

INSPECTION REPORT

Care Learning Centre

14 May 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 Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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 funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of her majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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 Jobcentre Plus programmes 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

Care Learning Centre is a private training organisation based in Ryde on the Isle of Wight. The company was formed in May 2001 to offer training in elderly care across the island. A contract from the Learning and Skills Council was awarded in December 2001, for work-based learning for young people in the care of the elderly.

A team of four full-time staff, three part-time staff and four directors provide training for 57 learners. All learners are employed in residential homes for the elderly, nursing homes or homes for people with behavioural and learning difficulties.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision at Care Learning Centre is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Work-based learning, leadership and management, equality of opportunity and the quality assurance of the Care Learning Centre are all satisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- good strategic direction to implement change
- good short-term target-setting
- particularly good support for learners in the workplace
- flexible arrangements for assessment
- strong links with external organisations to improve provision

KEY WEAKNESSES

- some unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective progress review process
- no monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures
- incomplete monitoring of teaching and learning
- slow implementation of key skills training and assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of staff expertise in teaching
- further implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures
- more effective evaluation of staff training

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at the Care Learning Centre during May 2002. Inspectors visited 12 work placements and interviewed 17 employers or supervisors and 24 learners. There were 22 interviews with the staff from Care Learning Centre. Inspectors observed training, assessment and progress reviews and graded five learning sessions. They examined a range of documents, including policies and procedures, the minutes of meetings, the business plan, promotional literature and awarding body reports. Twenty-two portfolios were examined and 21 individual learning plans scrutinised. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report which was produced in January 2002, and the subsequent development plan.

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	1	0	1	3	0	0	5
Total	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	5

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. The Care Learning Centre is a private training organisation based in Ryde on the Isle of Wight. From August 2001, the Care Learning Centre took responsibility for learners from Comcare Training Agency. A contract from the Learning and Skills Council was awarded in December 2001, for work-based learning for young people in the care of the elderly.

3. A team of four full-time staff, three part-time staff and four directors provide training for 57 learners. There are 34 foundation modern apprentices and 23 advanced modern apprentices. Care Learning Centre offers national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 and 3 in the care of the elderly and key skills. All learners are employed within residential homes for the elderly, learning disabilities and nursing homes in 30 locations across the island.

4. Employment on the Isle of Wight is mainly in the areas of wholesale and retail distribution, hotel and catering, public services and administration and health and social work. Businesses are mostly small and medium-sized enterprises, and most employ fewer than 25 people. It is estimated that there are 6,200 self-employed people working on the island as sole traders. About 65 per cent of local business rely on the internal island market, while 25 per cent concentrate on the mainland, and 10 per cent compete internationally. Most job vacancies are in the retailing and hotel and catering sectors. The Isle of Wight's unemployment rate is subject to dramatic seasonal fluctuations reflecting its dependence on the tourism industry. These are consistently above the Southeast and United Kingdom averages. In September 2001, the unemployment rate was 3.7 per cent compared with the national average of 2.9 per cent and 1.5 per cent for the southeast of England. Youth unemployment accounts for 22 per cent of the total unemployment on the Isle of Wight.

5. The 1991 census shows that minority ethnic groups on the Isle of Wight make up less than 1 per cent of the working population, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers on the Isle of Wight achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, was 44 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. Over 80 per cent of school leavers continue in full-time education at school or college.

Work-based learning for young people

6. There are currently 34 foundation and 23 advanced modern apprentices in training. Learners recruited by Care Learning Centre are on target to achieve their NVQs and their key skills qualifications within the agreed timescale. Learners who were transferred from Comcare Training are being supported by the company to complete their NVQ after their agreed end date. Data has been analysed since September 2001 when Care Learning Centre took over the contract.

7. On-the-job training is good. Learners work alongside qualified and experienced staff and are frequently assessed in the workplace. Flexible arrangements for assessment includes the assessment of learners in the evenings and weekends to accommodate shift work. A wide range of assessment methods are used to meet the individual learner's preferred style of working. There is particularly good support in the workplace by workplace supervisors and Care Learning Centre's staff. Learners have frequent progress meetings which specifically look at individual units of achievement. Effective short-term target-setting motivates and encourages the learner.

