

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Training Services 2000 Ltd Reinspection**

**30 April 2003**



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. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

Training Services 2000 Ltd is a privately owned training company based in the centre of Derby, which provides training for young people in engineering and administration. It currently provides training for 46 young people through its contract with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council. In business administration, there are three advanced modern apprentices and 11 foundation modern apprentices. In engineering, there are 15 advanced modern apprentices, 14 foundation modern apprentices and three learners following a national vocational qualification (NVQ). All learners are employed by local companies. Business administration learners are also employed by local companies. Two learners are directly employed by the provider.

### Overall judgement

The original inspection found the provision to be satisfactory in engineering and in business administration. Leadership and Management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance were judged to be unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, the provision of training in engineering and business administration was found to be good. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity were also judged to be good. Quality assurance was satisfactory.

### Grades awarded

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	4	2
Quality assurance	4	3

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2

## TRAINING SERVICES 2000 LTD REINSPECTION

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

- very effective strategies for retaining learners
- good training and development of staff
- particularly good work placements
- good individual support for learners in engineering

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- poor planning of off-the-job learning sessions

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better initial assessment of occupational aptitude
- more involvement of employers and learners in self-assessment

## THE REINSPECTION

1. The reinspection took place between September 2002 and April 2003. Monitoring visits were carried out in December 2002 and April 2003. The reinspection of the areas of learning was carried out in February 2003 by a team of three inspectors who spent a total of nine days with the company. A self-assessment report was produced in August 2002 and updated in January 2003, and again in February 2003. No learning sessions were observed during the reinspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

### STRENGTHS

- effective monitoring of learners' progress and attendance
- very effective strategies for retaining learners
- good training and development of staff
- good promotion of equality of opportunity for staff and learners

### WEAKNESSES

- poor planning of off-the-job learning sessions

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of data for decision-making and target-setting
- more involvement of employers and learners in self-assessment

2. Leadership and management are good. All of the weaknesses identified in the original inspection have been dealt with. Some of the original weaknesses are now strengths.

3. Training Services 2000 Ltd (TS2000) effectively monitors learners' progress and attendance. This strength was identified in the original inspection report and has been maintained. Learners' progress records are kept in each learner's portfolio and are regularly updated. This enables staff to identify slow progress and to respond effectively. Punctuality and attendance rates at TS2000's training centre and at college are good. Subcontractors provide TS2000 with weekly attendance records for all learners, and learners whose attendance or behaviour is identified as a cause for concern are effectively dealt with. This strength was identified at the original inspection.

4. TS2000 has very effective strategies for retaining learners. Retention rates for advanced and foundation modern apprentices in engineering and business administration are good. This strength was not evident at the time of the original inspection. Welfare reviews are carried out every 12 weeks by one of the company's directors. These reviews are comprehensive and enable TS2000 to identify vulnerable learners and to take remedial action where appropriate. For example, learners who need additional help with basic skills in order to achieve their qualification are given additional support in the workplace or at the training centre. Learners who do not complete their planned programme of study by their expected end date are supported until they achieve the qualification.



5. The original inspection identified insufficient staff appraisals as a weakness. This weakness has been rectified. TS2000 established a procedure for staff appraisal in February 2001, which now operates successfully. All staff are appraised annually. The directors appraise each other and other staff are appraised by a relevant member of the management team. In January 2001, TS2000 was awarded the Investors in People standard, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

6. The training and development of staff at TS2000 is now good. All staff are required to identify their training and development needs as part of their annual appraisal and to monitor their progress at subsequent appraisals. Training and development priorities are aligned with the company's business objectives. Reviews of the effectiveness of training are carried out. This strength was recognised in the company's self-assessment report.

7. There is satisfactory monitoring of health and safety at TS2000. Risk assessments are carried out at all work placements and a full health and safety audit is conducted every two years.

8. Off-the-job training in engineering is subcontracted to six local colleges of further education. TS2000 has service-level agreements with each subcontractor and there is satisfactory monitoring of the training provided by them.

