

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Morthyng Limited**

12 November 2001



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 *learnirect* 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

Morthyng Limited is a registered charity and limited by guarantee, based in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. It has close links with the South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council and the Employment Service, and has several partnerships with other local training providers. Most of the training takes place in the Rotherham area. Training is provided in construction, engineering, business administration, information and communication technology, retailing and customer services and foundation programmes. There were 74 work-based learners at the time of the inspection. Only retailing and customer service had enough learners to warrant inspection. At the time of the inspection, the company had seven clients on options of New Deal.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of work-based learning in retailing and customer service is satisfactory. The leadership and management of Morthyng Limited, including its approach to quality assurance and equal opportunities, are satisfactory.

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

### GRADES

Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

## **KEY STRENGTHS**

- extensive opportunities for workplace learning
- good progress by learners towards occupational learning goals
- effective training in background knowledge
- effective training partnerships and links with outside agencies
- good internal communications and open style of management
- well-managed staff appraisal and development process

## **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate progress review system
- narrow range of evidence in many portfolios
- lack of involvement by employers in assessment
- inadequate management information system
- insufficient use of target-setting
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- poor management reviews of occupational areas

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- earlier introduction of key skills training
- better communications with employers
- more observation of training sessions
- more critical self-assessment

## THE INSPECTION

1. Two inspectors spent a total of eight days with Morthyng Limited (Morthyng) in November 2001. They visited learners and their employers in the South Yorkshire region covered by the company. They interviewed 11 learners, company staff and supervisors, and line managers and senior managers at eight workplaces. Inspectors observed training, assessment and review sessions. They examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios of evidence, learners' records, Morthyng's plans, records, policies and procedures and awarding bodies' reports. Inspectors studied Morthyng's self-assessment report, which had been prepared in September 2001, following consultation with all staff.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

2. Morthyng has operated in South Yorkshire for over 14 years. During this period, it has provided training and assessment for long-term unemployed people as part of its mission statement to equip people with the skills needed to enter the labour market. Morthyng's core business has changed substantially this year. The Employment Service has contracted with other training providers in the region and outside to provide training for adults in the area. As a result of these changes, Morthyng has made 22 staff redundant. There will be more changes as the residual contract with the Employment Service ends. At present, Morthyng employs 36 staff.

3. As part of its strategic plan, Morthyng intends to expand its training for young people over the next two years, in partnership with other local training providers. It is introducing training in management and professional, engineering, health care and hospitality. Recruitment has started for these new areas, but numbers are low at present. Morthyng is working closely with several European partners to provide opportunities for learners to gain vocational work 'tasters' and training experiences in 11 other European Union member states. There are currently 74 learners on work-based training programmes. Morthyng does not use subcontractors to provide its training. As part of its trade and industry services section, it works in partnership with Rotherham Managing Agents (RMA) to run a programme of construction skills at the RMA Training Centre at Maltby. Morthyng is an active member of many different committees and steering groups associated with employment, training and education in the South Yorkshire region.

4. In comparison with the rest of the country, South Yorkshire is more reliant on manufacturing, construction, transport and communication industries. Manufacturing is still a major employer in Rotherham, although this, along with the mining industry, has declined over many years. Most businesses in Rotherham employ fewer than 10 staff. The level of social deprivation is high in the region and unemployment rates are higher than the national average. In September 2001, the unemployment rate for the South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area was 4.8 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.9 per cent. The local population is about 250,000, of which minority ethnic groups form about 2 per cent of the total. Most young people in South Yorkshire have low educational attainment, which is a major barrier to them gaining employment. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 41 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent.



## Work-based learning for young people

5. Work-based learning for young people in retailing and customer services is satisfactory. Learners received good training in their work placements, where they experience a range of appropriate tasks and responsibilities which extends their knowledge and competence and increases their self-confidence. Employers give additional training for some learners, including first-aid training. There are good learning resources and many learners are included in their employer's staff training events. Some learners gain vocational work experience in European countries and learn the local language.

6. Learners receive structured training to meet their needs. Assessors in the workplace give individual training to learners. They ensure that learners have an effective knowledge of the buying and selling of goods. Training materials are easy to read and understand. Learners are motivated and enjoy the training sessions. Retention rates have improved in the past three years and are satisfactory. The achievement rate of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) is satisfactory and is rising slightly. Many more young people who leave training early are gaining some qualifications. It is too early to judge the achievement rate of modern apprenticeship frameworks as they were only introduced in 2000-01. There is regular structured contact between assessors and learners. Assessors have a good understanding of learners who have additional learning needs. Learners' ability is carefully assessed and the results are used in the planning of their training. There is effective monitoring of learners' progress in the workplace.

