

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Norfolk Training Services Limited Reinspection**

**19 September 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

Norfolk Training Service Limited was set up as an association in 1969 and became a limited company in 1974. The company's offices and main training premises are in Norwich. There is also a satellite training centre in Kings Lynn. Norfolk Training Service Limited contracts with Norfolk Learning and Skills Council to provide work-based learning for young people in engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology, and retailing, customer service and transportation. At the original inspection and the reinspection, the number of learners in information and communications technology was low. Therefore this training was not graded. The company also contracts with Jobcentre Plus to provide adults with basic employability training, short job-focused training, longer occupational training, the intensive activity period, short intensive basic skills training and the full-time education and training option of New Deal. There were 330 learners in total in the areas covered by the reinspection.

### Overall judgement

At the original inspection in June 2002, work-based learning in engineering, technology and manufacturing, and business administration, management and professional was unsatisfactory. Work-based learning in retailing, customer service and transportation was very weak overall. Within retailing, customer service and transportation, work-based learning for young people was very weak, and work-based learning for adults was unsatisfactory. Foundation programmes were satisfactory. Leadership and management and quality assurance were very weak and equality of opportunity was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection, foundation programmes and work-based learning in retailing, customer service and transportation for adults were good. All other aspects of the provision were satisfactory.

### Grades awarded

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	4	3
Quality assurance	5	3

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

## NORFOLK TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED REINSPECTION

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		None

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	5	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4	2

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3	2

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good progress by learners
- very effective communications within the company

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- unsatisfactory resources at one training centre

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

## THE REINSPECTION

1. Six inspectors spent a total of 31 days at Norfolk Training Services Limited (NTS). The reinspection was carried out in two stages. The first visit was made on 14 to 16 May 2003 and the second was made on 15 to 19 September 2003. Inspectors examined NTS's revised self-assessment report, which was prepared in July 2003. They visited 38 work placements and interviewed 40 workplace managers and supervisors and 93 learners. They also carried out 48 interviews with NTS's staff. Inspectors studied 37 learners' portfolios and 56 individual learning plans. Inspectors observed and graded three learning sessions.

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	2	2	4	0	0	8
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	6
Foundation programmes	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

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

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

### STRENGTHS

- very effective communications within the company
- good promotion of equality of opportunity to learners

### WEAKNESSES

- unsatisfactory resources at one training centre
- inadequate system for reviewing staff performance and setting individual targets

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more use of data to plan improvements
- more consistent use of checks on quality

2. Communications within NTS are very effective. These have enabled the company to make great improvements to the way it is managed and to the quality of learners' programmes. The board of directors regularly discusses strategic and day-to-day matters. Quarterly managers' meetings are used effectively to review performance against a wide range of measures and to identify where improvements can be made. These meetings review learners' feedback, visits to work placements and performance against contractual requirements. Team meetings are used to give thorough consideration to problems that affect the performance of staff and the progress of learners. Information and good practice are shared through these meetings. Good practice is also shared at meetings involving staff who carry out different roles or who work in different departments. Staff are kept well informed.

3. Business-planning is satisfactory. The business plan focuses on the day-to-day running of the business. NTS has a three-year development plan but this does not set out clear strategic aims. Staff throughout the organisation are involved in business-planning through the discussion of departmental plans which are clearly linked to the main business plan. Managers work towards the targets in the business plan and review the organisation's performance at quarterly management meetings. Performance is also reviewed on corporate training days and at managers' meetings. The business plan has a wide range of targets. These include targets relating to quality assurance, performance against contract and ratios of learners to staff. The business plan focuses on improving learners' experience and achieving targets. However, some targets, such as 'improve school links', are vague and it is not clear how some will be achieved.



4. Resources are satisfactory for learners in business administration, management and professional and retailing, customer service and transportation. Staff have suitable vocational experience and qualifications. The ratio of learners to staff is satisfactory. At one training centre, resources are unsatisfactory for learners in engineering, technology and manufacturing and for learners on foundation programmes.

