

INSPECTION REPORT

Fawley Nursery Training Centre

23 October 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

Fawley Nursery Training Centre is a small training provider based in Fawley near Southampton. The centre provides work-based learning for young people in early years care and education. Currently, there are 37 young people in training.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the needs of those receiving it. Work-based learning and leadership and management, including equal opportunities and quality assurance, are satisfactory.

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

GRADES

| Health, social care & public services | 3 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 3 |

KEY STRENGTHS

- high retention rates
- flexible arrangements for training
- good on-the-job training
- effective use of external partnerships
- good initiatives to attract learners from under-represented groups

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate basic skills arrangements
- insufficient understanding of key skills by learners
- inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- insufficiently critical self-assessment report
- insufficient training for staff in equal opportunities

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more effective off-the-job training
- more thorough review and evaluation processes

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of three inspectors spent 12 days at Fawley Nursery Training Centre during October 2001. They interviewed 20 learners, conducted 11 interviews with training centre staff, visited 12 workplaces, and interviewed 12 employers and workplace supervisors. Inspectors observed and graded five training sessions. They examined a range of paperwork including learners' portfolios of evidence, learners' personal files and records, the centre's plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature and awarding body reports. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report produced by the centre.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Health, social care & public services | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

2. Fawley Nursery Training Centre has been in operation since January 2000. It is based in Fawley near Southampton and provides work-based learning in early years care and education. The centre has 37 learners on modern apprenticeships and other work-based learning, all of whom are employed by employers in Southampton, Bournemouth and Surrey. The centre has one director and five other staff.

3. Modern apprenticeship training is funded through a contract with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight offices of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Unemployment in the area was low at 1.5 per cent in June 2001, compared with the national average of 3.0 per cent. Using the 1991 census data, people from minority ethnic groups represent 3.1 per cent of the area's population, although in Fawley the proportion is 0.63 per cent. In 2000, the percentage of school leavers in Southampton achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 39.8 per cent, well below the national average of 49.2 per cent. Some 5.2 per cent leave school with no qualifications.

Work-based learning for young people

4. The retention rates for modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualification (NVQ) training are particularly good. In 2000-01, 75 per cent of advanced modern apprentices remained in training and in 2001-02, 88 per cent are still in training. On the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, 75 per cent of learners were still in training in 2000-01 and 100 per cent are still in training in 2001-02. Only one of the nine learners who started NVQ training at level 4 has left without achieving the qualifications. Fawley Nursery Training Centre has only been in operation since January 2000 so it is too early to judge pass rates. However, most learners are making good progress with their NVQ training and the standard of work is satisfactory. Two learners have completed the advanced modern apprenticeship framework.

5. On-the-job training is good. Learners work alongside qualified and experienced staff and are frequently assessed in the workplace. Assessments are planned with the learners. Assessors make good use of learners' experiences to help them develop their understanding. Written evidence is used extensively but insufficient use is made of other methods such as oral questioning and witness testimonies.

6. There are flexible arrangements which allow learners to train at their own convenience. Off-the-job training is provided early in the evening and on some Saturdays. Inspectors observed five training sessions. All were graded good or satisfactory. Some off-the-job training is not made interesting for learners.

7. Basic skills needs are not clearly identified and some learners requiring help in basic skills are not receiving it. There is no member of staff qualified to teach basic skills. Arrangements for key skills are unsatisfactory. Learners do not understand what is meant by key skills. They do not know how to use the work they produce for information technology as evidence for key skills. They do not cross-reference their key skills evidence to the NVQ standards. This is done by their trainers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

8. Fawley Nursery Training Centre was established in January 2000. The company employs six staff. The director is responsible for management of the training centre, finance and quality assurance. She is supported by a full-time NVQ co-ordinator, who is also an assessor. There are three part-time assessors. Two are based at Fawley and one who is not based at the centre visits learners on the Hampshire and Dorset borders. There is a full-time administrator. The training centre has an equal opportunities policy, a complaints procedure and policies and procedures which contribute to quality assurance. The centre was accredited with the Investors in People standard this year. The centre produced its first self-assessment report this year in preparation for the inspection.

STRENGTHS

- good internal communications
- effective appraisal and staff development
- good use of external partnerships
- effective collection and analysis of equal opportunities data
- good initiatives to attract learners from under-represented groups
- thorough internal verification system
- prompt response to feedback from learners and employers

WEAKNESSES

- incomplete policies and procedures
- inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- insufficient training for staff in equal opportunities
- lack of an established quality assurance system
- insufficiently critical self-assessment process
- ineffective internal audits

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better action-planning
- better communications arrangements for assessors not based at the centre
- more thorough review and evaluation processes

9. Internal communications at the centre are good. There is an open management style which encourages staff to make suggestions or discuss concerns as they arise and this leads to a speedy resolution of problems. The centre director and NVQ co-ordinator hold team meetings every six weeks. Agenda items include the progress made by learners against targets, course evaluations, recruitment and feedback on courses

attended by staff. Updates from awarding bodies and the LSC are also disseminated to the team. Good practice is shared and issues discussed. Each assessor has a message book and instead of staff receiving lots of memos, 'routine notices' are available for them to read on Fridays, which they have to sign to confirm they have read. Despite the efforts of management to communicate effectively with all staff, assessors not based at the training centre do not always receive information.

