

INSPECTION REPORT

Orient Gold

07 October 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

ORIENT GOLD

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
- **learndirect** 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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Orient Gold is a privately owned, limited liability company that was registered in December 1996. The company's head office is in West Hallam, Derbyshire. The main operational site which includes the administration and quality assurance unit, the operations centre and business development centre are based in Ilkeston in Derbyshire. There are also two satellite centres in Sleaford, Lincolnshire, and Dewsbury, Yorkshire. These function as drop-in centres for locally based assessors. Orient Gold provides work-based learning for 1561 modern apprentices and national vocational qualification (NVQ) learners in business administration, information and communications technology, retail and customer service and engineering. It also offers modern apprenticeships in hospitality.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training in information and communications technology, engineering, technology and manufacturing, hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, retailing, customer service and transportation is unsatisfactory. Business administration, management and professional training is satisfactory. The leadership and management of training, including the approach to quality assurance and equal opportunities are unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Information & communications technology	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

ORIENT GOLD

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- recent effective action to improve training programmes
- comprehensive staff training and development
- good internal communications

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- poor management of training
- ineffective management of business growth
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- poor initial assessment
- inadequate analysis and use of data to improve training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better access to review information for learners and employers
- more frequent sharing of good practice
- better system to ensure that errors identified at internal audit are corrected

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of fourteen inspectors spent a total of 80 days at Orient Gold in October 2002. They visited 109 work placements and interviewed 80 of Orient Gold's staff, 61 employers and 160 learners. They observed 18 progress reviews, and observed and graded five learning sessions. They examined a range of documents, including 143 portfolios, 147 individual learning plans, assessment records, external verifier reports, minutes of meetings, plans, policies and procedures. Orient Gold has produced five self-assessment reports. The most recent was written in August 2002 in preparation for the inspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	5

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Orient Gold is a privately owned, medium-sized, limited liability company. It began its training operations in the first quarter of 1997-98. The main site is in Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Orient Gold has experienced unusual growth over the past eighteen months. The company has expanded from 36 staff to 90 full- and part-time staff, and the number of learners has increased from 613 in 1999-2000 to 1584 at the time of inspection. In January 2002, the company opened two satellite centres in Sleaford, Lincolnshire, and Dewsbury, Yorkshire. Originally, training was centred on the retail and customer service sectors, but it has recently been expanded to include hospitality, catering and the meat sector. In 2001, the company secured national training contracts for three large retail chains and a national butchery company.

3. Orient Gold offers work-based learning in engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer service and transportation and hospitality, sports, leisure and travel. It has a contract with the national contract service of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to offer foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Training is carried out on the job directly by employers. Orient Gold focuses mainly on assessment. In engineering, assessment is subcontracted to another training company.

4. Orient Gold operates mainly in the East Midlands around Nottingham and Derby. However the company does attract learners from other areas of England. In May 2002, the unemployment rate in Derby was 3.7 per cent, in Nottingham it was 4.2 per cent, and nationally it was 3 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers in Derby achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 43 per cent, in Nottingham it was 30 per cent and nationally it was 47.9 per cent. At the time of the 1991 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Derby was 9.7 per cent and in Nottingham was 10.8 per cent, compared with a national proportion of 6.2 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

5. Learners receive good individual support. They are visited regularly by assessors, who will often make arrangements to observe special one-off events, sometimes at very short notice. Good support is given to learners who experience personal problems. Issues are dealt with quickly and sympathetically. All learners have access to professional advice and guidance, and additional numeracy and literacy support.

6. Initial assessment is poor. It is not used to identify the level of programme suitable for each learner, and the results are not analysed to identify individual learning needs. There is no policy or system for the accreditation of prior learning or achievement. Initial assessment has insufficient occupational focus. There are no policies or procedures for the recruitment of learners, induction, initial assessment, learning support, the production and use of individual learning plans, progress reviews or training. There are no procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of training.

7. Many learners do not have any structured training either from Orient Gold or their employers. In most cases, there is no training plan for either on- or off-the-job training. Some employers have very detailed in-house training programs, but these are rarely linked to the requirements of the modern apprenticeship.

8. The retention and achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are poor. Between 1999 and 2001, 3164 learners started training with Orient Gold. Of these only 5 per cent completed their qualification successfully. The retention rate for the learners who started their programme in 1999 is 26 per cent. Recent figures indicate a potential improvement in retention. Of the learners who have started their programme since 2000, 40 per cent are still in training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 4**

9. Orient Gold is managed by a board of four directors, three of whom are the shareholders. The contract development director and the operations director are responsible for the day-to-day running of the company. A middle management team has been recently introduced, which comprises the contract manager, operations co-ordinator, centre co-ordinator and the health and safety co-ordinator. This team oversees the work of the business development manager, quality manager, office manager, accounts manager, seven area managers, six internal verifiers, 34 assessors and 31 support staff based at the company's head office. The company has an equal opportunities policy and procedures, and some policies and procedures for quality assurance. In March 2000, the company was accredited with Investors in People, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. Orient Gold produced its first self-assessment report in 1997. Its most recent self-assessment report and development plan was produced in August 2002.

