

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Intec Business Colleges plc**

**09 September 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
- **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

Intec Business Colleges plc, established in 1982, is a privately owned company that operates as a recruitment and vocational training organisation. It provides work-based learning programmes from the seven training centres, in Bristol, Lincoln, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Rugby, and a national contracts division. Training is provided in business administration, management and professional, information and communication technology, retailing, customer service and transportation, and health, social care and public services.

### Overall judgement

The overall quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, training is unsatisfactory in business administration, management and professional, and information and communications technology. Training is satisfactory in health, social care and public services, and retailing, customer service and transportation. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory, but equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

### GRADES

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- good internal communications
- good range of evidence produced by learners in their portfolios
- particularly good working relationships with employers
- excellent assessment practice in some training centres in one occupational area

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ineffective management actions to improve achievement rates
- inadequate management of key skills training and assessment
- some inadequate internal verification
- weak quality assurance arrangements
- unsatisfactory achievement rates on most training programmes
- poor initial assessment

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider range of learning resources
- better review process
- more effective induction

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 25 inspectors spent a total of 122 days inspecting at Intec Business Colleges plc (Intec) in September 2002. They visited all of the training centres and the head office in Rugby. Inspectors conducted 100 staff interviews. They also visited 147 workplaces, and interviewed 136 workplace supervisors and spoke with 280 learners. Inspectors observed and graded 13 learning sessions. They also examined a range of documentation, including 228 portfolios of evidence, learners' files, records of learners' progress, audit reports from awarding bodies, records of meetings, policies and procedures, and achievement data. Inspectors also studied the self-assessment report, which was produced in January 2002.

### 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	2	0	1	0	4
Information & communications technology	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
Health, social care & public services	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Intec is a privately owned company, established in 1982, which operates as a recruitment and vocational training organisation. It provides work-based learning programmes in business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer service, and transportation, and health, social care and public services. Training is provided from the seven training centres in Bristol, Lincoln, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Rugby, and a national contracts division. There are currently 1,009 learners on work-based learning programmes. Training is funded by the relevant local learning and skills councils (LSCs).

### Work-based learning for young people

3. In business administration, management and professional, learners produce a good range of portfolio evidence. There is good career development for learners, and short-term action-planning is good. Training is particularly good for learners on accounting training programmes. Achievement rates, however, are poor and there is inadequate implementation of key skills training and assessment. Learners' achievement of national vocational qualification (NVQ) units is recorded late in the training programme. Initial assessment is poor and there is inadequate internal verification at three of the training centres. In ICT, learning resources are good. There are particularly good work placements and learner support. Framework completions are low. There is insufficient employer involvement in the training programmes and some learners make slow progress. In retailing, customer service and transportation, there are particularly good working relationships with employers. Learners are recruited effectively into employment. Learners produce good evidence in their portfolios and there is excellent assessment practice in some training centres. There is inadequate use of initial assessment and target-setting is poor. There is insufficient co-ordination of training, and achievement of individual learning plans is low. In health, social care and public services, there are very effective working relationships with employers. There is good training and assessment in the workplace and achievement rates are good on NVQs at level 3. Achievement of modern apprenticeships is poor and there is no systematic approach to learner support.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Grade 4

4. Intec's head office is in Rugby. The training is provided through eight branches across England. A range of management and administrative functions and the national contracts division are located at the head office in Rugby. The company is run by a managing director, the personnel director, and a senior management team. Each branch is managed by an operations manager who is responsible for a team of staff comprising a senior assessor, assessors and administrators. In addition, senior accounts managers are responsible for a small marketing and recruitment team. The two directors, the finance manager, the quality assurance manager and the operational managers comprise the senior management team. There are 123 full-time staff. The company has a quality assurance policy statement and several procedure manuals for company-wide processes, including internal verification, personnel and finance. The directors have overall responsibility for the formulation and review of all quality assurance policies. Each branch produces its own quality assurance procedures and processes. A quality assurance manager was appointed in October 2001 to review all aspects of training and to evaluate performance throughout the company. She has overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of internal verification within the eight training centres and the national contracts division. Regular national meetings of all lead internal verifiers are held. Intec was reaccredited with the Investor in People standard in 2000, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The company produced its current self-assessment report in January 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- particularly thorough processes for planning, target-setting and monitoring
- good use of management information
- thorough staff appraisal system
- good internal communications
- very effective actions to recruit learners from minority ethnic groups
- good management of equal opportunities data
- frequent internal audits
- good action-planning

## **WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient sharing of effective initiatives between training centres
- ineffective management actions to improve achievement rates
- insufficient identification and provision of additional learning support
- inadequate management of key skills training and assessment
- poor understanding of equal opportunities issues by learners and employers
- insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- some inadequate internal verification
- weak quality assurance arrangements

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more consistent communication with employers
- better evaluation of learner application process

5. Processes are particularly thorough for planning, target-setting and monitoring, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The three-year strategic plan for 2001-2003 sets clear strategic objectives which are regularly reviewed. All staff receive a copy of the strategic plan and understand its key objectives. A one-year business plan is also produced, which sets detailed specific objectives and targets. These are reviewed regularly by managers and improvement actions are identified. Good use is made of target-setting to improve performance. Targets are set for recruitment, retention rates and achievement rates for each training centre and for individual staff. These are reviewed at quarterly review meetings between the two directors and each operational manager. Detailed performance reports are produced for these meetings. In addition, monthly performance reports are produced by each training centre.