5. Management information systems were poor at the original inspection, but are now satisfactory. The data produced for the reinspection were reliable. However, NTS does not make full use of the data to monitor performance and plan improvements. Information about performance against contract is generated weekly and managers are increasingly using this to monitor aspects of performance such as the number of learners who leave early. Data on performance are regularly reviewed at managers' meetings. Although NTS monitors the progress of individual learners, it does not monitor the progress of groups of learners to identify trends or differences between programmes.

6. NTS has a detailed literacy and numeracy strategy. Additional support is available to all learners. Learners who attend the training centre weekly find it easy to take up this support. Learners who do not visit the training centre as part of their training programme receive coaching in the workplace.

7. Staff training and development are considered part of business-planning. However, individual training needs are not identified through reviews of staff performance. Most staff have not had a formal appraisal in the past year and there is no system to ensure that staff are appraised regularly. When appraisals take place, measures of performance are vague and records often lack detail. Some appraisals do not result in clear targets and deadlines for achieving them. Although there is a system of meetings between individual staff and their managers, not all staff take part in these. The records of these meetings do not always review individual performance, effectively. Nor do they record progress or future aims and targets. Managers are responsible for setting individual targets for staff, but few managers set clear targets. However, members of the recruitment team are set targets that relate to the number of learners without work placements. Trainers and assessors' targets relate mainly to meeting contractual requirements.

## Equality of opportunity

## Contributory grade 3

8. Equality of opportunity is promoted to learners well. Both training centres are very welcoming and have displays with colourful posters promoting equality and diversity. General promotional and recruitment material contains images of learners from under-represented groups. NTS also uses publicity to encourage women to enter craft programmes and bus driver's training. Equality of opportunity forms part of all learners' inductions. Learners' understanding is monitored and reinforced four times during their programmes by discussing learners' responses to a questionnaire. The discussions form part of learners' progress reviews. Managers monitor learners' responses to the questionnaires and respond effectively and appropriately to learners' comments. All learners are given a summary of NTS's equal opportunities policies and procedures. This is written in simple language. Most learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory or better. Learners feel valued and know how they are expected to behave.

9. Since the original inspection, NTS has used various strategies to improve its monitoring of equality of opportunity at employers' premises. This monitoring is now satisfactory. Employers receive a checklist before learners start their work placements and NTS responds to any concerns that they raise. When employers do not have an equal opportunities policy, NTS suggests that they adopt its own policy and offers support and guidance. NTS gives employers a pack with information about equality and diversity. However, not all employers remember receiving the pack.

10. An equal opportunities officer is responsible for monitoring and promoting equality of opportunity. This officer deals with problems that arise, gives information to staff and organises training. NTS has a clear procedure for appointing staff, which is monitored by the equal opportunities officer. The equal opportunities officer gives extra training to learners who have a particularly poor understanding of equal opportunities. The officer was appointed only recently but has already taken some effective action.

11. NTS collects equal opportunities data, including data on gender, ethnicity and disability. Its analysis of these data is satisfactory. The company also analyses data on the postcodes of new learners and the secondary schools of learners who join learning programmes for young people. These data are regularly discussed by the management team and are used to identify under-represented groups in each area of learning and to set targets.

12. NTS has satisfactory policies and procedures, including an equal opportunities policy that was reviewed and updated in June 2003. It also has an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy, a statement on disability and a grievance procedure. These policies are reflected in a clearly written strategy.

13. Both training centres have limited access for learners with restricted mobility. NTS has started a building programme on one site to move most training areas to the ground floor and to build a toilet suitable for learners with disabilities. Insufficient investment in the second training centre seriously affects learners' experience and results in

inequalities. Some training areas at this training centre are too small. This makes it difficult to manage some activities, such as checking learners' work and supervising group activities. Some social areas at this training centre are cramped and unwelcoming. This training centre has poorer resources than the other training centre and less equipment and materials for learners to use.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 3

14. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The managing director has overall responsibility for quality assurance. He is assisted by a quality assurance manager and an assistant quality assurance manager. NTS has a quality assurance policy and procedures that outline the main roles and responsibilities of all staff. The quality assurance policy sets out managers' monitoring responsibilities clearly. NTS is accredited with an international quality assurance standard.