9. The original inspection team identified insufficient use of data to guide decision-making, action-planning and target-setting, as a weakness. This weakness has been tackled by the company and its use of data is now satisfactory. Managers have access to data on learner numbers and retention and achievement statistics. This information is used to ensure that the company complies with its contractual agreement with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). However, the company does not produce these data as a matter of routine to enable it to make decisions and to set targets.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 2**

10. TS2000 has made considerable progress in its approach to equality of opportunity and now deals effectively with equal opportunities matters. The company introduced an equal opportunities policy in December 2001. The original inspection identified inadequate promotion of equal opportunities as a weakness. This weakness has been rectified and there is now good promotion of equality of opportunity for staff and learners. At induction, learners are made aware of the importance of equality of opportunity and this is reinforced at the 12-weekly welfare reviews. Staff induction also stresses equal opportunities. Three of the four directors are currently on an advanced equal opportunities course and all staff have a good understanding of diversity. The company has been actively involved in local initiatives to recruit women into engineering, and it has participated in open days at local schools and provided taster days at its training centre for local school children. The company has not yet been successful in recruiting any women into engineering. There is, however, a good balance between the number of male and female learners in the business administration programme.

11. The original inspection identified insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies as a weakness. During the reinspection, monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies was judged to be satisfactory. TS2000 requires employers to have an equal opportunities policy in place before a placement is offered. Companies that do not have their own equal opportunities policy are required to comply with TS2000's policy. A written agreement to this effect is drawn up and signed by the company and by one of TS2000's directors. Equal opportunities matters are monitored by TS2000 staff when they visit employers to conduct welfare reviews with learners, and also when workplace assessments are carried out.

12. The TS2000 training centre is not accessible to learners with restricted mobility. However, TS2000's statement on disability makes provision for learners with restricted mobility to receive support towards their qualification at their employer's premises instead of having to attend the training centre.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 3

13. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The original inspection identified inadequate monitoring of training as a weakness. This issue has now been satisfactorily dealt with. However, there is poor planning of off-the-job learning sessions at TS2000's training centre. Learning sessions are not sufficiently structured or planned. There is no established procedure for monitoring and reporting on the quality of learning sessions at the training centre. There is, however, effective monitoring of off-the-job learning sessions by subcontractors, and observations of such sessions take place regularly.

14. At the time of the original inspection, there was no established system for obtaining feedback from learners or employers. This issue has now been resolved. Learners' and employers' questionnaires were recently redesigned so that respondents have an opportunity to comment and make suggestions about how training can be improved. Responses from these questionnaires have been summarised but it is too early to say whether they have resulted in identifiable improvements.

15. TS2000 produced its first self-assessment report in October 2000 and a new report was produced in August 2001 in time for the first inspection. A self-assessment report was also produced in August 2002 for the reinspection, and this was updated in January, February and March 2003. The original inspection concluded that TS2000's self-assessment process was satisfactory but that it did not fully involve all partners. At reinspection, inspectors found that this issue has not yet been resolved. In preparing its most recent self-assessment report, the company involved all of its staff, but it did not formally involve learners or employers. The self-assessment report accurately identifies many of the company's key strengths and weaknesses, but some strengths are overstated and a few weaknesses are not identified. The provider's development plan is carefully monitored and actions required are carried out in a timely manner.

16. Internal verification is satisfactory. There is a comprehensive and well-structured sampling plan and feedback to assessors is helpful and constructive.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	32	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

### STRENGTHS

- very good retention rates
- particularly thorough assessment practices
- wide range of supportive employers
- good individual support for learners

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient on-the-job training plans
- poor off-the-job training by some subcontractors

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better initial assessment of learners' occupational aptitude
- better integration of key skills into work-based learning

17. TS2000 has recently updated its self-assessment action plan and has implemented improvements to build on strengths and to rectify weaknesses identified at the original inspection and through self-assessment. All plans have dates for implementation and identify individual responsibility for action. This action has led to clear improvements in the management and provision of training and assessment.

18. Retention rates on programmes are particularly good and have improved since the original inspection. On advanced modern apprenticeship programmes, there have been no early leavers in the past two years and on foundation modern apprenticeships, retention was 86 per cent and 100 per cent in 2000 and 2001 respectively. Retention rates on NVQ programmes are also good. Achievement of learning plans is now improving and the progress of most learners indicates that this trend will be maintained.

19. Learners showing ability at NVQ or foundation apprenticeship level are moved onto advanced programmes in a timely manner. Learners are encouraged by TS2000 and by employers to progress to their highest level of achievement. Some learners are identified by their companies as potential managers and work towards advanced qualifications at college. Several continue their studies following completion of apprenticeships and study towards degree level qualifications.