6. Good use is made of management information. Managers have good access to a range of up-to-date information. These data are thoroughly analysed. Data are used to produce action plans and help with decision-making. Individual staff targets are monitored by operational managers on an ongoing basis and form a key aspect of annual staff appraisal.

7. The staff appraisal system is thorough, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. A new system was introduced early in 2002 which focuses on staff performance and training needs. Staff targets are formally reviewed by line managers during appraisal and action plans are agreed. Training needs and specific corporate objectives are used effectively to produce a company staff training programme. Staff are encouraged to undertake in-house and external training. For example, company training events are held two or three times a year for all assessors. There are very effective arrangements for mentoring new staff. For example, new operational managers are assigned an experienced operational manager as a mentor who provides support during their first year in post. Similar support from a designated mentor is

provided for other new appointments.

8. Internal communications are good, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Operational managers hold monthly staff meetings which deal with issues raised at monthly senior management team meetings and other issues relating to specific training centres. Staff at each training centre meet every two weeks. All meetings are minuted with action points. Newsletters are used to keep staff and employers up to date with developments. Some communications with employers are inconsistent .

9. There is insufficient sharing of effective initiatives between training centres, a weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. For example, local initiatives to improve retention rates have been successfully introduced at two training centres but are not being adopted at other training centres.

10. Actions by management to improve achievement rates are ineffective. Framework completion is poor in most occupational areas. Achievement of NVQs is also weak in many occupational areas. Framework completions for the year 1999-2000 across the occupational areas range from 10 per cent to 36 per cent. Actions by managers to rectify this problem are not effective. Poor retention rates is acknowledged as a weakness in the self-assessment report. There has been some improvement in retention rates on retailing training programmes but this is still poor on other training programmes.

11. There is insufficient identification and provision of additional learning support. Very few learners have been identified as requiring additional learning support, although many learners have additional learning support needs. Insufficient use is made of a qualified basic skills tutor based at one training centre.

12. The management of key skills training and assessment is inadequate, a weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The development and assessment of learners' key skills is not consistent across the company. At one training centre, key skills training and assessment is managed well. Learners attend key skills workshops at the training centre or workshops in the workplace. At many training centres, however, attendance at key skills workshops is poor and insufficient key skills training takes place in the workplace. Some employers and learners have a poor understanding of key skills' requirements. Some staff are not appropriately qualified and experienced to provide key skills training and assessment. Some learners are on an inappropriate level of key skills. Some learners have not been accredited for prior achievement. Key skills progress is slow for many learners.

13. Employers are not adequately informed about the NVQ requirements and their involvement in the training programme. There is no effective system for monitoring learner progress. Learners work towards a range of NVQ units. Some learners do not know how much progress they have made. Assessors do not fully understand learners' progress. Information collected on learner progress is not accurate.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 3**

14. The company has a comprehensive, detailed diversity and equality policy. The policy contains all aspects of current legislation, company training processes and procedures, and applies to all staff, learners, and employers. The policy is reviewed regularly. There are very effective actions to recruit learners from minority ethnic groups. Links have been established with many relevant organisations and have been supplied with a range of information promoting training. This information includes details on a range of jobs and work placements. Multi-cultural images are used in recruitment advertisements. Responses to advertisements are monitored, analysed and evaluated to identify the success rate in attracting applications and the number of applicants who attend an interview. Equal opportunities workshops are organised for all staff. One training centre has an equal opportunities working group to identify and share relevant good practice. All training centres maintain a good and poor practice equal opportunities file to record equal opportunities issues experienced by learners.

15. There is good management of equal opportunities data. Targets to improve participation by learners from poorly represented groups are included in the corporate marketing plan. These targets are communicated to the operations managers at each training centre. Progress towards achievement of these targets is monitored and analysed each month. Action plans are put in place to further improve performance. Achievement rates and action plans are evaluated during the managers' monthly meetings. Currently, the proportion of learners who are women or from minority ethnic groups is improving.