8. Some teaching is unsatisfactory. The sessions are insufficiently planned, use a limited range of teaching and learning methods, have inadequate resources and do not fully engage the learners. Progress reviews are mechanistic, focus on the assessors' agenda rather than the learners' needs, and do not include sufficient discussion about training at work. Assessors are not reviewing previous targets effectively or updating individual learning plans. There is a slow start in assessing key skills. Some learners have a poor understanding of key skills and how they will be assessed. Opportunities for assessing key skills in the workplace are not used.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

9. The Care Learning Centre, a limited company, was formed in May 2001 with the aim of offering training in care of the elderly and adults with learning difficulties, across the island. Each of the four directors have a specific responsibility for key aspects of the company. One director has responsibility for operational management and business development. The quality assurance director is also responsible for the management of training. The personnel director is responsible for equal opportunities, health and safety and the management of care. The remaining director has responsibility for learning support. Four assessors from the Care Learning Centre work collaboratively with six work-based assessors and all assessors are trained by the company. Learning support is given by the administrator. There is a business plan upon which the company's management strategy is based. Care Learning Centre has produced an operational plan and a mission statement backed by a range of policies and procedures, including procedures for quality assurance and the promotion of equal opportunities. The directors have applied for the Investor in People standard and assessment is scheduled for July 2002. In January 2002, Care Learning Centre produced a self-assessment report based on the 'Common Inspection Framework'.

STRENGTHS

- good strategic direction to implement change
- thorough self-assessment leading to effective action-planning
- effective internal communication
- strong links with external organisations to improve provision
- good promotion of equal opportunities
- comprehensive staff development for equal opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- incomplete monitoring of teaching and learning
- inadequate management of on-the-job training
- no monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures
- insufficient use of management information systems for decision-making
- insufficient analysis of short course evaluation

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed staff appraisal documents
- clearer definitions of roles and responsibilities within the organisation
- further implementation of quality assurance policy and procedures
- more effective evaluation of staff training
- wider dissemination of minutes from the assessors' meetings

10. The directors of Care Learning Centre have a good understanding of the development needs of a new organisation. They have introduced a wide range of policies and procedures to implement their strategic view. The business plan is reflected in Care Learning Centre's self-assessment and operational plan. All staff have a clear understanding of the strategic view of the company which is focused on the quality of the learners' experience. Managers and staff review progress towards objectives in the operational plan each month and targets are modified. Clearly defined responses to changes in staffing and firm guidelines from the directors ensure continuity for the learner. Staff report to different directors for aspects of their role and there are no clear definitions of roles and responsibilities within the organisation.

11. Care Learning Centre has effective internal communications. A range of constructive meetings which include all staff and work-based assessors, take place each month and result in action points which are closely monitored and reviewed to ensure implementation. At present, work-based assessors are not given a copy of the minutes of meetings. These regular meetings enable staff to share ideas and good practice. Staff can discuss topics openly and some areas have resulted in change, such as flexible working hours to meet external circumstances. Ideas put forward by staff have been implemented within the organisation and Care Learning Centre identified this as a strength.

12. There are strong links with external organisations to improve the training at Care Learning Centre. Links with external agencies allow the assessment and support for literacy and numeracy to take place within Care Learning Centre. The directors have been proactive in establishing a care working group which shares good practice and bids for funds to enhance the training in care across the island.

13. Staff have a thorough induction when they join the company. All aspects of their role are included in a comprehensive job description and they are appraised every six months. Staff consider this to be helpful as they gain positive feedback on good practice, and areas for development are prioritised. However, as recognised by Care Learning Centre in their self-assessment report, appraisals are not sufficiently recorded. Each member of staff has a training plan which links into the overall strategic view of Care Learning Centre, but the effectiveness of this training is not evaluated.

14. There is inadequate management of on-the-job training. Care Learning Centre does not have a process which monitors on-the-job training, but this weakness was not

CARE LEARNING CENTRE

identified through self-assessment. Assessors check that some learners are benefiting from the appropriate work experience, but it is not routine for all the work placements. Procedures are in place to check that learners work with appropriately qualified staff but they are not monitored during the work placement. In one workplace, a supervisor did not have the occupational qualification to offer the training. Some employers have implemented comprehensive training plans within their organisation, but they are not linked to the learners' individual learning plan or cross-referenced to the NVQ.