STRENGTHS

- comprehensive staff training and development
- good internal communications
- effective procedures for dealing with complaints
- recent effective action to improve training programmes

WEAKNESSES

- poor management of training
- ineffective management of business growth
- inadequate analysis and use of data to improve training
- inadequate equal opportunities data
- insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices
- inadequate self-assessment process
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better completion of appraisal records
- better sharing of good practice
- better system to ensure that errors identified at internal audit are corrected
- better checking and monitoring of unqualified assessors

10. Orient Gold provides comprehensive training and development for all its staff. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. Newly appointed staff have a

thorough induction program. They are given good support through regular work shadowing and performance feedback. All staff have clear and detailed job descriptions. The company puts on a comprehensive range of training events for assessors and internal verifiers, in several locations across the country. The events are well attended, and feedback from staff is extremely positive. Many feel the training has improved the quality of their work with learners. Orient Gold effectively uses appraisal records, and feedback from one-to-one meetings between staff and their managers, to plan individual staff training and development. This takes account of the needs of the staff member and the learners as well as the key strategic priorities of the company. However, staff training records are not always accurately completed, and there are gaps in some appraisal records. A number of staff members are working towards modern apprenticeship qualifications to further develop their skills. Some staff have been given the opportunity to adapt or extend their skills by changing their job role with Orient Gold.

11. Orient Gold has well-structured communications systems. There is a regular cycle of weekly and monthly meetings involving operational teams and all managers. The board of directors meets every week. Meetings are clearly minuted with appropriate action points identified. Staff receive minutes of the meetings they attend and the outcomes of other meetings are clearly fed back to them by their line managers. Orient Gold holds a staff conference to celebrate the achievements of staff. This was an annual event, but has recently been rescheduled to take place every six months. The company does not have any other formal methods of sharing good practice. Assessors telephone their area manager daily to discuss any issues relating to learners, and meet their area manager individually once a month to discuss learners' progress and review their own performance. Area managers at Orient Gold are well equipped with laptops and mobile telephones to help them communicate effectively over the wide geographical area covered by the company. All assessors have mobile telephones. There is an increasing use of e-mail throughout the company. Orient Gold has a strong ethos of openness and teamwork. Managers are responsive and consult staff regularly, often taking up suggestions for improvements.

12. The management of work-based learning is poor. Training is managed differently by different sector teams. Many learners are not given any structured training by Orient Gold. The company provides insufficient guidance to employers about their role in the training process. Assessors have responsibility for training, but very few of them identify this as one of their roles. The company states in its contract with employers that there is an agreed training programme, but there are few training plans in place and most assessors do not carry out any training. The co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is poor. In most cases, there is no training plan for either on- or off-the-job training. Some employers have very detailed in-house training programmes, but there is seldom a link between these and the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Many employers do not provide any formal training linked to the modern apprenticeship programme.

13. Orient Gold has grown rapidly over the past two years. The number of staff and

ORIENT GOLD

learners has more than doubled in this time. However, the business planning process has not focused sufficiently on the expansion of training. The targets set for growth in the business plan for 1999-2004 do not focus on training. The business plan for the period 2002-05 sets training targets, but these are insufficiently detailed and lack timescales. Some of the targets are unrealistic. For example, achievement and retention rates of 100 per cent. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment and development planning processes are not used for annual updating of the business plan. Staff are not sufficiently involved in business planning, and are unaware of Orient Gold's training targets. There is insufficient planning of staffing requirements to meet the rapid growth of the company. For example, a basic skills co-ordinator was appointed in January 2002. Since then, the number of learners identified as needing additional support has more than trebled. High staff turnover and frequent changes of assessors have affected the continuity of training and assessment for learners. Some learners have experienced significant gaps between assessors' visits to the workplace.

14. Orient Gold collects data on learners, but it is not routinely analysed or used as a tool to improve training. The company does not routinely set annual targets for retention and achievement rates. Data collection and analysis are focused on meeting the requirements of external contracts, and monitoring the numbers of learners assessed or recruited against benchmarks set by the company. Occupational teams have poor access to detailed, up-to-date information on learners which could be used in decision-making. There is insufficient focus at both team and managers meetings on the overall progress of learners and on retention and achievement rates. Data on learners are not adequately analysed by occupational areas to enable trends to be identified or the effectiveness of training to be compared across the company.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 4**

15. Orient Gold has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. It is regularly updated, and is supported by detailed procedures covering issues such as complaints, grievances and harassment. Few complaints arise, but those that do are dealt with efficiently and effectively. Good relationships between staff and learners mean that many issues are dealt with before they develop into formal complaints. Learners receive equal opportunities awareness training as part of their induction, and have a good understanding of the key aspects. There is good monitoring of equal opportunities through the progress review process. Any issues raised by learners are investigated swiftly by assessors, who keep detailed records of the actions they take to resolve them. There is also a procedure enabling learners to raise issues without having them recorded on the review form.

16. Data are collected on the gender, ethnicity and disabilities of learners, but they are not analysed in sufficient detail. With the exception of meat and poultry processing programmes, equal opportunities data are not analysed by occupational area. The staff at Orient Gold do not adequately reflect the diversity of current working populations. There has been some analysis of staff recruitment and selection data. Little action has been taken to target specific under-represented groups within the workforce. Data are not used in decision-making or strategic planning.