16. Learners and employers have a poor understanding of equal opportunities issues. Most inductions are carried out in the workplace where there are no facilities to view the equal opportunities video. This video is shown to learners later in their training programme during a key skills communication session. Insufficient time is given during inductions for discussion on equal opportunity issues. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities issues during progress reviews. Learners are asked questions which refer only to how they are treated at work. A list of equal opportunities questions has been produced but is not used by many staff. Staff do not ensure learners have an adequate understanding of policies on bullying and harassment. There is insufficient monitoring of employers' understanding of equal opportunities issues.

17. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Provider staff do not examine employers' equal opportunities policies. Employers are asked if they have an equal opportunities policy, but the policy is not examined. There is no monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices in the workplace. Employers' premises are not checked for access for learners with mobility difficulties.

18. Insufficient staff are from minority ethnic groups, when compared with the proportion of people in the local population from minority ethnic communities. Currently, only 2 per cent of provider staff are from a minority ethnic background. This 2 per cent is located in only two of the training centres. Participation in training by learners

from minority ethnic backgrounds was over 5 per cent in April 2002. The company does not evaluate the learner application process in sufficient detail.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 4

19. Each training centre carries out frequent internal audits to ensure staff implement company policies and procedures effectively. Separate checklists are used for the administration, training and marketing teams. Learners' personal files are reviewed regularly against a checklist and a sample is reviewed either every month or every three months. Key information and documents are missing from portfolios and personal files. A detailed report is completed which includes feedback to the relevant team on strengths and weaknesses identified and any action required. These reports are reviewed to ensure actions have been completed. Head office staff at each training centre carry out separate audits of financial procedures and contract compliance.

20. There is good action-planning throughout the company. Action plans are shared with all staff. Training centre managers and their senior staff use action plans effectively to implement improvements needed at national and local levels. Targets are set with individual responsibilities and dates for achievement. Targets and performance are displayed in the training centres. Regular meetings are held in the training centres to discuss actions. Staff appraisals include individual targets directly related to the achievement of the action plans.

21. Some internal verification is inadequate. Each training centre has a senior tutor who is the lead internal verifier. The number of internal verifiers in each training centre is not consistent. In one training centre all assessors also act as internal verifiers. Another training centre has an internal verifier who also has an assessment caseload of up to 50 learners. The company has implemented a new internal verification system, developed with external verifiers from three awarding bodies. This system does not identify where internal verification is inadequate. Some internal verification is not well recorded. The work of some unqualified assessors is not countersigned by an experienced assessor. Observations of assessors and internal verifiers do not provide sufficiently detailed feedback.

22. Quality assurance systems are weak. Although the policies and procedures aim to ensure good training provision, some training is inadequate. All training centres use the relevant procedure manuals. Operations managers are able to adapt the application of these procedures to better suit local conditions. The company produced a quality assurance policy and a documented quality assurance system in 1999. These policies and procedures are not consistently implemented across the company. Documents and other relevant information are missing from learners' portfolios and files. There is no effective system to monitor the use of forms. Assessment is not consistent across the company. On-the-job training is not monitored. There is inadequate monitoring of off-the-job training provided by Intec. There are no effective procedures to ensure that best practice in one training centre is shared with other training centres. There is no system to ensure that all aspects of quality assurance are understood and implemented consistently throughout the company.

23. Senior staff from head office and each training centre took part in the annual review

of company performance against the 2001 action plan. The quality assurance manager used information from this review to produce the self-assessment report. All staff were able to discuss draft copies of the self-assessment report and suggest changes at training centre meetings. Inspectors found additional strengths and weaknesses to those acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Inspectors gave grades lower than those given in the self-assessment report.

#### **Good Practice**

*At one training centre, regular meetings of all staff are held to assess learner performance and take action to support those learners who are either close to completing their framework or considering leaving the training programme early. The retention rate at this training centre has improved.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	442	4

24. As of 9 September 2002, there are 442 learners on work-based learning programmes in business administration, management and professional. Of these, there are 129 advanced modern apprentices, 252 foundation modern apprentices and 61 learners on other work-based learning programmes. Account managers recruit learners to the training programmes and match them to job descriptions. All learners complete an initial assessment. All learners are working towards NVQs in administration, insurance, accounts and accountancy, management and team leading. All learners employed. Off-the-job training comprises background knowledge for key skills. Staff review the progress of learners and carry out individual training and assessment in the workplace. Most learners have an individual learning plan. The tables show retention and achievement rates up to the end of July 2002.