15. Care Learning Centre has implemented a good system which collects essential information about the learners. However, this information is not analysed centrally to identify patterns and trends, nor is it used to set targets to improve retention and achievement rates. Reports are not produced as part of a regular process to enable managers to monitor training and identify areas for improvement. Data are not routinely shared with all members of the company. A weakness relating to the analysis of data was identified in the self-assessment report.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

16. The company has recently produced a detailed and well-written equal opportunities policy and a wide range of related procedures. Positive action is taken to promote equal opportunities. The organisation has a good range of marketing materials which contain a statement demonstrating the company's commitment to equal opportunities. In addition to this, the materials include photographs of learners which challenge gender stereotyping in the care industry. The company acts promptly to deal with complaints, they are clearly recorded and the results of any actions taken are thoroughly checked.

17. Care Learning Centre has a well-planned approach in dealing with equality. An equal opportunities audit has led to a realistic action plan with clearly identified targets. The plan contains clear details relating to regular checking and updating of the company's equal opportunities policy and procedures. Data relating to equal opportunities have recently been collected and analysed. Although the company plans to introduce this data at the forthcoming management meeting, there are no clear plans of how the data can be used to improve the training.

18. Equal opportunities training is a high priority within the company. Staff are given good training and a clearly written training plan has been developed for all staff. Most have attended a range of equal opportunities workshops to update their knowledge and understanding. Some staff have been on short courses to enable them to offer training in equal opportunities. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. A detailed staff handbook was produced immediately before inspection and contains clear guidelines relating to all aspects of equal opportunities. The company has plans to give this to all new and existing staff.

19. Staff take care to ensure that learners are protected and treated fairly, but the company has no guidelines to monitor equal opportunities with employers. Checks are made on their policies before learners start their training, but copies of their policies and procedures are not always kept by Care Learning Centre. When copies are not available there are inadequate procedures in place to ensure details of employers' policies are recorded. Insufficient formal checks are made of learners and employers' understanding of equal opportunities. The company has recently introduced a revised quarterly review form to enable learners' and employers' comments to be recorded more clearly, although staff have not been trained to use it as yet.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

20. Care Learning Centre has a clearly written and comprehensive quality assurance policy with related procedures and all staff are fully aware of them. The policy, procedures, and systems have only recently been introduced. All employers' premises are thoroughly assessed for health and safety before learners start training and regular monitoring visits take place to ensure learners' safety. Internal verification is satisfactory and a recently introduced sampling plan is in place to ensure all assessors are regularly observed.

21. Self-assessment is comprehensive and takes full account of the views of learners, employers and members of staff. The company produced its first self-assessment report in January 2002, which included evidence which accurately identified many of the strengths and weaknesses highlighted during inspection. The process led to a detailed development plan with challenging targets. Many of the areas identified were being dealt with by the time of inspection.

22. The organisation introduced new procedures for the observation of training immediately before inspection, but they are limited to off-the-job training. There is no routine method of assessing the quality of training which takes place in the workplace. Two off-the-job training sessions have recently been observed and constructive feedback given to the two members of staff. However, the feedback did not identify the learning taking place, but focused primarily on the quality of teaching. Individual training in the workplace is not observed.

23. Learner's feedback from off-the-job training is regularly collected at the end of each course, but the questionnaires are insufficiently detailed and are difficult to analyse. No improvements have been made as a result of the questionnaires.

Good Practice

Care Learning Centre has produced a larger copy of the learners' handbook so that a learner with visual impairment can use it.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	57	3

24. Care Learning Centre has 57 learners working towards NVQ levels 2 and 3 in care. Twenty-four are advanced modern apprentices and 33 are foundation modern apprentices. The learners are employed in residential, nursing homes or homes for people with behavioural or learning disabilities. Two learners are working in the community. Learners are recruited through the careers service, the local Learning and Skills Council, or are already employed. There is a programme for off-the-job training which includes health and safety, equal opportunities, moving people safely, food hygiene and first aid. On-the-job training has two elements. Practical skills training is undertaken by staff employed in the care homes and individual coaching by staff from Care Learning Centre develops the required background knowledge. Learners can also use written resources and textbooks. Assessment is carried out by work-based staff and staff from Care Learning Centre. All learners have regular progress reviews. There are monitoring review visits every eight weeks. Skills in literacy and numeracy are assessed during induction using a national assessment. Learners who have additional learning needs are offered individual tutorials and support each week at the training centre. A weekly evening session on key skills has recently been introduced. Care Learning Centre has also developed a work-based key skills module.

