

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Lunn Poly Ltd**

**10 July 2002**



ADULT LEARNING  
I N S P E C T O R A T E



**Estyn**

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg  
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
For Education and Training in Wales

## 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
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## 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

Lunn Poly Limited is a national travel agency that provides work-based learning programmes in retail travel and customer services. There are currently 848 advanced modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes with Lunn Poly. There were insufficient learners on customer service training programmes and this area was not inspected.

### Overall judgement

The quality of training is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of the retail travel training programme is good. Leadership and management and quality assurance are good, and equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

### GRADES

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	2

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

### KEY STRENGTHS

- good vocational training programme
- particularly good learner support
- good career progression by learners
- good management of training
- good use of management information system
- well-planned recruitment process to meet learners' and business needs
- extensive evaluation of training programmes leading to continuous improvement

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- some poor assessment practice
- slow start to national vocational qualifications
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more focused target-setting for learners
- better management of key skills programme
- more comprehensive training for industrial tutors and trainers

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors from the ALI and one inspector from Estyn spent a total of 51 days with Lunn Poly during July and September 2002. They interviewed 142 learners, 70 workplace supervisors, 45 shop managers and one regional manager. Inspectors visited 110 shops. They observed seven assessments and interviewed nine staff from the subcontracted training company. Fourteen members of Lunn Poly head office staff were interviewed. Inspectors observed nine training sessions. They examined a range of documents, including 97 portfolios of evidence, 80 individual learning plans, records of learner support, data, evaluation questionnaires and their analysis, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures, assessment and internal verification records and reports from awarding bodies. They studied Lunn Poly's self-assessment report, which had been updated in November 2001 as part of the annual self-assessment cycle, and a revised development plan written in August 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	1	3	5	0	0	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Lunn Poly Limited is a large national travel agency chain with branches across the United Kingdom. The company was established over 100 years ago as the Polytechnic Touring Association and was acquired by the Thomson Travel Group PLC in 1972. Following a reorganisation in 2001, Lunn Poly is now owned by its parent company TUI UK, (Touristic Union Internationale UK), which operates and retails travel and tourism products across Europe. The company has 765 shops throughout the country, divided into three divisions. In each division there are approximately 12 regions. Each region has a shop manager who co-ordinates the modern apprenticeship programme in their region. Lunn Poly has been providing government-funded training since 1988. The training programme is managed through the company's funded schemes department at its head office in Leamington Spa. There are 11 staff who work in the funded schemes department. The resource manager for funded schemes has overall responsibility for the government-funded training programme. There are 848 young people in training in England and Wales on advanced modern apprenticeships. Learners find out about their training through Lunn Poly publicity or careers advisers, and prospective learners apply through the company's head office. Most off-the-job training takes place in regional training centres across the country. A team of trainers, who are shop managers, provide the off-the-job training. All assessment and internal verification is subcontracted to a large specialist national travel and tourism training company and a local college for customer service. Approximately 40 of the subcontractor's assessors and internal verifiers are responsible for Lunn Poly learners. There were insufficient learners on customer services training programmes to be included in this inspection. Lunn Poly's government-funded training is funded through the National Contracting Service (NCS). The company operates in areas of high and low unemployment.



### **Work-based learning for young people**

3. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory with 59 per cent of learners who start training programmes being retained, and 56 per cent achieving their full modern apprenticeship framework. Achievement of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 is particularly good at 71 per cent. Virtually all of those learners who are still on the programme at the end of their course achieve their full modern apprenticeship. A high percentage of learners are employed either during, or on completion of, their training programme.

4. Learners have a thorough and well-devised 12-week induction to the workplace. This helps them develop quickly and confidently into the job role. There is a good relevant programme of on- and off-the-job training, and learners develop the essential skills and knowledge needed for the travel industry. There is particularly good learner support, provided by the funded-schemes department, workplace supervisors, shop managers and assessors. All learners have regular study time in work, where they work on good self-study and activity packs. In particular at NVQ level 2, learners work to a very high standard that exceeds the requirements of their NVQ. There is however, a delayed start to the NVQ for some learners, and key skills training and assessment starts late in the training programme. There is some poor assessment practice, with insufficient recording of assessors' observations of learners at work, professional discussions and questions.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Grade 2