17. The monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices is neither systematic nor routine. There is no routine check to ensure that employers have an equal opportunities policy. All learners are employed and they are nominated by their employer for the training programme. There is no effective check to ensure that the selection process ensures equal access for all potential learners. Employers' equality of opportunity arrangements are monitored through the learners' progress reviews. This is inadequate. Orient Gold's managers suggest that little formal monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace is required, because the overall quality of the work environment is good.

18. The member of Orient Gold's staff who held overall responsibility for equal opportunities recently left the company. This responsibility has not yet been taken over by her successor. The company's marketing strategy is based on an overall target for the provision, with no sector-specific targets set to widen participation. Equal opportunities is an agenda item at all meetings, but discussion is usually confined to reporting of equal opportunities issues rather than planning. There is insufficient staff development in this area, and too few links with relevant external agencies. The approach to equal opportunities is reactive, and there is no management strategy.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

19. Orient Gold has a clear commitment to continuous improvement, and has taken recent effective action to improve the training programmes. Area managers were finding it difficult to carry out their duties as internal verifiers, because of their workloads. The company has now appointed dedicated internal verifiers, a lead internal verifier and an administration assistant. There are now monthly meetings of internal verifiers, and communication between the team members has greatly improved. There are also monthly meetings of individual internal verifiers with the lead internal verifier, at which a comprehensive and detailed record is made of their work. Standard company forms are used to record internal verification and there are weekly reports of internal verification activity. Assessors now meet monthly to share good practice and discuss assessment issues.

20. The company produces comprehensive monthly reports detailing the number of visits to learners, the time spent with each learner and the activities carried out. Orient Gold is currently designing a report which will compare learners' achievements with the time they have spent in training to allow closer monitoring of progress. The company has compared data for learners leaving training between May and August 2001 with the same period for 2002. The data show exceptional improvement in learners' achievement. Between May and July 2001, none of the leavers had achieved all the targets on their individual learning plan. In August 2001, the proportion was less than 5 per cent, but in August 2002, it had increased to over 96 per cent.

21. Orient Gold's self-assessment process is inadequate. The company produced its latest self-assessment report in August 2002. There was insufficient involvement of staff, employers and learners in the self-assessment process. Staff were not consulted about the company's strengths and weaknesses. Many have a poor awareness of the strengths and weaknesses identified in their occupational area. Many employers were unaware of the company's self-assessment process, and learners' feedback was not analysed as part of the process. The company did not ask staff for their views during the draft stages of the report, and did not involve them in the production of the development plan. The self-assessment report was informative and accurately identified some of Orient Gold's strengths and weaknesses. In leadership and management and most areas of learning inspected, the grades in the self-assessment report were higher than those given by inspectors. Inspectors awarded the same the grade for business administration, management and professional, as was given in the self-assessment report.

22. There is inadequate use of feedback from learners and employers to improve the training programmes. Feedback is collected by telephone using a short questionnaire. The questions nearly all require yes or no answers, and the results do not give a good indication of the true level of learners' or employers' satisfaction. The range of questions is inadequate to collect meaningful data which could be used to improve training programmes. There are no questions about the quality of the training learners have received. Although Orient Gold's own quality assurance procedure requires feedback to be analysed monthly, this does not always happen. Analysis of the feedback does not

result in improvements, and in many cases the same issues occur repeatedly without improvement. For instance, Orient Gold has a quality assurance standard that learners should be visited in their workplace at least once every four weeks. Feedback since November 2000 indicates that this has not happened, and around 30 per cent of employers report that they do not know the name of the assessor who visits their company.

23. The quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. There are no policies or procedures for self-assessment or for learners' recruitment, induction, initial assessment, learning support, individual learning plans, progress reviews, or training. There are no procedures or systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of training sessions. Most of the procedures in the quality assurance manual are administrative. The policies for assessment and internal verification are inadequate. They do not include indicators and they refer only to meeting the awarding body's standards, not to Orient Gold's own quality assurance standards. There is no procedure to ensure systematic reviews and updating of the quality assurance manual. There are no systems or procedures to monitor, measure and evaluate any changes or improvements. A copy of the quality assurance manual is held at all the company's premises, but is not used by staff. Staff do not have copies of the key policies and procedures which they need to use in their work. The quality assurance manual is poorly indexed and it is difficult to find documents. The company subcontracts the assessment of engineering programmes to a local training provider. The subcontractor's agreement lacks thorough and robust quality assurance arrangements. The contract does not specify how assessment will be carried out. Orient Gold staff do not attend, or receive minutes of, assessors' or internal verifiers' meetings held by the subcontractor. There are no systems to check that the subcontractor is meeting its own quality assurance standards.

24. There is a thorough system for auditing compliance with the quality assurance standards. When errors are identified, they are recorded and circulated to the appropriate member of staff for correction. However, the records are often not completed and returned to confirm that corrections have made. There is no system to ensure that all the identified errors have been corrected.