7. The different purposes of assessment visits and progress reviews are not understood by learners, although assessment is clear to them. Learners do not receive a copy of their review paperwork, or an updated copy of their individual learning plan. Some reviews are conducted in places which lack privacy and prevent adequate discussion of personal problems. Review paperwork lacks detail and insufficient attention is paid to health and safety or equal opportunities matters. There is insufficient participation by employers in the assessment process. Few meetings between assessors and learners take place off the shop floor. Assessment and review documents do not contain a section for employers' written comments on learners' progress.

8. Learners' portfolios in retailing are unsatisfactory. They consist mainly of notes of observation and responses to questioning, and few learners feel that they have personally contributed much to them. There is a lack of evidence for most everyday retailing tasks. The portfolios of learners in customer service are satisfactory. The development of learners' key skills is slow and there has been no assessment of key skills. Few learners understand that key skills are an integral part of their training programme.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

9. Morthyng is a registered charity. It has a number of partnerships with other local training providers and has strong links with other agencies. Its core business has changed substantially this year from adult to youth work. A chief executive heads the company and an operations manager is responsible for its day-to-day running. There are now 36 staff, 22 staff having been made redundant. Most staff provide training and assessment in the workplace. Morthyng has an equal opportunities policy, which has been updated recently to cover instances of bullying, and has policies and procedures relating to quality assurance. The company began self-assessment in 1998 and produced its third self-assessment report in September 2001.

### STRENGTHS

- effective style of management
- good internal communications
- effective training partnerships and links with outside agencies
- well-managed staff appraisal and staff development process

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate management information system
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities
- insufficient use of target-setting
- poor vocational management reviews

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better communications with employers
- more formal observation of training sessions
- more critical self-assessment

10. Morthyng manages its staff and resources well. Senior staff have an open and effective style of leadership and management that is responsive to, and appreciated by, staff. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities well. Morthyng has established clear priorities and strategic objectives that cover most essential aspects of the company's business. It has careful financial management procedures. The company recognises in its self-assessment report the need to improve its communications with employers.

11. Communications between managers, tutors and administration staff are good. Staff are well informed about all aspects of the organisation and have regular, often weekly, meetings that cover all essential areas of their business. There is a full team meeting every two months with the chief executive. Each year, all staff attend a two-day

residential event to discuss the development of the company and its future role. Meetings enable the sharing of good practice and the establishment of a strong sense of teamwork. A quarterly newsletter provides good, informative and amusing stories about the company and its staff.

12. Morthyng has good training partnerships and effective links with outside agencies, which benefit learners. It has developed effective partnerships with other local training providers for construction and manufacturing. Useful links are maintained with a large number of training, educational and employment agencies in the region which help to provide opportunities for vocational learning. Morthyng also has strong links with European partners which provide opportunities for learners to have vocational work experience in most member states of the European Union.

13. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, management information systems are inadequate. Despite recent improvements, which include a new computerised system, they do not yet provide information which allows for detailed and thorough analysis of the progress of learners. At present, paper-based records provide some information on learners.

## Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

14. Morthyng trains many young people with learning difficulties and promote equal opportunities within the company. Its equal opportunities policy states its commitment to comply with current legislation and covers both staff and learners' requirements. A senior manager is responsible for the co-ordination of equal opportunities. The equal opportunities policy is given to all learners at induction and is clearly displayed in the training centres. Learners are able to recall in some detail the equal opportunities training that they received at induction. There are useful equal opportunities reference guides for learners, but there are none for staff. There is some checking of equal opportunities by assessors at learners' progress reviews. A few staff have had extensive training in equal opportunities issues.

15. Morthyng has been involved in several local initiatives to give learners the chance to take up training appropriate to their needs. Further help is given to learners in the form of free transport to and from the training centres from various parts of Rotherham. Morthyng's promotional literature includes a statement of its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and shows images to counter gender stereotyping. Information is collected about learners in terms of their gender, ethnicity and disability. However, none of this information is analysed and it is not used to influence recruitment or provide targets to increase the number of learners from groups under-represented in training, such as minority ethnic groups.

16. Morthyng does not adequately monitor equal opportunities in the workplace. The policies and procedures do not seek to determine, for example, whether learners are being bullied or are suffering other forms of harassment. The present reviews and questionnaires completed by learners are mainly related to training issues and not to equal opportunities. The monitoring of employers' promotion of equal opportunities is only cursory.