5. Lunn Poly is a major national travel agency which is part of the TUI UK group. It has its own recently appointed board of directors. There is a director with responsibility for human resources, and a head of resourcing. The company has over 6,000 employees, of whom 848 are work-based learners. The resource manager for funded schemes, who reports to the head of resourcing, is responsible for the work-based learning programmes. The resource manager has a team of 11 staff responsible for all aspects of the training programme including recruitment, administration of the learners, training material, and course management and financial analysis. A further six staff have recently, or are currently, being recruited into the department. Each member of the team has a job profile stating their specific responsibilities. Staff meet weekly to discuss priorities for the week and other relevant issues. All staff discuss their work with their manager informally on a weekly basis and more formally on a monthly basis. The funded schemes department supports all shop managers, industrial tutors and learners. They write, evaluate, review and update all the training material for learners, industrial tutors and other training. Lunn Poly has equal opportunities and anti-harassment at work policies and a grievance procedure, copies of which are held in each shop. The equal opportunities policy makes specific reference to government-funded learners alongside rights and responsibilities of all staff and the company. All learners are given an equal opportunities statement during their induction. The resource manager has overall responsibility for equal opportunities for learners. Lunn Poly has systems and procedures for evaluating the work-based learning programme. Self-assessment is carried out on an annual basis, with the most recent report issued in November 2001 as part of the annual cycle. An updated development plan was written in August 2002 to review the company's progress towards actions. Lunn Poly achieved the Investors in People standard in 1997 and was re-accredited in 2000. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

### STRENGTHS

- good management of training
- good internal and external communications
- good use of management information systems
- well-planned recruitment process
- highly effective appraisal system for learners and staff
- extensive evaluation of training programmes leading to continuous improvement

### WEAKNESSES

- ineffective promotion of training to learners from under-represented groups
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity
- ineffective national strategy for internal verification

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more thorough health and safety monitoring
- better management of key skills programme
- more comprehensive training for industrial tutors and trainers
- increased understanding by learners of NVQ appeals process

6. The work-based learning programme is well managed and organised at all stages. Training has been carefully planned and structured to meet learners' needs. It is regarded as an important part of the business, contributing significantly to its success and future growth. The funded schemes department was restructured recently following a comprehensive time-management analysis. There has been a recent commitment from the company to recruit more staff for the funded-schemes department. There are now specific staff members dedicated to aspects of learner support. Funded-schemes staff maintain detailed and comprehensive records of all contact with learners, industrial tutors and managers.

7. Internal and external communications are good, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. There are effective communications between the funded-schemes department and shop managers and industrial tutors. All training material, information, activities and self-study packs are clear and well written. Within the funded-schemes department, the management style is open and supportive. All staff are able to regularly discuss work and team goals. During a recent restructure of the company, there was good consultation with staff and effective communication of key information affecting individual roles and responsibilities. Staff are well informed about the company's decision-making. There are high quality staff magazines that keep staff up to date. There are productive regular quarterly meetings with the subcontractor to discuss resources and training, assessment issues and good practice. A recently agreed service level agreement is now monitored during these meetings. Assessors are kept up to date with learners' progress through briefing newsletters.

8. There is good use of the management information system to monitor the training programme, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Data on recruitment, learners' administration, learners' progression, early leavers, budgets and financial control, are analysed and used effectively in management decision-making. The resource manager analyses data from assessment visits to ensure learners receive a consistently sound assessment from the 40 subcontracted assessors. There is good financial analysis of training costs, including the wider business implications to the company of the modern apprenticeship scheme.

9. The strategy for recruitment of learners is linked effectively to a four-year rolling business plan. This plan clearly identifies the future vacancies for qualified staff and the level of training needed. The recruitment and selection process is thorough, comprehensive and inclusive. There is a prompt response to any application and

candidates are interviewed and tested quickly and efficiently.

10. There is a highly effective annual appraisal system for staff and learners. In addition, all new starters are appraised after their 12-week induction, before they start the next stage of their training programme. For learners and industrial tutors, the modern apprenticeship programme is an integral aspect of their appraisal. Appraisal leads to personal, professional and career development. Staff are set appropriate targets which are monitored regularly on a three- to four-week basis.

11. Managers and learners currently complete risk assessments through health and safety self-assessments of the workplace. However, there is currently no similar mechanism for monitoring the training centres. For example, one training centre used for off-the-job training, has health and safety hazards and is not appropriate as a training environment. The company is currently reviewing its health and safety monitoring system.

12. Learners, managers and industrial tutors do not fully understand key skills training and assessment as an integral part of the overall training programme. Trainers currently carry out key skills initial assessment and introduce the relevant activity packs, and the subcontracted assessors carry out accreditation of prior learning and assessment. There is insufficient co-ordination between these aspects of the training programme. Many learners, exempt from key skills, still complete the training and assessment.