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.	%	
	Number of starts	134		241		234									
Retained*	90		95		88										
Successfully completed	6		64		79										
Still in learning	84		31		9										

\*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	319		227		129									
Retained*	222		91		49										
Successfully completed	4		53		47										
Still in learning	218		38		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



Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	95		92		81											
Retained*	84		61		38											
Successfully completed	17		52		37											
Still in learning	67		9		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 range of evidence produced by learners in their portfolios
- good career development for learners
- good short-term action-planning
- particularly good training for learners on accountancy training programmes

## WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- inadequate implementation of key skills training and assessment
- late recording of NVQ unit achievement
- poor initial assessment
- inadequate internal verification at three of the training centres

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider range of learning resources
- better review process
- more effective induction
- better co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

25. Learners produce a good range of evidence in their portfolios, including CD-ROMs, digital photographs, audio and video recordings. Records of discussions, sometimes involving the employer, are also appropriately used as an assessment method. Other evidence includes good work products designed and produced by learners. In some portfolios, assessors have produced particularly detailed observation reports of learners

in the workplace. Learners are given initial guidance to cross-reference evidence with the NVQ standards. Learners are responsible for collecting and cross-referencing evidence. Some portfolios contain a poor standard of evidence. Some learners are provided with too much help from their assessors and do not have sufficient individual responsibility for the collecting and cross-referencing of evidence.

26. There is good career development for learners. Employers, workplace supervisors and assessors provide good learner support. Learners are able to work as members of work teams. Most employers provide good on-the-job training in busy offices. Some employers provide good administration resources. Learners are able to attend in-house training programmes. Learners have access to modern and high specification computers as well as filing systems, databases and reception areas with telephone switchboards and stock control systems. Some learners are involved in departmental, supervisory or managerial functions. Most employers allow learners to move posts within the company to enable them to collect evidence across a wide range of tasks and meet the NVQ requirements. Learners are able to develop their job role and progress to the next NVQ level or take other relevant NVQs at the same level. There are insufficient handouts, open learning resources and books relevant to learners. Some employers are not sufficiently involved in progress reviews. There is insufficient reinforcement of induction and the framework and qualification requirements. Although there are satisfactory links between on- and off-the-job training, there is insufficient matching of targets on individual learning plans with work tasks.

27. There is good short-term action-planning. Learners have a good understanding of collecting evidence against targets. Assessors visit learners at least once a month to provide advice and carry out assessments. Assessors arrange visits according to the individual needs of learners and the workplace. Assessors agree detailed short-term action plans with learners, which include targets to be completed for the next visit. Learners can contact assessors by phone and e-mail to discuss relevant issues. Examples of e-mail communication between assessors and learners are used as evidence for both key skills evidence and NVQ evidence. There is insufficient reference to previous progress reviews. Review sheets do not cover a sufficiently wide range of issues for discussion. Employers do not systematically attend progress reviews.

28. Training is particularly good for learners on accounting training programmes. At one training centre, learners have a six-month plan for off-the-job training and are able to select the training they need to attend. At the other training centres, well-planned training is provided on employers' premises. Training is provided by fully qualified and experienced accountants. There is a good range of relevant books and training materials. Some employers encourage learners to move through a series of posts in their job role to ensure that they gain experience to meet the full requirements of their NVQ.

29. Achievement rates are poor. Of those learners who started training programmes in 1999-2000, 66 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 64 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have not completed the full framework. Of the 319 foundation

modern apprentices who started training in 2001-02, 101 left the programme early and only four have achieved their full framework. The average figure for apprenticeship achievement over the past three years for foundation modern apprenticeships and advanced modern apprenticeships is 20 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively. NVQ achievement is slightly better with an average figure over the past three years of 40 per cent. Retention rates are improving.

30. There is inadequate implementation of key skills training and assessment. Staff at each training centre are responsible for developing their own approach to key skills training and assessment. Staff have a poor understanding of how to implement key skills training and assessment. Assessors do not fully understand or do not implement effectively the system for accreditation of prior learning and achievement. Many learners do not receive copies of the standards for key skills early in their programmes. Most learners do not start working towards their key skills until towards the end of their NVQ. The provider has recently changed its strategy and many learners now start working towards their key skills earlier in their training programme. Although a series of well-implemented key skills workshops are now provided for learners, attendance is poor. The provider has acknowledged this in its self-assessment report and development plans. One training centre is providing key skills workshops on an employer's premises.

31. There is a late recording of NVQ unit achievement. Many learners are unsure of their overall progress. Although progress is measured as an estimated percentage of work to be completed, for most learners the assessor has not signed off sufficient units of their NVQ. For example, one learner was told that all five mandatory units would be signed off on one day. Another learner was told that they were 90 per cent complete, although no NVQ units had been signed off. Some learners are approaching their target achievement date with no or insufficient units completed. For example, three learners due to finish their full framework by the end of October 2002, have only two units completed with no key skills assessed. Two learners due to finish in September 2002 have insufficient portfolio evidence and have more than five NVQ units still to complete.