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															
	No.		%		No.		%		No.		%		No.		%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Number of starts	39															
Retained*	1															
Successfully completed	0															
Still in learning	24															

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																	
	2001-02																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	61																
Retained*	15																
Successfully completed	2																
Still in learning	33																

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

STRENGTHS

- good short-term target-setting
- particularly good support for learning in the workplace
- flexible arrangements for assessment

WEAKNESSES

- some unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective progress review process
- slow implementation of key skills training and assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of staff expertise in teaching
- better retention rates

25. Care Learning Centre has frequent progress meetings with the learners which focus on individual units for achievement. Clear short-term targets are set and agreed by the learner and the assessor motivates and encourages the learner to collect the relevant evidence. Learners have a good understanding of their targets. Care Learning Centre has the appropriate text books and handouts to improve the learners' background knowledge. Good short term target-setting was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

26. There is particularly good support in the workplace by workplace supervisors and Care Learning Centre's staff. Care Learning Centre has an effective professional working relationship with employers and most workplace supervisors have a good understanding of the NVQ. Practical skills training at work is good, and learners benefit from a thorough workplace induction. New learners shadow an experienced carer who demonstrates practical skills in bathing, feeding and dealing with the individual needs of clients. The young person takes responsibility for these tasks and is observed by their supervisor and given useful feedback. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Care Learning Centre insists that all learners are paid the minimum wage from the age of 16. Many learners' hourly rate of pay is increased when they achieve their NVQ.

27. Flexible arrangements for assessment include evenings and weekends to accommodate shift patterns. There is good use of witness testimony from senior staff who have a good understanding of the NVQ requirements. Effective assessment methods are used including professional discussion, written and oral questions, personal statements and reflective accounts. The assessment method is chosen to suit the individual learner. For example, a learner who has dyslexia is assessed through observation and oral questioning. Observation records are detailed and well referenced to a range of units and elements and this was identified in the self-assessment report.

28. Some staff are inexperienced teachers. The training sessions are insufficiently planned, have inadequate resources and do not fully engage the learners. For example, one tutor read from a handout throughout the training session and the materials were not linked to the learners' work setting. In an individual coaching session, the tutor read from a handout and from a textbook and did not engage the learner fully in the process. Some of the observed teaching was good and included a range of teaching methods including discussion, practical activities, question and answer and group work. The content was relevant to the learners working situation and learners were encouraged to participate and give examples from their own experiences. Learning was evaluated at the end of the sessions and the details of the next sessions were given to the learners.

29. The progress review process is ineffective. It is assessor driven and focuses on the assessors' agenda rather than the learners' needs. Assessors are not reviewing previous targets effectively. The individual learning plan is not referred to and there is insufficient discussion on training at work. Employers are not always included in the progress review. Records are brief and do not identify problems. Some progress reviews are not carried out on time but this was not identified in the self-assessment report.

30. There is a slow start to the training and assessment of key skills. Some learners have a poor understanding of key skills and how they will be assessed, even though they have been on the training programme for six months. Assessment of key skills in the workplace is not carried out. Although a new support programme has recently been introduced, not all learners are benefiting from this. Employers do not understand key skills or their relevance to the completion of the modern apprenticeship framework. This weakness was partly identified in the self-assessment report.

CARE LEARNING CENTRE

31. Care Learning Centre has been in operation for less than a year and reliable data are only available from September 2001. On the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, the retention rate is 54 per cent. Twenty-six per cent of the learners have achieved an NVQ at level 2 and 3 per cent have completed the full framework. Retention rates are 62 per cent on the advanced modern apprenticeship and 10 per cent have achieved an NVQ at level 3. These figures include the learners who were transferred from another company in September 2001.

Good Practice

The Care Learning Centre uses a self-assessment vocational skills questionnaire as part of the initial assessment process. Learners describe previous work and life experiences which have enabled them to develop relevant skills.