10. Fawley Nursery Training Centre's systems and procedures are in a developmental stage, but improving at a significant rate. Policies and procedures have been developed in an unplanned way and some have only been written recently. There is no manual which brings all the procedures together. Policies and procedures for the quality assurance of work-based learning are incomplete. Some procedures have not been written in language that is easy for learners to understand. Many existing policies and procedures are not dated, and it is not clear when they were last updated, or when they are due for review. There is no system for the review and evaluation of procedures and at present they take place in an unplanned way at staff meetings. There are satisfactory systems for collecting management information. The data are analysed and used as a basis for future planning.

11. Staff development is good. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. All new assessors receive a thorough induction covering company policies and procedures, equal opportunities, health and safety, and all aspects of assessment and training. Induction is supplemented by a comprehensive information pack to use for reference. Assessors are allocated a mentor who helps them during their first few months. There is an effective annual staff appraisal to monitor performance and identify personal and business development needs. Progress made towards achieving targets identified at appraisal is monitored through a six-monthly review and through feedback on the progress and performance of learners. The staff development plan is linked to the business plan and is updated annually. Although objectives and targets are identified in the business plan, the related action plans do not always identify who is responsible for carrying out the actions or indicate the review and target dates.

12. The centre makes good use of its external partnerships to provide training for staff and learners. Local nursery employer networks provide training on topics such as behavioural management, cot death, play management and autism. Learners are encouraged to attend the training and benefit from networking with learners from other training centres. A contract to provide wider access to jobs for learners has recently been implemented with the local careers service. Fawley Nursery Training Centre uses the facilities at the local college for off-the-job training. Learners are able to make good use of resources at the college, where there are up-to-date computer facilities with access to the Internet.

13. There is inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. There are no procedures to ensure that planned training takes place at work. Employers are not required to provide a structured training programme and they do not always have a copy of the NVQ standards. Sometimes employers are not informed of workplace

projects being undertaken by learners so they are not fully involved in the training. Insufficient use is made of workplace mentors to help to plan training. Although centre staff visit the employer's premises to carry out reviews with the learner, many employers and mentors are not involved in the review process apart from signing the form afterwards. There is no observation of on-the-job training to evaluate its effectiveness. The centre has recently started to inform employers by letter when assessments are to take place, but the letter does not give details of what is to be assessed or of any training needs which could be met by the employer.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

14. Fawley Nursery Training Centre has a policy for equal opportunities and harassment but it does not reflect current legislation and practice. The policy had been reviewed in October 2001 but it is brief and does not include any reference to bullying. There are procedures for complaints and grievances but few other procedures for carrying out the policy. The complaints procedure is issued to all learners. Formal and informal complaints are dealt with rapidly.

15. There is effective collection and analysis of equal opportunities data. The training centre collects data on learners' age, gender, ethnicity and individual learning needs on a regular basis and they are analysed twice a year. Staff have used this analysis to develop initiatives to attract learners from under-represented groups. They attend careers events in schools with some of their young learners and a male early years worker in one of the centre's placements has also agreed to attend careers events. The centre managers have made arrangements to attend a multicultural awareness day.

16. The centre director has recently undertaken her own training in equal opportunities but there has been no systematic planning of equal opportunities training for other centre staff and assessors. Some staff have not had recent equal opportunities training or updating. The centre managers have planned some training for later this year.

17. Fawley Nursery Training Centre ensures that all work placements have an equal opportunities policy. Promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace is monitored through questionnaires to learners and assessor visits. However, the monitoring is not yet thorough enough.

18. Some learners have a poor understanding of equal opportunities issues. There is a need for more emphasis on equal opportunities in learners' written work.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 3**

19. Fawley Nursery Training Centre does not have an established quality assurance system. Although there are some procedures in place there are no quality assurance procedures for some key activities, such as learner progress reviews, initial assessment, on-the-job training, or the accreditation of learners' prior learning. Off-the job training is reviewed and evaluated, but there is inadequate monitoring of the quality of on-the-job training.