32. The initial assessment process is weak and poorly designed. It does not ensure that the individual learning and/or social needs are identified and relevant support provided. Account managers are responsible for carrying out initial assessments. However, some have poor knowledge of the framework requirements. Three learners are on inappropriate training programmes. Initial assessment is used mainly for key skills and is unsuitable for identifying literacy and numeracy support needs. There is insufficient individual training and support based on the results of the initial assessment. The self-assessment report incorrectly identified this as a strength. Some pastoral support is provided but the staff carrying this out are not appropriately qualified.

33. Internal verification is inadequate at three of the training centres. Some unqualified assessors do not have their assessment decisions countersigned by an occupationally competent assessor. In some training centres, there is an over-reliance on the sampling of portfolio evidence by internal verifiers and insufficient observation of assessment in

the workplace. At one training centre, feedback from an internal verifier is not being acted on by the assessors. At another training centre, the internal verifiers have a full caseload of learners for assessment in addition to their internal verification duties. There is no internal verification of learners' understanding of the NVQ appeals procedure.

**Good Practice**

*A key skills project produced by a learner contained proposals which are now being implemented by the provider.*

**Information & communications technology****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	34	4

34. As of 9 September 2002, there are 34 learners on work-based learning programmes in ICT. Of these, 10 are advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3 and 19 are foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2. There are also five learners on other work-based learning programmes working towards NVQs at level 2 or 3. Learners are recruited through advertisements in the local paper, schools' careers conventions, staff visits to local companies and personal recommendation. Intec also advertises job vacancies for its work-placement companies and carries out the initial interview. All learners are employed in a wide variety of organisations, including government departments, finance companies and manufacturing organisations. Learners may start their training programmes at any time of the year. Learners are visited in the workplace at the start of their training programme to carry out an induction. This comprises information about their NVQs, health and safety, and equal opportunities. In addition to on-the-job training, some learners attend their nearest training centre for off-the-job training, which comprises key skills training and assessment, and training in telephone techniques and organisational and time-management skills. Assessors visit learners in their workplaces to carry out progress reviews and assessment. The tables show retention and achievement rates up to the end of July 2002.

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

<b>Work-based learning for young people</b>																	
<b>Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)</b>	<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	3		4		20											
Retained*	3		1	25	5	25											
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	10											
Still in learning	3		1	25	3	15											

\*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	27		20		19											
Retained*	18		6		3												
Successfully completed	0		2		3												
Still in learning	18		4		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																	
NVQ Training	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	7		14		10											
Retained*	5		10	71	3	30											
Successfully completed	2		7	50	3	30											
Still in learning	3		3	21	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 learning resources
- particularly good work placements
- particularly good learner support

### WEAKNESSES

- low framework completions
- insufficient employer involvement in training
- some slow learner progress

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better development and assessment of learners' knowledge and understanding
- more consistent cross-referencing of assessment reports with NVQ standards

35. Learning resources are good, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Training centre workshops contain industry-standard networked computers which run applications including word processing, spreadsheets and databases. A range of good relevant learning resources is available in the workshops, including textbooks, computer manuals and other reference materials, and key skills resources. Training rooms are spacious and well resourced. Although not all relevant workshops can be accessed by learners with mobility difficulties, equipment and resources are made available in ground floor rooms when necessary. Although many learners do not make good use of the resources available, training rooms are now used more frequently for key skills workshops. All staff responsible for ICT training are appropriately qualified and experienced.

36. Work placements are particularly good and learners are employed in a range of national and international companies. This strength was not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Learners' job roles involve high levels of computer-based work. They use modern computer systems which run a range of programs. Learners carry out a broad range of computer-based work and collect good evidence for their portfolios. Learners are able to take on increased responsibility in the workplace as their skills improve. Some employers have very good in-house training programmes and resources, which are available to learners.

37. Learner support is particularly good, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Staff visit learners in the workplace every three to four weeks to carry out assessments. Visits are arranged according to learners' and employers' needs. Staff systematically monitor workplace evidence and observe learners carrying out a range of computer-based tasks. Some assessors cross-reference learners' evidence to the occupational standards. Staff also visit learners to provide relevant training. This is not adequate or sufficiently challenging for some learners. Learners are able to contact assessors by phone or e-mail.

38. Framework completions are low. In 1999-2000 and 2000-01, the proportions of learners who left their training programmes without completing their frameworks were 84 per cent and 70 per cent respectively. Of those learners who were advanced modern apprentices in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, 75 per cent left early each year without completing their modern apprenticeship. In 1999-2000, only 30 per cent of those learners on other work-based learning programmes completed their qualification. There are significant improvements for 2001-02. Although 33 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have left their training programme early, all advanced modern apprentices are still in training. Twenty nine per cent of learners on other work-based learning programmes have completed their training and 43 per cent are still in learning.

39. There is insufficient employer involvement in the training programmes, a weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Some employers do not fully understand the NVQ requirements of how key skills training and assessment takes place. Some employers do not fully understand the assessment process and the importance of workplace evidence. Although they sign witness statements, some do

not understand how these relate to the qualification. Some employers have good learning resources which are not used effectively to help develop learners' background knowledge, skills and understanding.