17. There is satisfactory access to training centres for people with mobility difficulties, and appropriate toilet facilities. Accessible car parking spaces are available directly outside the main training centre at Ship Hill. There is no lift at the Bank buildings.

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

18. All staff are involved in the quality assurance process and in the production of the self-assessment report. There are clear and comprehensive procedures for quality assurance. These have identified the need for continuing improvement, which this year has included the development of better basic skills training and meeting new awarding body standards. The operations manager supervises critical and thorough internal audits. Learners regularly complete questionnaires. These are analysed and managers effectively act upon any areas of weakness identified.

19. Every six months staff have a training review followed by an effective appraisal. The outcomes identified at appraisal are used to determine individual training needs and to set clear job objectives for the following six months. Training undertaken by staff meets their operational and personal development needs, and is closely linked to the company's strategic objectives. Most staff have received extensive training this year.

20. There is inadequate setting and use of targets to improve performance. There are too few clear, measurable targets so it is difficult to monitor the progress made towards achieving the aims of business plans.

21. Managers' reviews of occupational areas, and the minutes of these meetings, are poor. There is inadequate checking and analysis of training and learning, there is no detailed analysis of retention or achievement rates and review documents are perfunctory. Minutes of management review meetings are very brief and do not sufficiently address the essential areas of training and learners' progress. Some observations of training sessions are carried out, but these are not done routinely.

22. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but considered that there was insufficient evidence to support some of the judgements made and that some of the strengths were no more than normal practice. They identified some additional weaknesses.

23. Overall, internal verification is satisfactory. There has been a delay in the development of a standardisation plan. One meeting has been held to discuss standardisation of assessment practices, but further meetings have been cancelled.

### Good Practice

*The names and details of assessment staff, the name of the internal and external verifiers for each area of learning and particulars of the awarding body are displayed on noticeboards for easy reference by learners.*

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	39	3

24. There are 39 learners on retailing and customer service programmes. One is an advanced modern apprentice, nine are foundation modern apprentices and 29 are on work-based learning programmes for young people. All modern apprentices are employed. One advanced modern apprentice is working toward an NVQ in customer service at level 3 and key skills at levels 2 and 3. Two foundation modern apprentices are working towards NVQs at level 2 in customer service, three in retail operations and two in distribution and warehousing. They are all working towards key skills at levels 1 and 2. Twenty-one learners on work-based learning for young people are employed and eight are in work placements. Four of these learners are working towards distributive operations NVQs at level 1. Ten are working towards NVQs in distribution and warehousing, four in customer services and 11 in retail operations each at level 2. Six of these learners have additional learning needs. Learners are recruited throughout the year from the careers service, Employment Service, their employer or because of personal recommendation. Initial assessment and induction takes place at Morthyng's Moorgate Street premises or at the learner's place of work. Daily routine tasks provide evidence for the assessment of the NVQ. Assessors employed by the provider visit learners at work to assess their skills and review their progress. Most learners work in shops and distribution depots. Basic skills support and vocational training is offered at the provider's premises.

The tables below show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started							4		6
Still in training							3	75	6	100
FMA framework completed							0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed							0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework							1	25	0	0

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started									1	
Still in training									1	100
AMA framework completed									0	0
NVQ level 2 completed									1	100
NVQ level 3 completed									0	0
Left without completing the framework									0	0

  

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					11		41		21	
Still in training					3	27	9	22	17	81
Individual learning plan completed					7	64	29	71	2	10
Left without completing individual learning plan					4	36	10	24	2	10
NVQ level 1 completed					0	0	1	2	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					7	64	29	71	2	10

## STRENGTHS

- extensive opportunities for workplace learning
- good progress towards occupational learning goals
- effective training in background knowledge

## WEAKNESSES

- inadequate progress review system
- narrow range of evidence in many portfolios
- lack of involvement by employers in assessment

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- earlier introduction of key skills training and assessment

25. Good on-the-job training is provided in highly suitable work placements, a strength identified in Morthyng's self-assessment report. Some learners attend first-aid courses arranged by their employer. There are good resources and learners are included with other staff at in-house training events. Learners are given appropriate tasks to extend their range of skills. They are given responsibilities and gain self-confidence. There is effective communication between Morthyng's staff and the supervisors and managers in the workplace. Unemployed learners are placed in supportive organisations where they increase their employability skills. Some learners are offered appropriate work experience in Belgium and are encouraged to learn Flemish. Learners who participate in this scheme receive a written report from their supervisors in Belgium.