20. Internal verification is carried out regularly and is thorough. At any one time it includes a sampling of the work of about a third of all established assessors and 30 per cent of units across all portfolios. There is 100 per cent sampling of portfolios assessed by newly qualified assessors. All assessors are observed regularly and new assessors are observed three times a year. The written feedback given to assessors is detailed and helpful. Action points are followed up by the internal verifier and initialled when completed. The internal verifier holds regular meetings with assessors, during which standardisation, training, assessment and learners' progress are discussed. Despite the regular monitoring of assessors, there are differences in the standards of assessment used by assessors. These differences have not been identified or addressed. Part-time assessors are particularly well qualified and experienced. Only assessors with current experience are recruited. If the assessors are promoted to management roles in their nurseries they are required to undertake regular occupational updating to ensure that their practical skills remain up to date.

21. There is good evaluation of feedback from learners and employers. Questionnaires are issued three times a year to learners and response rates are good. The results are analysed and discussed at team meetings. When issues are raised, either in feedback questionnaires or through personal contact, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. For example, when a learner expressed dissatisfaction with on-the-job training, the centre asked the learner to keep a diary of the training she was receiving. They then arranged a meeting with the employer to agree more suitable work allocations. Feedback from some employers in a recent questionnaire indicated that they were not receiving sufficient information about the learner's training progress. The centre responded quickly by ensuring that before a learner was to be assessed in the workplace, a letter was sent detailing the units completed and the units to be assessed. However, this information does not always get passed on to the learner's mentor.

22. Internal audits are carried out on some procedures but they are not effective. For example, learners' files are audited, but it is not clear what criteria are being used in the audit. There is a checklist of what should be in a learners' file and the person carrying out the audit signs to confirm which documents are in the file. However, there is no attempt to check the usefulness of the information in the files. Some review records in files contain good information on the learner's progress and include an action plan with clear targets for the learner to achieve before the next review meeting. Other review records are poor. Some learning plans are updated, but others do not show what the learner has achieved or give any details of additional support needs or development.

FAWLEY NURSERY TRAINING CENTRE

23. The self-assessment report was written by the director. The provision was evaluated using the 'Common Inspection Framework'. The report was informative and well written, but judgements were not sufficiently self-critical. There was insufficient involvement of learners, employers and some assessors; a weakness recognised in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified by the centre but identified significant weaknesses not in the self-assessment report. The action plan prepared by the centre was comprehensive but it did not always identify the person responsible for carrying out the action, the timescale involved, or when the progress made against the targets would be reviewed.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 37 | 3 |

24. Fawley Nursery Training Centre offers foundation and modern apprenticeship training in early years care and education and national vocational qualifications in early years care and education at level 4. There are six learners on foundation programmes, 23 advanced modern apprentices and eight learners on NVQs at level 4. All the learners are employed in one of 19 day nurseries and pre-school nurseries in Surrey, Bournemouth and Hampshire. Learners start at any time during the year. The centre talks to year 10 pupils at local schools and advertises in newspapers. There is a partnership agreement with the careers office. Initial assessment takes place over a two-week period. Learners who have not worked with children gain experience at the Fawley Independent Day Nursery. Four assessors from the training centre assess learners by direct observation in their workplaces and one internal verifier samples their work. Some groups of learners attend training sessions at college every week. Individual learners plan assessments and discuss their evidence with a trainer in their workplace. Learners complete assignments and answer questions to provide evidence of their knowledge and understanding. Assessors review learners' progress every 10 weeks.

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 | | 3 |
| Still in training | | | | | | | 3 | 75 | 3 | 100 |
| FMA framework completed | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NVQ level 2 completed | | | | | | | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Left without completing the framework | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

FAWLEY NURSERY TRAINING CENTRE

| 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 | | | | | | | 12 | | 16 |
| Still in training | | | | | | | 9 | 75 | 14 | 88 |
| AMA framework completed | | | | | | | 2 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| NVQ level 2 completed | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NVQ level 3 completed | | | | | | | 2 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Left without completing the framework | | | | | | | 1 | 8 | 2 | 12 |

| NVQ Training | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---------|---|-----------|---|---------|-----|---------|----|
| NVQ Training | 1997-98 | | 1998-99 | | 1999-2000 | | 2000-01 | | 2001-02 | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| | Number that started | | | | | | | 2 | | 7 |
| Still in training | | | | | | | 2 | 100 | 6 | 86 |
| Individual learning plan completed | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Left without completing individual learning plan | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 |
| NVQ level 1 completed | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NVQ level 2 completed | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Foundation Programmes | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---------|---|-----------|---|---------|----|---------|-----|
| Foundation Programmes | 1997-98 | | 1998-99 | | 1999-2000 | | 2000-01 | | 2001-02 | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| | Number that started | | | | | | | 4 | | 3 |
| Still in training | | | | | | | 3 | 75 | 3 | 100 |
| Gained job with training/progressed to further training and/or planned learning completed | | | | | | | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Left without either | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gained job with training | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Progressed to further training | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Planned learning completed | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

STRENGTHS

- high retention rates
- good rate of progress towards completing NVQs
- good support for learners in on-the-job training
- flexible arrangements for training

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate arrangements for developing basic skills
- insufficient understanding of key skills by learners
- over-reliance on written evidence

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more effective off-the-job training
- better use of short-term target-setting

25. A high number of learners stay on their training programmes. Six of the seven foundation modern apprentices are still in training and the seventh has converted to an advanced modern apprenticeship. Out of the 28 advanced modern apprentices who have started, 23 are still in training and two have achieved their qualifications. Only one of the nine learners who started NVQ training at level 4 has left without achieving the qualification.