40. Some learners make slow progress, a weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Some learners have been in training for six months before they start working towards their key skills qualifications. Although workplace evidence is cross-referenced to the occupational standards, some assessors do not regularly review the evidence for each unit to identify if it can be completed. No individual targets are set and all learners work towards the same programme end date. Progress reviews carried out every three months are not used effectively to help learners' progress. Poor targets are set for the following three months and relate only to short-term activities. Many employers are not fully involved in the review process. Some of their comments recorded on the progress review forms do not highlight learners' development needs. Some learners do not understand the difference between review and assessment.

#### **Good Practice**

*One learner compiled a series of workplace procedures for his employer in consultation with his colleagues. The learner improved his word processing skills and his interpersonal and communication skills.*

#### **Poor Practice**

*One foundation modern apprentice is making slow progress. Tutors have received inconsistent and insufficient information relevant to the NVQ and key skills. The employer is not sufficiently involved in planning the training, such as arranging for the learner to attend the training centre for key skills workshops during working hours.*



**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	498	3

41. As of 9 September 2002, there are 498 learners on work-based learning programmes in retailing, sales and telesales, call-handling, customer service and warehousing. There are 362 learners on customer service programmes working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. There are 57 learners on warehouse NVQs, 45 learners following call handling NVQs, the remaining 21 learners are following retail NVQs. In addition, 13 learners are on other work-based learning programmes in sales and telesales. All learners are employed. Account managers contact employers to promote the training and recruit learners. Some employers use Intec as a recruitment agency. Account managers match learners to employer requirements following an initial assessment of job descriptions, a competence audit checklist and an interview. There is no initial assessment of learners' basic skills. Employers provide on- and off-the-job training carried out by in-house training staff or external specialists. Key skills training and assessment are provided for learners either at their training centres or on the job. Induction is carried out in the training centres or in the workplace. Assessors visit learners each month to carry out assessment and key skills training and assessment. Progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks. The tables show retention and achievement rates up to the end of July 2002.

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

<b>Work-based learning for young people</b>																	
<b>Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)</b>	<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	147		124		122											
Retained*	115		50		37												
Successfully completed	2		20		36												
Still in learning	113		30		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

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	294		219		64											
Retained*	205		108		19	30										
Successfully completed	3		74		19	30										
Still in learning	202		34		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																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	138		128		71											
Retained*	104		63		37	52										
Successfully completed	16		52		37	52										
Still in learning	88		11		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

- particularly good working relationships with employers
- effective recruitment of learners into employment
- good evidence produced by learners in their portfolios
- excellent assessment practice in some training centres

## WEAKNESSES

- inadequate use of initial assessment
- poor target-setting for learners
- insufficient co-ordination of training
- low achievement of individual learning plans

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better induction
- more effective use of progress review meetings
- more effective use of learning resources

42. There are particularly good working relationships with employers, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Many employers use the company as a source of information and advice on, for example, health and safety. Workplaces for learners are good. The training provider responds effectively to employer queries about their learners or the training programmes. Learners are able to progress well in their careers. Employers provide excellent internal training, supported by effective staff appraisal systems which help develop learners skills. Larger national companies have structured training programmes which begin at induction as staff are recruited. Monthly individual progress meetings are carried out between the learner and workplace supervisor and individual development plans are monitored, updated and further training needs are identified. When employers are involved in the work-based learning programmes, they provide good learner support. For example, learners are given time away from work to work towards their qualification. Some learners are unable to remember the content of their induction and relevant learning materials and documents are inadequate.

43. The recruitment of learners into employment is effective, a strength not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Employers work well with the provider to carry out recruitment. Many employers make direct contact with the provider to advertise staff vacancies and carry out recruitment. Learners are carefully matched to the job requirements. Jobs are well matched to the training programmes. The marketing strategy is comprehensive and effective. To assist in the equal opportunities process the name, gender and ethnic origin of applicants are not released to the employer. The training programmes provided at the training centres are designed to meet the needs of local labour markets.

44. Learners produce good evidence in their portfolios, a strength not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Portfolios contain a variety of good diverse evidence, including observations, photographs, written statements, witness testimonies, product evidence, projects, and records of professional discussion. Portfolios are organised well and evidence is clearly presented. One employer, has introduced the use of an electronic version of the portfolio of evidence for the call handling award. Learners understand the NVQ requirements and most are fully involved in the construction of their portfolio.