25. Orient Gold has a number of assessors who are working towards a recognised assessors' qualification. There is monthly internal verification of the work of these assessors. The company is meeting the awarding body's requirements by ensuring that all their assessment decisions are counter-signed by an experienced qualified assessor. Many of the assessment decisions relate to observations of learners' performance. There is no system to ensure that a qualified assessor observes adequate samples of these assessments.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	103	4

26. There are 103 learners on engineering, technology and manufacturing training programmes, of whom 99 are foundation modern apprentices and four are on NVQ programmes at level 2. Learners are recruited through their employers. They work for organisations ranging from small independent businesses to large national companies, including retail outlets and processing plants. Learners can start programmes at any time of the year. They are given an induction at their workplace, which introduces them to their training programme and their assessor, and informs them of their rights and responsibilities. Learners have an initial key skills assessment during the induction process. The induction is carried out in three stages over a six-week period. All the training is given on the job. Work-based mentors and supervisors provide some on-the-job training in engineering. Assessors carry out regular performance and progress reviews. In meat and poultry processing, all the assessors are occupationally qualified, have relevant industrial experience and hold assessors' qualifications. One has a teaching qualification. In engineering, three qualified subcontracted assessors carry out NVQ assessments and visit learners in their workplaces every four weeks. There are five qualified internal verifiers for this area of learning. One member of the engineering staff is a qualified key skills trainer.

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.	%	
Number of starts	1																
Retained*	0																
Successfully completed	0																
Still in learning	0																

*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		2000-01		1999-2000											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	82		41		63											
Retained*	0		22	54	24	38										
Successfully completed	1		6	15	11	17										
Still in learning	71		19	46	9	14										

*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																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4															
Retained*	0															
Successfully completed	0															
Still in learning	4															

*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 assessment practice
- good, well-equipped workplaces
- good support for learners with basic skills needs

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates in meat and poultry processing
- poor retention rates
- slow progress on most programmes
- inadequate planning of training
- poor use of initial assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more emphasis on ensuring that learners and employers have access to review information
- more occupationally relevant learning support materials

27. Assessment is thorough and takes place throughout the programme. Assessors visit learners in their workplaces at least once every four weeks, and will make additional visits to meet individual learners' needs. In engineering, subcontracted assessors are used and there is a good ratio of assessors to learners. Most assessment is by observation in the workplace. Assessors plan their visits to ensure full coverage of the performance criteria required for the qualifications. For example, assessors in meat and poultry processing will ensure that they visit learners at 07.00 in order to observe them accepting deliveries. Portfolios of evidence are well structured and clearly presented. The portfolios contain a range of diverse evidence, including photographs, equipment log sheets, temperature control log sheets and written reports. In meat and poultry processing, learners are given information books for each unit. Learners use these for individual study, and then answer written background knowledge questions which are marked by the assessor. The internal verification of assessments is well planned. Joint visits by assessors and internal verifiers are used to verify the learners' work and confirm the assessment decision. All learners understand the role of the internal verifier.

28. Learners' workplaces are appropriate and of a good standard. They provide a good range of learning opportunities. Employers offer a high level of support for both the technical and the personal development of learners. Meat and poultry processing employers are enthusiastic about training, and liaise with the assessors to ensure that learners work in all the necessary areas to collect the evidence for their qualification. They encourage learners to carry out more demanding tasks as they gain experience. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. The relationship between employers and assessors is good. Any concerns raised during the training programme are effectively dealt with.

29. All learners have access to specialist numeracy and literacy support. Once learners have been identified as needing support, a qualified adviser arranges to work with them. All learning sessions are held discreetly on employer's premises. Learners who have had this kind of support have made significant progress. The employers interviewed said they were particularly pleased with the outcome, and reported that learners' motivation and self-confidence improved. The vocational assessor liaises with the basic skills co-ordinator to arrange support visits. There are support materials to help learners with additional learning needs in numeracy and literacy, but since the materials are not occupationally specific, some learners find it difficult to relate them to their job role.

30. Achievement rates are poor in meat and poultry processing. Between 1999 and

2001, only 17 per cent of learners completed their modern apprenticeship framework. Retention rates improved from 38 per cent to 54 per cent during the same period, but this figure is still poor. Of the 82 learners who started in September 2001, 71 are still in training. Engineering programmes started in January 2002. Some learners recruited from another training provider started their programmes in 1999-2000. During the period from January to October 2002, 73 per cent of NVQ learners left the programme early with no qualifications. Orient Gold recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report and is closely monitoring the situation. Additional induction and initial assessment programmes are being introduced in an attempt to reduce the number of early leavers.

31. Some learners make slow progress towards gaining their qualifications. Learners are not always given written information or NVQ standards until several months into their training programme. Many learners do not complete their NVQs or key skills awards within the expected timescales. One learner with one month of his planned programme remaining has only completed one NVQ unit. Many learners are progressing towards their NVQ but have not yet started on their key skills training. Key skills training for most learners begins during the last two or three months of their programme, and is not integrated with the vocational training. Since September 2002, all meat and poultry processing learners have started their key skills training during their six-week induction period. In engineering, the results of learners' progress reviews are not always made available to learners and employers. Clear targets for learners' NVQ progress are not communicated to employers. Some targets agreed by the learner and the assessor are not specific, and dates are not always set for achievement. Some learners are unclear about the progress to be achieved by the next review. Individual learning plans are not always updated to take account of learners' progress and achievement. There is no overall record of changes to target dates or recording of additional qualifications.