13. Industrial tutors and trainers receive relevant annual training. However, some industrial tutors who have not been a modern apprentice themselves, have not received specific training related to the NVQ and key skills. There are currently plans to run a second training day to supplement the one day training already held for industrial tutors. New trainers do not receive sufficient training to help them develop their techniques in providing training to learner groups.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 3**

14. Lunn Poly has clear recruitment and selection procedures with specific, comprehensive criteria for selection. There is appropriate guidance on how to interview prospective candidates with set questions and good examples in line with current legislation. There is an effective system for monitoring all applicants by age, gender, ethnicity and reason for rejection. Promotional material is good for the modern apprenticeship. There is insufficient promotion of training to learners from under-represented groups. There is poor representation of learners from under-represented groups, a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Only 8 per cent of learners are men and only 1 per cent of learners are from a minority ethnic background. Five learners have declared that they have a disability. The current promotional leaflet contains a picture of a group of learners that includes men, but there is no similar image to encourage applicants from minority ethnic groups or those who have a disability. Promotional material states that the company holds the Investors in People standard, but does not contain their equal opportunities statement. Some shops have an appropriate mix of staff that reflect the local minority ethnic community. The company recently agreed specific targets for recruitment by gender and ethnicity, which are representative of the travel industry.

15. All learners complete an equal opportunities activity as part of their induction pack. This makes good use of the policy held in the shop where they are employed, and the supplementary information about employment rights and responsibilities. In 2002, all staff received equal opportunities training which focused on prejudices, stereotyping, discrimination and diversity. The training material was produced at head office and made good reference to current legislation and the relevant company policy. Some learners, however, had insufficient recollection of this training or how equality of opportunity applies to them. Three staff from the funded schemes department have attended external equal opportunities training and have shared this information with the whole team. All staff who work in the department have a good awareness of equality of opportunity and how to deal with grievances and appeals. There are no examples of formally recorded appeals. Where issues have arisen with assessors, the team has dealt with these in a timely, appropriate and constructive manner.

16. There is insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace, particularly during progress reviews and assessments. Equal opportunities discussions focus only on any relevant learners' problems. The mechanism for recording this information is inappropriate. Both the manager and industrial tutor sign the relevant paperwork. Most learners have a good understanding of the grievance procedures, but not of the assessment appeals process. Equality of opportunity is not routinely discussed at meetings and a working party mentioned in self-assessment has not met for two years.

17. There is poor access to some of the training centres. Most of the training centres are above Lunn Poly shops and are only accessible by stairs. There are some examples of where adaptations have been made to the workplace to meet the needs of learners with disabilities, including making changes to the telephone system in one shop where the

learner has hearing difficulties.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 2

18. There are clear, well-written policies and procedures covering the training provision. There is extensive monitoring and evaluation of the training through regular questionnaires and surveys. These are carried out at various stages throughout the training programme and collect feedback from learners, shop managers and industrial tutors. The analyses of responses are used to improve training and resources. Regional co-ordinators evaluate course material during their annual training. The training material for industrial tutors has been recently revised. Other recent improvements include, the addition of new material in learners' induction packs and improvements to the activity packs for NVQs at level 2. Staff from the funded-schemes department and regional managers, observe training events and provide constructive feedback for improvements. All staff are able to suggest improvements and are involved effectively in developing new learning materials. When changes are made to course material or administration, the effectiveness of these changes are evaluated.

19. Retention and achievement rates have improved over the past three years. The funded schemes department conducts a thorough and detailed analysis of the reasons why learners leave the training programme early. Following this analysis, the resources manager has made a number of recommendations to senior human resource management which are currently being reviewed.

20. Whilst there are appropriate arrangements for internal verification regionally, including final and interim verification, there is no similar national strategy. Nationally, internal verification is not managed well and there is no overall sampling plan. Some learners' portfolios of evidence have been internally verified several times, while others have not been examined. Internal verification takes place very late in the training programme. Currently the subcontractor internally verifies 10 per cent of learners' portfolios. There are insufficient arrangements for this sample size to be adjusted nationally to allow for NVQ units or assessors which require more attention. Where internal verifiers require direction from the lead internal verifier, this guidance is not provided effectively. There is some poor assessment practice, with insufficient recording of assessors' observations of learners at work, professional discussions and questions.

21. The current self-assessment report was written by the resource manager and then passed to the funded-schemes team. Analysis from questionnaires and data on retention and achievement are successfully used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the training programme. The self-assessment report is very self-critical and largely accurate in identifying appropriate judgements. Inspectors gave similar grades to those given in the self-assessment report. The development plan has been successfully used to develop the training programme.