45. Assessment practice is excellent in three training centres, where 40 per cent of the learners are in training. There is thorough, detailed assessment planning with clear short-term targets. Assessment is designed and carried out to meet the needs of the learners,

the NVQ requirements and the business needs of the employer. Evidence is referenced fully against the NVQ requirements. Assessment is monitored well. In one training centre, the assessor meets with individual learners for individual discussion and guidance. Members of staff at these training centres have or are working towards appropriate assessor qualifications. All staff have thorough, relevant occupational knowledge and experience. Staff ensure they keep up to date with current industrial practice as an essential part of their individual development. Some staff have additional qualifications, including training and development NVQs at level 4, training and development certificates, and health and safety qualifications. There is some inconsistent assessment practice. There are insufficient staff with relevant key skills or training qualifications. Internal verification is not consistent at all training centres.

46. There is inadequate use of initial assessment, a weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Learners do not complete a basic skills initial assessment. There are no resources for basic skills support. For many learners a key skills initial assessment is used to assess their basic skills needs. This process is ineffective. There is no assessment of prior achievements and qualifications. Learners are not systematically told the assessment results. Some learners complete the test in their own time away from the training centre. A competence checklist is used to match the learners' job role to the correct NVQ and level. This is inadequate and does not ensure that the learners' job is appropriate for the qualification. The document is completed by the learners or by the assessor. It does not always involve the workplace manager. Where additional learning needs are identified, there is no record of plans to meet these needs. Some learners are working towards an inappropriate NVQ level.

47. There is poor target-setting for learners, a weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Individual learning plans are not used effectively. The individual learning plans are poorly detailed. There are no details of the NVQ units or target completion dates. It is not updated to show learner progress or changes to the training programme. Many learners do not know when they are expected to complete their training programme. Short-term target-setting is inadequate. There is no monitoring of progress and target-setting during progress reviews. The progress reviews do not cover in sufficient detail health and safety and equal opportunities. Questioning of learners by assessors is poor. Many learners and employers do not understand the system for calculating learner progress. Assessors do not consistently carry out the system for calculating progress. For example, one learner was judged as close to completion but had no units completed or signed off. The system does not provide an accurate record of learner progress. Some learners are making slow progress towards their qualification. In many cases, key skills training and assessment are carried out late in the training programme.

48. There is insufficient co-ordination of training. Although many employers provide good on-the-job training, it is not used to provide good relevant evidence. There is insufficient information given to employers on the requirements of the NVQ. Workplace supervisors are not fully involved in progress reviews. They do not help to co-ordinate and plan the on- and off-the-job training and are only involved in informal

discussions about the training. There is insufficient recording and monitoring of on-the-job training. Assessors provide individual on-the-job training. However, relevant learning materials are not used effectively. At some training centres, there are insufficient learning materials. Off-the-job training generally comprises key skills training and assessment. There is weak integration of key skills training and assessment with the training programme. Key skills are worked towards as a separate qualification from the NVQ. Key skills assessment is inadequate. For example, learners produce a key skills project in addition to their normal work activities, but it does not enable them to record evidence from their everyday work.

49. There is low achievement of the targets on individual learning plans. Many learners do not meet the objectives of their individual learning plans. Of the 122 advanced modern apprentices who started their training programme in 1999-2000, only 30 per cent achieved the targets on their individual learning plans. Of the 249 learners who have left the training programme since 1999, only 23 per cent have achieved the targets on their individual learning plans. However, some learners did achieve an NVQ. Of the 246 foundation modern apprentices who started training programmes in 1999-2001, 34 are still in training and 93 achieved their framework. Of the 212 learners who left the training programme, approximately 75 per cent achieved an NVQ at level 2. Approximately 25 per cent of learners work only towards an NVQ for their individual learning plan, although achievement is poor with less than 50 per cent of these learners achieving an NVQ. Retention rates are improving.

50. Progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks and are recorded. Although some details of progress are matched to the NVQ units and key skills, this is not systematically carried out. There is no clear record of progress linked to preset targets. Although some employers take part in progress reviews, they generally only write a comment on the review form and do not take part in the meeting.

51. Assessors have access to learning resources, which include well-equipped information technology (IT) suites and a range of guided distance learning materials for key skills. These are not used adequately by all assessors. Some learners and employers are not aware of the available resources. Some tutors and assessors are not sufficiently confident to provide individual training and use learning materials which are not suitable. Other more suitable learning materials are available but are not used. Not all assessors and tutors hold teaching qualifications.