26. Assessors visit learners in the workplace frequently. The timing of these visits varies according to the needs of each learner. Assessors are particularly sensitive to the requirements of learners who have additional learning needs. They are visited at their workplace weekly and sometimes attend off-the-job training for basic skills support in addition to vocational training. Learners are encouraged to work at their own pace. Learners' progress is monitored carefully and delays are quickly investigated. The achievement rate of NVQs is satisfactory. The proportion of learners who gain some qualifications although they have left training early has increased significantly from 30 per cent to 54 per cent. Over three years, there has been a steady decline from 36 per cent to 10 per cent in the proportion of learners leaving early with no qualifications. NVQ training has led to a satisfactory proportion of learners gaining suitable jobs.

27. Trainers carefully take into account individual learning needs. The results of initial assessment are used as a basis for the learning plan. Learners take part in group training sessions for health and safety. Adequate training rooms are used for this purpose. Training materials are simple but effective to use. Trainers introduce an element of fun into all training sessions and learners participate with enthusiasm. Assessors give individual training to learners when they visit them in the workplace and communicate with them effectively in a relaxed way. Assessors continually improve their skills, occupational competence and qualifications. All are working towards training or teaching qualifications. Particular attention is paid to the background knowledge learners need to carry out their job. Learners gain a good understanding of consumer legislation. Some learners receive useful learning materials to use in the workplace.

28. Learners cannot distinguish between assessors' visits and formal progress reviews. Learners are not given a copy of their review records and do not have a current copy of their individual learning plan, which is the basis of the review. The reviews are sometimes held in areas that lack privacy, so that sensitive issues cannot be discussed. Reviews are not conducted in such a way that learners can give an account of how their training is progressing. The reviewer completes the review document by asking direct or closed questions of the learner and of the supervisor, if he or she is present. There is insufficient emphasis on health and safety or equal opportunity issues. Objectives are not specific enough and timescales for their achievement are not laid down. New review forms are being introduced but reviewers have not been trained in how to use them.



29. Learners in retailing and distribution have unsatisfactory portfolios of evidence. They consist almost entirely of observation notes and questioning. Learners working towards retail operations, distributive operations and distribution and warehousing contribute little towards their portfolios. Their progress towards achieving qualifications relies too heavily on the assessor and learners mainly react to their requests for information. Evidence is not recorded in such a way that it is easily retrieved. There is little tangible evidence of learners' practical work. Learners write lengthy reports that are not always validated or authenticated. There are few witness testimonies. There is not enough assessment of learners' everyday work tasks. Customer service qualifications have recently been introduced. Portfolios of learners in this area are better and contain a much wider range of evidence that is effectively cross-referenced.

30. Employers are not encouraged sufficiently to contribute to the assessment process. For example, an assessor planned to observe a candidate building a display. However, the display had to be constructed a day earlier and so the assessment was missed because no witness testimony was sought, the plan for the display was not requested and no contingency plans were made to gain photographic evidence. Learners are not always allowed to meet their assessors off the shop floor. There is no space for employers to write their account of learners' progress on the assessment paperwork and they are simply required to sign the form.

31. Although assessment planning covers key skills, no assessment of key skills has been recorded. Few learners are aware that their learning targets include the acquisition of key skills. The foundation modern apprenticeship was introduced during the financial year 2000-01. It is too early to judge the achievement of qualifications on this programme but there has been no achievement of the framework or any qualifications as yet. Only one learner left early without achieving any qualifications. The one advanced modern apprentice who started during the past 12 months has gained an NVQ at level 2 in retail operations and customer service during previous NVQ training. Additional units required to complete the advanced modern apprenticeship framework are accredited as prior achievement. This learner has just begun working towards an NVQ in customer service at level 3.

### Good Practice

*A learner had a work placement where she was often left without supervision. The learner left the work placement after a disagreement with her supervisor. Morthyng heard of her experience, staff quickly offered the learner a choice of three new work placements. She is now gaining work experience in a major high street retailer. The learner is now confidently taking payment at the till and gaining competence in all the store's departments.*

### Poor Practice

*During a progress review, an employer was asked to help familiarise a learner with health and safety procedures. The employer offered to let the learner work through the procedures manual, but was unaware that the learner had difficulties with reading. There was no opportunity for the reviewer to discreetly let the employer know this.*