32. Orient Gold offers no off-the-job training and no planned on-the-job training. In meat and poultry processing, there are no training plans and any training carried out by employers is coincidental to the learners' modern apprenticeship programme. This restricts the opportunities learners' have to improve their skills and knowledge. In engineering, there is little discussion with employers to identify appropriate tasks to meet the requirements of the NVQ. Learners are expected to accumulate evidence of competence from their workplace, and attempt to reference this to the NVQ at a later date. Employers interviewed said that they would appreciate more support with the planning of training. There is no off-the-job training to support competency in foundation modern apprenticeships or NVQ programmes. In engineering, there is not enough reference material for learners. In meat and poultry processing, learners are given information books which help them with the background knowledge for each NVQ unit. However, these books do not contain all the information required for each unit, and there are no references made to additional sources of information. Some information books are generic, for example, covering health and safety, and do not contain sufficient technical and specialist information. The handouts given to engineering learners are of poor quality. Some have been photocopied and are not legible.

ORIENT GOLD

33. Initial assessment is not used to identify the appropriate level of training programme for each learner, or to plan individual training needs. Staff are unsure how to interpret the results of the key skills initial assessment test, and the results are not analysed. There is no policy or system for the accreditation of prior learning or achievement. In meat and poultry processing, most learners are given the same length of time to achieve the components of their modern apprenticeship framework, regardless of their previous work experience in the industry. There is no attempt made to give credit for relevant qualifications.

Good Practice

One learner in a small welding and fabrication firm has developed a marketing brochure for his employer. This involves the use of information technology (IT). The brochure is now issued to customers, and the learners' work is to be used as evidence towards a future qualification.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	59	3

34. There are 59 learners on business administration, management and professional training programmes, of whom 22 are advanced modern apprentices and 37 are foundation modern apprentices. Learners are working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in business administration, and key skills awards. Learners are referred for training by their employers, and can start programmes at any time of the year. They are given an induction at their workplace, which introduces them to their programme and their assessor and informs them of their rights and responsibilities. A further induction is provided by Orient Gold, which includes the initial assessment of learners' basic skills. The induction is carried out in three stages over a six week period. All the business administration training is given on the job. Assessors carry out regular performance and progress reviews. A team of seven staff is responsible for assessing learners' work and for internal verification. Staff are based at the main site in Ilkeston, and there are regional centres in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Learners' progress is reviewed in their workplaces every eight weeks.

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												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	17		13		4											
Retained*	0		0	0	1	25											
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0											
Still in learning	14		8	62	0	0											

*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		2000-01		1999-2000												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	42		8		1											
Retained*	0		1	12	0	0											
Successfully completed	0		1	12	0	0											
Still in learning	35		2	25	0	0											

*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 support for learners
- good use of internal verification
- good induction process

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient formal planning of NVQ training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of employers in training

35. Learners are given frequent and effective support. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors ensure that the qualification being taken is matched to learners' job roles. Employers provide good opportunities for learners to collect evidence, in some cases by allowing them to experience different jobs. Employers also provide witness testimony and opportunities for additional training and development. Although assessors are timetabled to visit learners monthly, they make informal visits fortnightly or more often if required. They will arrange to observe special one-off events for assessments, sometimes at very short notice. They give learners their mobile telephone numbers and encourage them to telephone at any time should they need advice or guidance. There are close and effective working relationships between assessors and learners. Assessors give good support to learners who experience personal problems. Issues are dealt with quickly and sympathetically. Learners are well-motivated and take responsibility for building their portfolios of evidence. Assessors

negotiate challenging short-term targets with learners during their progress reviews. Assessment plans are clear and learners are given copies of all the paperwork. Workplace supervisors are always informed of learners' short-term targets. Learners understand and meet the targets. Assessors ensure that all explanations are clear and give constructive feedback on completed work. All learners make good progress towards completing their planned programme of learning.

36. There is now a team of experienced internal verifiers to support and monitor the assessors. Internal verification has been considerably extended. There are comprehensive procedures to give assessors constructive feedback on their performance. Learners whose progress is slower than expected are now identified promptly. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. New initiatives have been introduced to improve key skills training. Staff now encourage learners to start early in their training programmes to develop key skills projects relevant to their personal and professional interests. The projects cover all the key skills. Learners are motivated by the challenge presented. There have been a number of successful recent initiatives introduced by Orient Gold to improve the learners' experience and increase the retention and achievement rates. Over the past year, several new staff have been recruited to the business administration section. The expansion of the team means that more frequent and effective visits can be made to learners. Two regional offices have been established, with a good range of office resources, and support from an internal verifier and an area manager.