#### Good Practice

*The method used by the provider to present learners' curriculum vitae to employers ensures that gender, name, or ethnic background do not identify potential employees, to ensure equality of opportunity.*

#### Poor Practice

*At one training centre, an unqualified assessor has not had assessment decisions countersigned by a qualified assessor.*

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	35	3

52. As of 9 September 2002, there are 10 learners on work-based learning programmes in care and 25 learners on work-based learning programmes in early years care and education. Of the 10 learners on care training programmes, one learner is a foundation modern apprentice and nine are on other work-based learning programmes working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3. Of the 25 learners on early years care and education training programmes, nine are advanced modern apprentices, six are foundation modern apprentices, and 12 are on other work-based learning programmes working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3 in early years care and education, or NVQs at level 2 as teaching assistants. Most learners on care training programmes are employed. Approximately 50 per cent of learners on early years care and education training programmes are unemployed. All training is carried out in the training centre in Lincoln. Two members of staff provide training and assessment. Both staff have relevant vocational qualifications and experience and appropriate assessor and verifier qualifications. Internal verification is subcontracted to an external health practitioner. The tables show retention and achievement rates up to the end of July 2002.

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

<b>Work-based learning for young people</b>																
<b>Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)</b>	<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	10		5		2										
Retained*	9		1	20	0											
Successfully completed	0		1	20	0											
Still in learning	9		0	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		1999-2000													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		9													
Retained*	7		2	22												
Successfully completed	0		2	22												
Still in learning	7		0	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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	23		38		21											
Retained*	18		29		2	10										
Successfully completed	3		27		2	10										
Still in learning	15		2		0	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

## STRENGTHS

- very effective working relationships with employers
- good training and assessment in the workplace
- good achievement rates for NVQ at level 3

## WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement of modern apprenticeships
- no systematic approach to learner support

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more emphasis on the 10 underlying principles of early years care and education
- more opportunities for staff to share good practice in their vocational area
- more effective induction to equal opportunities
- better use of some documentation to avoid overlap of information

53. There are very effective working relationships with employers. Employers provide learners with good work placements. They provide witness statements for learners' portfolios of evidence. There is good regular communication between the provider and employers. Provider staff deal effectively with relevant issues as they arise. Assessors make frequent visits to employers. Times and dates for assessors' visits to the workplace are negotiated along with attendance to workshops organised by assessors. Additional visits are arranged when necessary. Employers have a good understanding of their learners' training programmes. They receive copies of assessment plans to help them plan specific relevant activities for learners. The provider effectively matches learners to job roles.

54. There is a good training and assessment in the workplace. The two provider staff are very well qualified and experienced and have a good understanding of learners' work routines. Good use is made of these routines to arrange assessments, particularly for those learners on early years care and education training programmes. For example, one assessment was arranged for the first day back after the summer break at a kindergarten and one learner was able to demonstrate skills such as settling in new children, playing games, working with children in groups, and aspects of health and safety, and key skills. Assessors have a good understanding of the NVQ requirements. Learners work well with assessors to plan their work and assessments. Although discussions to plan assessments are good, the actions and completion dates are not always clear on the written assessment plan. On the early years care and education training programme the 10 underlying principles that have to be applied in all work with children are not always given sufficient emphasis in planning assessments or when giving feedback, either from observations or written evidence. The two trainers who are also assessors have insufficient contact or discussion with other trainers or assessors in their own vocational area and are unable to share good practice.

55. Achievement rates are good for NVQs at level 3. Of the 17 learners who started training programmes in 1999-2000, 65 per cent achieved their NVQ. Of 10 learners who started training programmes in 2001-2002, none has yet achieved the NVQ but 80 per cent are still in learning and their progress is satisfactory or good. Of those learners working towards NVQs at level 2, achievement rates are poor for those who started training in 1999 but good for those who started in 2000.

56. There is poor achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks. Of the nine learners who started foundation modern apprenticeships in 1999 and 2000, 22 per cent achieved the full framework. Of the seven learners who started on advanced modern apprenticeship in the same period, only 14 per cent achieved the full framework. None of the other learners achieved an NVQ. Those learners still on their training programmes are making satisfactory progress. There have been some recent good key skills developments. Most learners understand how to gain relevant evidence from their vocational work. Learners are currently completing a project on opening a nursery which involves key skills in IT and application of number. One learner had finished this



project. The work presented is of a high standard.

57. There is no systematic approach to planning and providing additional learning support. Although the results of the initial basic skills test are recorded on individual learning plans there is no record of how individual learning needs will be met. There is insufficient monitoring of learners. Additional learning support is not referred to in progress reviews. One learner, identified as making slow progress, had results below entry level following the initial basic skills test. There was no plan for providing relevant support. The learner's assessor provides general support and keeps records. The other assessor has basic skills qualifications and relevant experience but is not providing relevant learner support. Specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, are not identified unless disclosed by the learner. No staff are qualified in assessing dyslexia and no use is made of external dyslexia assessment services. One learner who is dyslexic is not receiving any specific support, although her assessor does give additional help. Two other learners with literacy needs have not had any specific help or assessment.

58. Overall organisation of the training programme is satisfactory. Although much communication is informal it is effective. Some documents contain repeated information. For example, the information contained within the assessment review and on the progress review is often the same. Induction is satisfactory but learners do not remember sufficient information on equal opportunities.