26. Learners make good progress towards achieving NVQs. Appropriate use is made of learners' evidence from programmes of study they have already completed. Assessors make frequent visits to learners in their workplaces to plan assessments and to observe them working with the children. Assessors effectively set goals that show what learners need to do to complete units. There is careful monitoring of the units learners complete and there is sensitive support for learners whose progress is slowing because of ill health.

27. Inspectors agreed with the strength identified in the self-assessment report that there is good support for learners in their workplaces. Learners work alongside experienced staff who effectively demonstrate routines and practices. Assessors make good use of learners' experiences in work settings to illustrate and develop learners' understanding of important issues. One assessor encouraged a foundation modern apprentice to read the workplace behaviour policy to help her become more effective in managing children's unacceptable behaviour. A learner on NVQ at level 4 discussed how she could develop the skills of the nursery assistant so that she could give her more responsibility. Learners are given higher levels of support at the start of their training and do more for themselves as they become familiar with the NVQ process.

FAWLEY NURSERY TRAINING CENTRE

28. Training arrangements are flexible to meet the needs of individual learners, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Training is offered during the early evening and on occasional Saturdays. The trainer provides sessions at the training centre, in a local college and at workplaces. There is a good match between the level of qualification being pursued and the learners' work roles and previous experience. Learners at level 4 are in managerial positions and have good opportunities to collect their evidence and improve their management skills.

29. Basic skills needs are not clearly identified or addressed. Learners are screened if their school results indicate that they may have additional learning needs. The diagnostic test does not give sufficiently detailed information about individuals' needs. Five learners are identified as having basic skills needs. This is 14 per cent of all learners. One member of staff has responsibility for them and visits them each week in the work setting to give them additional general support. There is little attempt to address the underlying causes of learners' difficulties. Learners are told how to spell words but are not encouraged to use strategies for improving their spelling. A learner has been offered a dictaphone but prefers not to use it. None of the staff is trained to provide basic skills support.

30. Not all learners are told that they will be developing key skills when they start training. Opportunities for learners to practise and improve their information technology (IT) skills in their workplaces are not used sufficiently. Not all learners have a copy of the key skills standards. Learners who have attended an IT training session are not sure how they can use the work they produced as evidence. They do not know what further evidence they need. Key skills activities are related to early years settings. However, learners do not cross-reference their key skills evidence to the NVQ standards. This is done by their trainers.

31. Learners are asked to write evidence of their knowledge but other methods, such as oral questioning, are not used sufficiently. Trainers decide the order in which learners work on units. They provide a pack of prepared questions that require written answers. To cover the performance criteria that have not been observed, they question the learners orally about what they have done. There is very little use of witness testimonies and insufficient cross-referencing by learners of their evidence to the NVQ standards. Some records of learners' performance in the workplace are brief. Assessors take away evidence and feedback sheets and assessment plans are sometimes not given to the learner until the day of the next assessment.

32. There have been some planned training sessions to develop learners' understanding of, for example, child protection. Off-the-job training provided by the centre and given in the college is inadequate. It is not made interesting for the learners. Training session plans do not always identify what learners should be achieving or what they will be doing. In most training sessions provided by the centre, learners work on their own to produce written evidence of their understanding. Resources such as videos are not used to prompt discussion or increase learners' understanding.

33. Trainers discuss and record medium-term targets with learners during reviews and there is thorough planning for assessments. However, discussions during support sessions do not lead to sufficiently clear short-term goals. Assessors make suggestions for further evidence rather than learners identifying what they could use to show their knowledge and understanding. Learners do not have records of what they need to do before the next visit. Not all learners can recall what has been discussed.

Good Practice

A nursery chain asked staff in all their nurseries to improve the design of outdoor play spaces. The assessor identified that this would be good evidence for the unit to 'contribute to improvements at work'. Learners interviewed staff, observed the children playing in the existing garden area and monitored when accidents occurred. They drew up a plan that would provide better play and learning experiences for the children. They presented their plans to managers and staff and rewrote policies and procedures to improve the safety of outdoor play. Learners worked out the cost of the new design, bought the materials and have now built it.