37. Orient Gold has recently improved and extended its induction process. The induction is well planned and effective, and takes place in the workplace over a number of weeks. This gives learners plenty of time to familiarise themselves fully with the modern apprenticeship framework. Topics can be reinforced in subsequent four-weekly visits. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and health and safety, and a good awareness of their training programme. The extended induction also gives learners the opportunity to withdraw from training at an early stage if they find that it is not what they expected. Learners are given comprehensive information about the NVQ and told at the very earliest stage about the key skills requirements. During the induction, assessors advise learners about the sort of evidence they will need, and how to collect it. Learners are given a starter pack, which contains relevant forms, and questions for them to answer as evidence for the NVQ. The learners' handbook is comprehensive, covering health and safety and equality of opportunity, and giving contact details for external agencies which can help with addictions, health problems and a range of other personal problems. Assessors carefully check that the learners' job role will allow them to meet the requirements of the NVQ.

38. Retention and achievement rates are poor, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Between 1999 and 2002, 85 learners started modern apprenticeship programmes in business administration. Of these, 57 per cent are still in learning, and only one has successfully completed their modern apprenticeship framework. Orient Gold has expanded the programme considerably. At the time of inspection, 83 per cent of the learners recruited in September 2001 were making satisfactory progress towards

ORIENT GOLD

completing their modern apprenticeship frameworks.

39. There is not enough formal planning of NVQ training. Employers provide comprehensive on-the-job training for their staff. However, it does not always cover all elements required by the NVQ. Training needs are agreed in advance with the employer and the learner, and formally recorded in the individual learning plan. The individual learning plan identifies which NVQ units the learner will do but does not give target completion dates for them. It does not identify learners' additional training needs. The plans are not updated to include training provided by the employer, or the progress the learner has made. Training provided by the employer is acknowledged by assessors and used as evidence towards the NVQ, but the assessors do not check that it adequately covers all the NVQ requirements. The self-assessment report noted that learners' training needs are not formally identified, and commented that this could lead to learners not receiving basic skills support.

Information & communications technology

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	4

40. There are 15 learners on ICT training programmes, of whom nine are advanced modern apprentices, five are foundation modern apprentices and one is on an NVQ programme. All learners are recruited directly through their employers, and work in Derby, Nottingham and Lincolnshire. Employers include local government departments, universities and small businesses. Learners can start their training programme at any time of the year. All learners receive an induction, which introduces them to their assessor and informs them of their rights and responsibilities. They are given a skills check and a key skills assessment. The induction is given in three stages over a six-week period. All the training takes place on the job, and is given by workplace mentors and supervisors. Assessors visit the workplace to carry out regular performance and progress reviews with learners. Assessors are occupationally qualified, have relevant industrial experience and hold assessors' qualifications. There are three qualified internal verifiers and two assessors for ICT programmes.

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	5		4													
Retained*	0		0	0													
Successfully completed	0		0	0													
Still in learning	5		4	100													

*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

ORIENT GOLD

Work-based learning for young people															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)															
	2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	6		4												
Retained*	0		1	25											
Successfully completed	0		1	25											
Still in learning	3		2	50											

*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															
NVQ Training															
	2001-02														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	3														
Retained*	0														
Successfully completed	0														
Still in learning	1														

*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 induction for learners
- good support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poorly structured work-based learning
- insufficient guidance for work based supervisors

41. Orient Gold has recently improved and extended the induction process for learners. All learners receive a thorough induction over a six week period. This gives them time to familiarise themselves fully with the modern apprenticeship framework. The induction effectively covers health and safety, equality of opportunity, the NVQ requirements and key skills. All learners undertake a thorough initial assessment, which includes a basic skills test and recognition of their prior achievement. Learners' aspirations are discussed in detail. The information collected is well documented, and used to decide on an appropriate training programme for each learner. Staff have

encouraged some learners to start training programmes at a level the learners thought would be beyond their capability. These learners now agree that the selection was appropriate and are progressing well. Assessors make frequent visits to the workplace to monitor learners' initial progress and to ensure they are on the appropriate level of course. Throughout the induction period, assessors advise learners about the most appropriate evidence to collect. They conduct a detailed skills scan to ensure that learners will have sufficient opportunities in their workplace to gather evidence for their NVQ.

42. Learners receive good individual support from their assessor. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors regularly visit learners in the workplace to conduct assessments and review progress. These visits are scheduled to take place every four weeks. However, assessors are flexible when planning visits and will often visit learners on request, to observe special one-off events at short notice. Learners are aware that they can request additional support if needed. For example, one learner is receiving extra review visits and increased assessment to help her achieve her qualification before she goes on maternity leave. Learners discuss personal issues with their assessors, and value the pastoral support they receive. Learners reported that Orient Gold staff are always available and willing to support them through their learning programme. Learners are motivated and assessors encourage them to identify evidence and take responsibility for building their portfolios. Learners are given the mobile telephone number and e-mail address of their assessor, and are encouraged to make contact at any time should they need advice or guidance.

43. Orient Gold's training in ICT is poorly structured. The link between the employers' training programme and the modern apprenticeship framework is inadequate. The employer identifies the training needs in the workplace and the Orient Gold assessor identifies the training necessary to meet the requirement of the modern apprenticeship framework. The information is not combined to form a comprehensive learning plan for the learner. There are no on- or off-the-job training plans for the modern apprenticeship frameworks. Assessors provide some NVQ training, but it is unplanned, and learners often have to ask for it. Assessors are not fully aware of the content and quality of the training provided by employers. The evidence produced during this training is not being used for the NVQ or key skills units or for their modern apprenticeship qualification. Learners are set some short-term targets at progress review meetings with their assessor, but few include expected completion dates. Some learners are unaware of the targets set and do not refer to them in between the assessor's visits. Target dates are not always used to guide learners' progress. There are not enough good-quality handouts to support learners in the workplace.