20. The last inspection report identified lack of assessment by observation. This weakness has been rectified. A programme of observations by assessors has been implemented and outcomes recorded in individual records and portfolios. Assessments are completed from an early stage in the programme. The monitoring of learners' progress is recorded on a workplace assessment record. Learners receive prompt feedback on their performance during assessment. There is thorough recording of achievement of NVQ and key skills completions and of on-the-job training received. This information is made available to employers who make comments on the record as confirmation of competence in the workplace.

21. Learners provide a wide range of evidence for their portfolios. Good use is made of technical workplace documents and drawings which are directly attributable to the learner. Supervisors endorse the quality of the work and provide authentic witness testimony for tasks completed when assessors are not present. Most portfolios are well structured and easy to follow. Digital photography is used effectively to demonstrate the range of work. Assessors encourage self-assessment of individual progress. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements.

22. All learners are employed. Employers demonstrate a high level of interest in their learners and offer a wide range of skills and opportunities. Many learners nearing the end of their apprenticeships were transferred to TS2000 from another provider in 2000. This transition was completed with minimum disruption to learners' programmes. Many companies are involved in high-precision work and they demand work of a particularly high standard from their employees. Most employers continue to demonstrate a good understanding of NVQ qualifications. This was identified as a key strength at the original inspection.

23. Since the original inspection, TS2000 has made good progress in providing basic skills support for learners. Arrangements for basic skills support are satisfactory. Basic skills are systematically assessed on entry to the programme. Learners who are identified as having additional support needs are allocated off-the-job training during periods when colleges are on leave. This planning makes effective use of learners' time and is approved by employers. There have been substantial successes in improvements in basic skills following these sessions.

24. There are frequent and well-planned visits to monitor learners' progress in the workplace. Welfare review visits are arranged every 12 weeks and additional visits are arranged when learners are identified as requiring specific support. Learners hold

welfare reviews in high regard. There are examples of learners sharing information about personal problems and important health issues with the reviewer. Employers and assessors are not always aware of learners' personal problems. Resulting discussions have led to a better understanding of why learners' performance at work may have been adversely affected. There are several examples of learners facing redundancy who have been given additional help to complete their qualifications and find new employment. TS2000's assessors, who are particularly well qualified, continue to work with learners who leave programmes or exceed their time on funded programmes. Every effort is made to ensure that time has not been wasted and that learners complete their programmes. Assessors work effectively with a wide range of employers and a diverse range of skills in the workplace.

25. Employers are interviewed regularly in the early stages of employment to plan appropriate NVQ routes. In some cases, training schedules for each department have been agreed and are linked to company business needs. Target dates for completion have been agreed with some employers. The initial planning process is not followed up with an appropriate clear schedule to ensure that learners also meet the requirements of their selected qualification. The information supplied to employers about NVQs is appropriate. Systems are now in place to issue explanatory information on apprenticeship frameworks and copies of standards to employers.

26. There is poor co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training for some learners. Representatives from employers and colleges rarely meet to plan effective integration of learners' programmes. Some college courses are conducted independently and little attention is paid to the relevance of background knowledge to support learners' learning in the workplace. There is poor off-the-job training by some subcontractors. Learners have been sent home on some occasions because of lack of tutor cover to meet contractual requirements. Some learners, who have completed key skills, sit through key skills classes to meet the needs of other learners. They are not given appropriate, alternative work to do. One college lost the assessment and examination results for some learners. This meant several months' delay in progress for these learners, who had to repeat work previously completed. TS2000 responded appropriately to these problems and its actions ensured that learners were not unduly disadvantaged. These two weaknesses were not evident at the original inspection.

27. Resources at TS2000's training centre are good. Key skills training for learners is supported by the centre. There is an adequate supply of computers and office equipment for learners. Resources in the workplace are satisfactory. Employers ensure that learners are adequately equipped with appropriate tools, and personal protective and relevant specialised equipment.

28. The initial assessment process is satisfactory. However, it does not include an occupationally specific assessment linked to areas of engineering which would be most suitable for the learner. There is insufficient accurate guidance at this stage to help assessors make appropriate recommendations to employers. Discussions with employers to determine appropriate NVQs, however, are good.

29. The management of key skills is satisfactory. All learners receive a key skills initial assessment. Key skills are taught in the training centre. TS2000 is in the early stages of developing key skills integration into the work-based programme. Prior learning and achievement are identified, followed up and accredited towards the current qualification, particularly units of key skills, which may result in exemption from examinations. Learners are not fully aware of the importance of key skills. Progress is being made to identify assignments and areas where workplace evidence is appropriate.

