early receive insufficient recognition for the work that they have done. There is no assessment or strategy to deal with evidence not easily collected from the workplace. No assessment strategy has been discussed or considered by training provider staff. Evidence is collected solely in the workplace. Learners' portfolios of evidence contain insufficient examples of assessment by observation in the workplace.

42. Achievement rates on the modern apprentice framework are poor. Currently, no advanced modern apprentices have completed their framework. Only two foundation modern apprentices have completed the framework. All learners on these training programmes started their NVQ with different training providers and transferred to KITA in April and May 2001. Thirty-three per cent of the advanced modern apprentices have already left the training programme early. Thirty-three per cent of foundation modern apprentices have also left early. The teaching of background knowledge is currently ineffective and resources are inadequate.

#### Good Practice

*An employer wanted one learner to work towards an NVQ in operating IT. The training provider did not offer such a training programme but quickly responded by becoming an accredited centre to provide the qualification.*

## Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	32	4

43. There are currently 32 learners on work-based learning programmes in retailing, customer service and transportation. Of these, 14 are advanced modern apprentices and three are foundation modern apprentices in customer service, and 11 are advanced modern apprentices and four are foundation modern apprentices in call handling. Twenty-eight learners are women and four are men. All are employed by local businesses. In April 2001, 15 learners on customer service training programmes were transferred from other training providers. New learners are recruited directly by employers and can start at any time of the year. All learners carry out an initial assessment. The results of this assessment, together with the learner's current job role, determine the most appropriate training programme. Induction is given in the workplace to small groups of learners or individually by the training provider's assessors. Most learners receive some additional training from their employers. Key skills training is provided at the training provider's premises in Sittingbourne. Learners unable to attend can receive individual key skills training from their assessor in the workplace. Assessors, including the training co-ordinator, visit learners every two or three weeks to carry out assessment and action-planning. All assessors are qualified and four are qualified internal verifiers. Four assessors have recently joined the training provider. Two assessors only started three months ago. Progress reviews take place monthly and generally involve the employer.

The following tables show 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											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	21		24											
Retained	0		14											
Successfully completed	0		0											
Still in learning	11		14											

Work-based learning for young people															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	4		4											
Retained	4		3												
Successfully completed	0		0												
Still in learning	4		3												

## STRENGTHS

- good learner support from assessors
- good range of evidence in learners' portfolios

## WEAKNESSES

- poor retention rates
- poor achievement rates
- inadequate provision of key skills training

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more specific information packs for NVO learners
- better professional development for staff

44. Assessors visit learners every two or three weeks to provide support, advice on collecting evidence, provide on-the-job training, and plan formal assessments. Action-planning is well recorded and checked at each visit. Learners know what they are expected to achieve between each visit. Learners who transferred from other training providers to complete customer service apprenticeships, received particularly good support during the changeover. Assessors spent considerable time and effort in clarifying progress made up to that stage, enabling learners to progress without undue interruption to their training. Similar attention was given to reducing disruption experienced by learners whose assessor had been replaced. Employers were kept well informed throughout the process. Communication with employers is good.

45. There is a good range of evidence in learners' portfolios. Observations carried out

by assessors in the workplace are detailed, and record good examples of NVQ evidence. Observations are supported by evidence of verbal questions, which clarify actions taken and decisions made by learners in the workplace. Learners are encouraged to write detailed explanations of particular events, demonstrating how they have provided good customer service or handled customers' problems over the telephone. Associated evidence, which complements these examples, is also provided. Witness statements from colleagues and line managers are provided.

46. Although these training programmes have only been provided since April 2001 for customer service and October 2001 for call handling, retention rates are poor. In 2000-01, when only customer service training was available, the retention rate was 45 per cent. With the inclusion of learners who transferred from other training providers, the retention rate was 46 per cent. Most learners are now on call handling training programmes and the retention rate is currently 67 per cent, with only six months of the training programme remaining.

47. Achievement rates are poor. Few learners have achieved their qualifications in the target timescales. Many learners are now close to achieving their qualifications, but progress is still poor. Many learners have GCSEs, GCE A levels, and general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) at intermediate and advanced levels. Learners prior achievements, however, are not used to inform their training programmes. Currently, no learners have completed the full framework. Of those who have left the training programme early, three learners achieved an NVQ, but did not complete the key skills training required for the full apprenticeship framework. Employers do not provide adequate support for learners to complete their NVQ. Assessors frequently observe learners in the call centres. Learners are often unable to develop a good understanding of the content and context of the NVQ and key skills training, and are unable to develop key skills through all aspects of their work. Monthly progress reviews are not planned well and do not always contain adequate action-planning. Learners and employers do not understand what progress is made by the learners. Evidence for the NVQ is collected throughout the training programme, but no units are completed until the end of the training programme. There are no indicators against which learners and employers can measure progress.

48. There is inadequate provision for key skills training. Key skills training does not take place at the start of learners' training programmes. There is insufficient evidence in assessor records of key skills evidence collected by those learners transferred from other training providers. There is no systematic planning to provide key skills training and no evidence in portfolios of any key skills development. The training provider runs key skills training at its premises in Sittingbourne. Learners are not always given time by employers to attend this training. For some learners, the distance to travel to Sittingbourne prevents them attending this training.

49. The call handling training programme only became available late in 2001. The structure of the customer service NVQ changed in April 2001. The training provider provides all learners with a pack containing advice and guidance on achieving NVQs.

Additional advice and guidance materials for learners on these two NVQs are unavailable. Team meetings are held regularly, but there is insufficient staff development and good practice is not shared.