### **Good Practice**

*In one of the regions, an effective programme of diversity training was carried out using external consultants. Discussions are now taking place to introduce this training to all regions.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	845	2

22. There are 845 advanced modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. Of these, 503 learners are working towards NVQs at level 2, and 342 learners are working towards NVQs at level 3 in travel services. All learners take the level 2 NVQ in their first year, progressing to level 3 in the second year. In 2001, most learners started their key skills training and assessment once they have completed their NVQ at level 2. In 2002, learners start key skills training and assessment during their first year. Learners are either employed or on a work placement at one of the Lunn Poly shops in England or Wales. Prospective learners find out about their training programmes through advertisements in shops and local newspapers, careers advisers and regional recruitment and selection events. All prospective learners then apply for a place on the modern apprenticeship programme through Lunn Poly's head office. They are interviewed over the telephone and in person by shop managers, assistant shop managers and regional sales managers. All are initially assessed for their suitability for the travel industry, general knowledge and their application of geography, numeracy and literacy. An additional key skills initial assessment, which is completed at the first off-the-job training session, is used to identify learners' additional learning support needs. Learners have a 12-week induction to Lunn Poly, the workplace and the role of a travel salesperson. They are allocated an industrial tutor, who is usually the assistant shop manager, to support them at work and manage their on-the-job training. Learners have monthly progress reviews with their industrial tutor and shop manager. Off-the-job training is carried out at regional training centres across the country for two days each month. Learners are given activity packs at the start of their training programme which are completed in the workplace. All assessment and internal verification is subcontracted to a specialist travel training provider. Assessors visit learners every three months to carry out assessment in the workplace and review learners' progress. All assessors and internal verifiers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Assessors accredit learners for prior learning during the first year of the training programme. Learners find out about careers with Lunn Poly through their industrial tutors, managers and the human resources department.



The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	546		540		287		214		221							
Retained*	0		0		164	57	120	56	122	55						
Successfully completed	0		0		163	57	118	55	120	54						
Still in learning	503		341		1	0	0	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

## STRENGTHS

- good vocational training programme
- particularly good learner support
- good career progression for learners
- thorough induction to the workplace
- good range of work produced by learners of NVQ level 2

## WEAKNESSES

- some poor assessment practice
- slow start to the NVQ
- late introduction to key skills training and assessment

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more convenient geographical locations for off-the-job training
- more focused target-setting

23. Training is good and learners experience a varied and relevant range of on- and off-the-job training. Off-the-job training comprises much of the NVQ, key skills, and understanding of company and product knowledge. All off-the-job training is prepared at head office. Off-the-job training is particularly consistent in regards to content, learning materials and teaching methods. Learners are able to develop good working

relationships with other learners. Each off-the-job training session is provided by two trainers, who are shop managers, and have attended a relevant one-day training course. Trainers work well together, and use a variety of effective teaching styles. Learners are kept up to date with regards to current industry practice. Learners' knowledge is checked regularly through formally set tests at each training session. Some learners have to travel considerable distances to attend off-the-job training days. Locations are determined by region and are not necessarily the closest to each learner's shop. There are plans to carry out an evaluation to identify those learners with long journeys and provide alternative locations. Lunn Poly has developed self-study packs to help those learners who cannot attend the off-the-job training or if the sessions have been cancelled. All learners complete a range of well-designed activity packs to help them collect relevant NVQ evidence at work. Industrial tutors are involved effectively in planning on-the-job training, ensuring learners make good progress, and assessing their activities. However, industrial tutors and assessors do not routinely mark poor spelling and grammar.

24. Learner support is particularly good, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Many of the industrial tutors and other staff have been modern apprentices and have a good understanding of the training programme requirements. They spend time with learners before and after the off-the-job training days in order to both prepare them for tasks and follow-up the training. Learners receive regular study time at work. Staff from the funded-schemes department provide an effective and immediate information and clarification service for the NVQ, key skills and activity packs. There is good access to external support services. For example, counselling support was arranged for a learner at a shop where a robbery took place. There are many good examples of where practical support has been given by industrial tutors. For example, one tutor attended the off-the-job training days for six months on behalf of a learner who was on maternity leave. The tutor was then able to provide her with the relevant course notes, activities and guidance.