30. Review visits make good use of individual learning plans to record learners' progress and changes to programmes as well as to record contact with assessors. The result is a clear picture of the progress made by learners. Managers are able to identify any gaps in the provision of support for learners and to take appropriate action.

#### Good Practice

*One learner, who was nearing the end of his level 3 NVQ was involved in an incident and received a prison sentence in January 2002. TS2000's staff approached the prison authorities to see if there was any way in which the learner could complete his qualification. This was unachievable in the prison environment.*

*On release from prison, every effort was made to persuade the employer to take the learner back to complete his NVQ. The company was in the process of allocating redundancies, but was persuaded by TS2000 to allow the learner to complete his NVQ and one additional qualification. The learner was subsequently successful in finding a new employer.*

## Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	14	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

### STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- particularly good work placements
- good achievement of additional qualifications

### WEAKNESSES

- ineffective planning of off-the-job-training sessions

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider variety of evidence in portfolios
- better initial assessment of occupational aptitude

31. TS2000 offers training in business administration for foundation and advanced modern apprentices. There are currently three advanced modern apprentices and 11 foundation modern apprentices.

32. Retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices are still good. Of the nine advanced modern apprentices who started their programme between 1998 and 2002, only one has left early. Similarly, of the eight foundation modern apprentices who started their programme in the same period, only one withdrew early. Achievement of all the targets in the framework for advanced modern apprentices in this period are good. Five out of seven learners have achieved all the targets and one is still in training. All learners on foundation modern apprenticeships completed the framework.

33. TS2000 finds employment for all its learners. These are all good-quality work placements with a range of modern business administration equipment. This was not identified as a strength at the original inspection. Employers work hard to ensure that a wide range of learning opportunities is made available to the learner. All learners are employed within their organisation during the period of their training programme.



Employers move learners from one department to another in order to ensure that they effectively develop the competences and key skills required for their NVQ. Employers provide good individual support for learners. TS2000 also provides good support for learners through the training reviews which it carries out with learners every six weeks. There is also a 12-weekly welfare review to look at all aspects of the learning experience. These reviews are carried out by one of TS2000's directors, who is not its work-based assessor. There is good communication between employers and TS2000. Employers are knowledgeable about the NVQ and key skill standards and they support learners in the production of appropriate evidence. Regular reviews and assessments take place in the workplace and in the training centre. Internal and external verification support the assessment process. Recommendations and actions required by external verifiers are carried out in a timely manner.

34. TS2000 offers all learners the opportunity to achieve additional qualifications free of charge. Learners and employers value this additional opportunity for achievement. All learners take up this offer and achieve a range of qualifications, particularly in information and communications technology, word processing, text processing, databases and spreadsheets. Unit accreditation of the NVQ also takes place.

35. Additional support is offered to all learners. Learners identified as having literacy and numeracy needs are offered appropriate support, either at the training centre or at the work placement. Welfare reviews are used to ensure that learners' support needs are identified and that appropriate action is taken. During an observation of a welfare review, a learner requested further development in communication skills and this was taken up quickly by the provider to set up the required development.

36. Employers release learners for one day a week to attend TS2000's training centre for off-the-job training. The training centre is well equipped with up-to-date computers and paper-based resources. However, there are no structured session plans for these days. Learners use workbooks to develop their skills. This weakness was not identified at the original inspection. During the day, learners receive an individual assessment, portfolio review session and key skills development.

37. The variety of evidence used in learners' portfolios is satisfactory. It meets the NVQ requirements and there are some good work-based observations and witness testimonies. However, they are all very similar and lack creativity. They do not sufficiently demonstrate the learners' skills in presenting evidence.

38. Initial assessment is satisfactory. This takes place before learners are offered a placement with TS2000. However, initial assessment does not focus enough on learners' suitability for training in business administration. It only provides assessment that is used as the basis for the requirements for key skills acquisition. Learners' potential suitability for achievement is satisfactorily assessed by TS2000. However, not enough is done to ensure that learners have the specific occupational skills and aptitudes for achieving a modern apprenticeship in business administration.

### **Good Practice**

*TS2000 has produced a learner-progression document for all learners, which provides information on the progress of achievement of the additional qualifications and the unit accreditation of the NVQ. This has been extremely well received by learners and employers. This document was developed in response to a need identified through the learners' and employers' surveys.*