44. Workplace supervisors are not given enough training programme information or support. They do not receive induction, training or guidance and are not always clear about their role. On-the-job training is not discussed formally with either learners or employers. Although they are not involved in the learners' progress reviews, supervisors are asked to comment on learners' progress. Some learners are not employed in IT companies. Their supervisors do not fully understand the requirements of the modern

ORIENT GOLD

apprenticeship and cannot adequately support them with background knowledge or witness statements. Learners working in IT companies are able to collect evidence of competence from their everyday work. However, their work-based supervisors are not qualified to assess them, and learners have to contact Orient Gold staff to arrange an assessment.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	1028	4

45. There are 1028 learners on work-based learning programmes in retailing, customer service and warehousing. There are 755 foundation modern apprentices, 272 advanced modern apprentices and one learner on an NVQ programme. All learners are employed at the start of their programme. Employers include local and national companies. Learners are recruited onto Orient Gold's training programmes directly through their employers, at the recommendation of workplace supervisors. Learners can join the programme at any time. Most learning takes place in the workplace, although Orient Gold offers off-the-job training for IT key skills. Orient Gold's assessors carry out assessments, progress reviews and individual action-planning with learners in the workplace. They visit learners in their workplaces at least every four weeks. Assessment is carried out throughout the training programme as required. Progress reviews take place at least every twelve weeks. Learners also have telephone access to their assessors. There are 24 full-time assessors, working in five areas of the country. Assessors have occupational experience and have gained, or are working towards, appropriate assessors' awards. Three of the areas are headed by an area manager who is a qualified internal verifier.

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											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	153		256		256										
Retained*	7		43	17	61	24										
Successfully completed	1		22	9	33	13										
Still in learning	124		111	43	37	14										

*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		2000-01		1999-2000												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	937		310		68											
Retained*	3		32	10	17	25											
Successfully completed	3		32	10	11	16											
Still in learning	657		97	31	1	1											

*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 individual support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective initial assessment
- slow progress by learners
- poor links with employers' training
- poor retention and achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of individual learning plans
- better management of learners' documentation

46. Learners receive good individual support. Assessors visit the learners in their workplaces to carry out assessments and action-planning every two to three weeks, depending on the learners' needs. Visits are arranged in advance with the learner and the employer. Assessors are reliable and flexible when planning visits. They carry out early morning visits to assess learners competence in dealing with deliveries. Assessors increase the frequency of assessment visits when learners are progressing more quickly than planned. Progress reviews take place at least once every twelve weeks. Learners are aware that they can request extra support if needed. When one learner was unable to leave the workplace to attend an off-the-job training session, the key skills trainer brought a laptop computer into the workplace to conduct the session one to one. Learners are given their assessor's mobile telephone number and e-mail address. They speak highly of the close relationship which they have with their assessors. They feel

able to discuss personal matters with them, and value the pastoral support they receive. When learners have moved to new employers or a different work site, assessors have followed their progress to ensure that they complete their learning program.

47. The initial assessment process is ineffective in identifying individual learners' needs. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Initial assessment is not used to plan the training or design the learners' personal development plan. Orient Gold does not test learners' basic skills, and it is left to assessors to identify learners' basic skills needs from the results of the key skills initial assessment. Some learners have been incorrectly identified as having no basic skills needs. There is no formal procedure for accrediting prior learning or experience, and some learners have been put on NVQs at an inappropriate level. Orient Gold has recently introduced revised initial assessment procedures, but it is too soon to judge their impact on learners.

48. Individual learning plans are completed for all learners, but they do not include a detailed breakdown of the units required to achieve the qualification or complete the training programme. Individual learning plans are pre-printed with the mandatory units of the NVQ, but the optional key skills units are rarely identified. Target achievement dates are usually the same for all units and correspond to the end date for the training programme. They do not take into consideration the prior experience of the learner.

49. Many learners are making slow progress towards their qualification. Some learners have been on programmes for eight to twelve months but have still achieved no NVQ units. High staff turnover has led to assessment visits being missed. Assessors carry out observations in the workplace, but these often do not start until learners have been on programmes for some time, typically two or three months. Experienced learners who are ready for assessment when they start their programme are held up by this. There is no focus on completing individual units of the NVQ. Typically all units of an NVQ are completed at the same time. Witness testimonies are not routinely used to speed up the achievement of the qualification for experienced learners. Some learners do not receive their portfolios until they have been on a programme for several months. Key skills training is now introduced at the start of modern apprenticeship programmes. Learners who started programmes before this change did not collect any key skills evidence until they had nearly completed their NVQ. Learners are not entered for the key skills tests until they are near the end of their programmes. If they fail the tests at the first attempt, they will be unable to complete their programme until they can re-sit the test.