25. There is good career progression, with 20 per cent of learners who started training programmes between 1998 and 2000, promoted to assistant manager level. Many staff who started as modern apprentices are now shop managers or regional managers. Learners are able to transfer to other shops to gain experience of different working environments. Learners are encouraged to succeed through a range of company incentives. These include the star of the week, employee of the month, and modern apprentice of the year, awards. In 2001, two learners were runners up in a national learners' award scheme. Many of these achievements are well-publicised in the company's in-house magazines.

26. Learners complete a thorough induction, which comprises a well-devised, and carefully planned activity pack. This includes a variety of particularly relevant tasks completed through individual research, on-the-job training by the industrial tutor and manager, observing staff and carrying out job activities. Learners quickly become competent and confident in working in travel. Industrial tutors use a detailed checklist on the first day of a learners' employment to ensure a consistent approach to induction.

Progress is monitored on a monthly basis, in addition to an appraisal at the end of the induction period. Learners receive a congratulatory certificate when they successfully complete the induction.

27. Learners produce a wide range of good quality work at NVQ level 2. Their work clearly demonstrates their occupational competence and understanding. Learners are involved in a variety of work-based activities and bookings completed to a high standard. Portfolios of evidence are well organised and comprehensive. Learners and industrial tutors make good use of a timetable of expected progress to evaluate learners' progress nationally, against other learners. Learners have regular monthly progress reviews with their industrial tutor and manager, and three-monthly assessment reviews with their assessor. Some of the targets set by assessors are based on the achievement of one or more units. Industrial tutors are not sufficiently involved in agreeing targets during the progress reviews. Targets set by assessors, shop managers and industrial tutors, are not sufficiently specific. Some industrial tutors do not have sufficient knowledge of the NVQ requirements and key skills, to set appropriate targets.

28. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory and have improved steadily over the past three years. For example, the retention rates for learners who started training programmes between 1998 and 2000, are 55 per cent in 1998-99, 56 per cent in 1999-2000, 57 per cent in 2000-01, and 63 per cent in 2001-02. Achievement rates are 54 per cent in 1998-99, 55 per cent in 1999-2000, and 57 per cent in 2000-01. Of those learners who are retained, 99 per cent achieve their full modern apprenticeship framework. The achievement rate for NVQs at level 2 is particularly good at 71 per cent. Many learners gain jobs either during, or on completion of, their training programme.

29. There is poor assessment practice by some of the subcontracted assessors. Assessors complete insufficient observations of learners at work. Many observation records are not detailed and do not provide sufficient detail of competence. Observation records are not cross-referenced to the NVQ requirements. Where assessors use professional discussions and questions to supplement the portfolio evidence, these are not always recorded. Assessments at NVQ level 2 are thorough. Assessors authenticate portfolio evidence with booking information held on computers. However, portfolio evidence does not clearly show whether an assessor has consistently checked the authenticity of learners' work, or the context in which the work was carried out. In some cases, all the evidence requirements are not met, particularly in relation to complex and group bookings at NVQ level 3. NVQ units are assessed very late in the training programme. It is difficult for learners to gain accreditation of units if they leave the training programme early. Learners with prior achievement of travel-related vocational qualifications do not have their qualifications accredited at the start of their training programme.

30. There is a slow start to the NVQ. Induction lasts for 12 weeks, regardless of when the learner starts, their individual abilities, or rate of progress. Some learners finish the induction pack early, but cannot start their NVQ at level 2 until the first off-the-job

training session in mid-September. The first assessors' visit is not until November or December. Some learners make slow progress. Some learners complete their NVQ level 2 early, in May or June, but have to wait until October before starting their NVQ at level 3. In 2002, learners were sent key skills activities and logs for recording holiday bookings to complete. Many learners are not aware of how this evidence will be used, or if the bookings they have recorded are relevant. Learners have an insufficient understanding of the NVQ requirements. Although information is available on the company intranet, learners do not have their own separate site with relevant information on the modern apprenticeship.

31. The key skills initial assessment is completed during the first off-the-job training session. However in 2001, learners did not start their key skills training or assessment until the end of the first year of their training programme. During the first year of their training programme, some learners were provided with activities designed to give key skills support. For some learners, this does not provide appropriate support for their additional learning needs. Often these activities are provided after learners have been on their training programmes for several months. Frequently, there is a delay of several months before the prior achievements of learners' key skills are accredited. Many learners are unsure whether or not they have to complete their key skills qualifications.

#### **Good Practice**

*Learners at one shop lead the team briefing each Monday to discuss bookings, activities or evidence requirements for the NVQ. A noticeboard is also provided which contains a record of priorities from these discussions and targets for that week.*