50. Some learners are receiving formal structured training from their employer, but it is not being linked to their modern apprenticeship framework. Assessors are often unaware of the content and quality of this training, and it is not being used as evidence for the learners' NVQs or key skills awards. Learners were unaware that the training given by their employer could be used towards their qualification. Assessors are unaware that some learners are attending regular off-the-job training sessions provided by their employers. Employers do not have copies of the occupational standards, and have a poor understanding of the content of learners' programmes. Many employers

ORIENT GOLD

stated that they had never been asked to provide any specific workplace training towards the learners' qualification. Employers sign the learners' progress review document, but are seldom actively involved in planning specific training or setting targets. Employers and assessors do not plan workplace learning opportunities to increase the learners' competence.

51. Achievement and retention rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are poor. In 1999-2000, only 13 per cent of advanced, and 15 per cent of foundation modern apprentices achieved all the targets on their modern apprenticeship framework. The proportion fell to 10 per cent in 2000-01 for foundation modern apprentices. The retention rate is also poor for both programmes.

52. The paperwork in some learners' portfolios and personal files is incomplete. Assessors and learners have not signed all the documents. Employers' witness testimonies are being used in some learners' portfolios, without accurate records and signatures being added to the witness status lists. The progress report in learners' portfolios does not contain the same information as the learners' personal files.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	356	4

53. There are 356 learners on hospitality, sport, leisure and travel training programmes, of whom 50 are advanced and 306 are foundation modern apprentices. Learners are employed and are referred for training by their employers. Orient Gold has well-established links with a wide range of employers in businesses including public houses, restaurants, hotels, coffee bars and fast food outlets, many of which are part of national organisations. Learners are on a broad range of modern apprenticeship programmes including food preparation and cooking, bar service, food and drink service, kitchen supervision, and hospitality quick service. Assessors visit learners frequently and at times when they can take advantage of assessment opportunities. All learners have a thorough six-week induction which includes a basic skills initial assessment, and an introduction to health and safety and equal opportunities. Learners receive a detailed briefing about the modern apprenticeship framework, key skills and assessment requirements. There are seven assessors and two internal verifiers. They carry out all the assessment and verification in the workplace. The team have a broad range of industrial experience, and hold, or are working towards, the relevant assessment and verification awards. There is no off-the-job training.

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												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	16		117		53											
Retained*	0		16	14	19	36											
Successfully completed	1		0	0	2	4											
Still in learning	13		31	26	6	11											

*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		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	308		312		87									
Retained*	0		110	35	15	17									
Successfully completed	7		30	10	11	13									
Still in learning	243		61	20	2	2									

*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

- particularly good teamwork

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- poor initial assessment
- inadequate planning of training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better system for missed appointments
- better range of occupationally specific support material

54. The team of assessors and internal verifiers and their manager work effectively together. The team has regular, formal and frequent informal, meetings to review learners' progress, share good practice and develop new initiatives. The team has recently worked on the development of key skills portfolios, and attended workshops to review the teaching and assessment of key skills. The key skills portfolios seen by inspectors were of a good standard. New assessors are particularly well supported during their first months. Management time is made available to develop their skills and knowledge. Ongoing support is provided through work shadowing, one-to-one training sessions and observations of performance. The internal verifiers accompany each assessor for one full day each month to carry out a range of verification and support activities. The team have good, recent industrial experience.

55. Retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices are poor. In 1999-2000,

the retention rate for foundation modern apprentices was 17 per cent and in 2000-01 it was 35 per cent. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices was 13 per cent in 1999-2000 and 10 per cent in 2000-01. Twenty per cent of foundation modern apprentices who started their programmes in 2000-01 are still in learning. Of the advanced modern apprentices who started their programmes in 1999-2000, 36 per cent were retained and 4 per cent successfully completed their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Of those who started in 2000-01, 14 per cent were retained, but none has successfully completed their modern apprenticeship framework so far. The figures for 2001-02 suggest a potential improvement in the retention rates. Seventy-nine per cent of learners who started foundation modern apprenticeships in 2001-02 are still in learning, as are 81 per cent of advanced modern apprentices.

56. Orient Gold's initial assessment is poor. It is based on a discussion and interview, and fails to identify learners who have additional needs. There are examples of learners several months into their learning programme who have not received appropriate support for their additional literacy needs. The initial assessment has insufficient occupational focus. It fails to recognise learners' prior experience and achievement. Many learners have good industrial experience when they join the training programme. This is not taken into account in their individual learning plan. Individual ability or experience is not taken into consideration. There is no short-term target-setting, and individual learning plans are not kept up-to-date with learners' progress. The target achievement date for all NVQ units is given on individual learning plans as the projected end date of the programme.

57. The training is inadequately planned. Many of the employers provide good company training programmes for learners. However this training is not integrated with the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Learners do not see any connection between this training and their modern apprenticeship framework. Employers do not understand the training and assessment required for the modern apprenticeship framework. They make little attempt to link training to the framework requirements. There is insufficient involvement of employers in Orient Gold's training programmes. Work-based supervisors are not actively involved in learners' reviews. Many supervisors are unaware of their learners' progress or level of achievement.

58. Assessors carry out frequent visits to learners, but appointments are often missed by the learner. There is no formal system for dealing with missed appointments. Orient Gold provides work packs to help learners gain the background knowledge for the mandatory units of the NVQs. However the range of support material available does not cover all aspects of the NVQs.