15. At the original inspection, quality assurance was ineffective. Since then, NTS has followed strategies that have enabled it to assure the quality of all business activities and training. Managers carry out regular activities to assure quality. These include interviewing employers and learners and observing training. Quarterly management meetings are effective in ensuring that managers carry out checks. These are also used to plan improvements. Although all managers carry out most of the required activities, some departments have not met all their targets for quality assurance. Observations of training take place but some trainers have not been observed regularly. Some observations of training have not focused sufficiently on learners. However, recent training has led to some improvements. Learners provide feedback at forums and through various questionnaires. Individual problems are dealt with quickly. Managers meet to analyse trends. A yearly review is carried out for each aspect of quality assurance, for example feedback from learners or observations of training. NTS produced detailed reports which provide useful information on trends within individual departments and across the organisation as a whole. The reports also comment on the effectiveness of the quality assurance system and make recommendations for improving it.

16. At the original inspection, self-assessment was inadequate. Self-assessment is now satisfactory. All staff are involved in self-assessment. Self-assessment is guided by feedback from learners and employers, and observations of training. Each team identifies areas where performance is weak, normal and strong, and managers evaluate the accuracy of these assessments. Progress against the company's action plan is regularly reviewed. However, the plan's targets are not always specific and some targets have no deadline. The self-assessment report accurately identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors during the reinspection.

17. Internal verification is satisfactory overall. NTS has a clear internal verification strategy. This clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of assessors and internal verifiers. Internal verification is satisfactory in business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer service and transportation and foundation programmes. There have been some weaknesses in internal verification in engineering, technology and manufacturing, such as infrequent observations. NTS has recognised this and is introducing a new system.

**Good Practice**

*Learners are given a document which summarises NTS's equal opportunities policies and procedures in simple language. It sets out clearly how learners are expected to behave and what they should do if they have problems.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	192	3

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

#### STRENGTHS

- good, comprehensive support for learners
- wide range of learning opportunities in the workplace

#### WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- poor accommodation and vehicles at one training centre

#### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better links between on- and off-the-job learning

18. Before they start their training, learners are interviewed to identify their individual interests, ambitions and needs for support. NTS uses suitable diagnostic tests to assess learners' literacy and to identify needs for additional support. Fifty-nine per cent of learners on craft programmes have been identified as needing additional learning support. Learners receive support promptly. However, some of the staff who provide the support are not suitably qualified. Learners speak positively about the improvement in their literacy skills. Learners who secure a work placement are given an experienced mentor in the workplace. Mentors are responsible for helping learners to develop their practical skills. All staff who work directly with learners have suitable vocational knowledge and experience. This enables learners to reach a suitable level of competence in engineering. Learners who do not have a work placement, develop their practical skills and background knowledge in the training centres. This increases their chances of employment. NTS's staff now visit learners frequently in the workplace and monitor their needs for training and pastoral support. NTS monitors learners' progress against previously agreed assessment plans and sets new targets when appropriate. However, learners and employers are not sufficiently involved in reviews of learners' progress. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities, and harassment and bullying and of their rights and responsibilities at work. The monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace is also satisfactory.

19. Learners have a wide range of learning opportunities at work. Employers range from small, privately owned garages and body-repair centres, to companies that make furniture. All learners in motor vehicle take part in a wide range of servicing and repairs. These involve all makes and models of vehicles and provide a wide range of suitable learning opportunities. Learners in wood skills are placed with employers such as bench joinery manufacturers, conservatory manufacturers and furniture manufacturers. Learners use an extensive range of industry-standard equipment at work.

20. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, both on and off the job. Learners gain the skills they need to achieve their qualifications. However, on- and off-the-job training are not sufficiently linked. The planning of assessment has improved and learners understand what is expected of them. There is satisfactory assessment and monitoring of learners' development of skills at work. However, many employers are not sufficiently involved in this. Some employers are unaware of learners' targets. Some are unaware of learners' progress towards their qualifications. Learners produce satisfactory work for their portfolios. However, some assessors are not identifying gaps on learners' job cards, such as missing signatures. Internal verification is satisfactory and does identify these inconsistencies in assessment. Currently learners are unable to gain accreditation of individual national vocational qualification (NVQ) units. Initial assessment of learners' key skills is satisfactory and key skills work is linked to vocational tasks.

21. There are satisfactory communications within and between the training centres. All motor-vehicle staff share information at scheduled meetings. The minutes of these meetings are detailed and refer to a range of performance measures that are used to identify trends or areas for improvement. However, examples of good and poor assessment practice are not routinely identified and shared with all staff.

22. At the original inspection, retention and achievement rates were poor. Achievement rates remain poor. In motor-vehicle engineering, only one learner has completed an advanced modern apprenticeship since 1999-2000. Of the 44 learners who started foundation modern apprentices in 1999-2000, eight have completed their modern apprenticeship framework and two are still in training. Of the 66 learners who started foundation modern apprenticeships in 2000-01, seven have completed their modern apprenticeship framework and seven are still in training. Some learners in wood skills work towards a qualification in background knowledge. The current achievement rate for this award is good at 70 per cent. However, no learner in wood skills has completed the foundation modern apprenticeship. NTS has recently taken various steps to improve retention rates, including the appointment of a retention officer. Retention rates are improving and are now satisfactory except for learners who are taking NVQs only. Of the 195 learners who started their training in 2002-03, 101 are still in training. Of the 88 learners who started foundation modern apprenticeships in 2002-03, 54 are still in training. Of the 106 learners who are working towards NVQs only and who started their training in 2002-03, 46 are still in training.

23. One training centre has sufficient resources. At the other training centre, resources

## NORFOLK TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED REINSPECTION

are unsatisfactory. The vehicles used for training at this centre are poorly maintained and rely on technology that is out of date. Some vehicles at this centre have defective bodywork. This makes them unsafe for learners to work on. The canteen at this training centre is drab and inadequate. The training centre is close to the railway line and sound insulation is poor. It is difficult for learners with restricted mobility to use the facilities at this training centre.

### Poor Practice

*A vehicle at one training centre is badly corroded. It has holes with rough edges, which make it unsafe for learners to work on.*



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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	34	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	9	None

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

**STRENGTHS**

- good assessment
- good support for learners in developing their careers and skills
- good rates of achievement of extra qualifications

**WEAKNESSES**

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress by some learners

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- stronger focus on achievement of units

24. Assessment was identified as a strength at the original inspection. Since then, it has improved further. Assessors visit the workplace at least every three weeks and often more frequently. Assessors keep good records of their visits and provide learners with excellent written and verbal feedback. Assessors make detailed observations, which form an important part of learners' evidence. They give concise written explanations and make clear judgements which confirm that products produced by learners are valid evidence. Learners are given responsible tasks in the workplace, such as the recording of time to be charged to clients. These activities are used to produce evidence for learners' portfolios. Assessors plan three visits at a time. This enables learners to plan ahead and gives them plenty of time to prepare products that can be used as evidence. At the original inspection, target-setting was inadequate. This weakness has now been put right. Learners have clear targets and succeed in meeting them. Individual learning plans contain short- and longer-term targets, which are continually revised. Workplaces have good commercial resources and learners benefit from following good business practice. Trainers and assessors are suitably qualified.

25. NTS and employers give learners good support in developing their skills and careers. At the original inspection, support for learners was a strength. Since then, it has improved further. Most employers are supportive. Most know what learners have

achieved and what they still need to achieve. Employers give useful advice on gathering evidence. Learners' needs are accurately identified at initial assessment and are used to design their individual learning plans. Learners attend off-the-job training in key skills. Learners who need it, also receive off-the-job training in literacy, numeracy and language. Many learners receive good support that helps them to take on more senior roles in the workplace. Some learners have been promoted to management positions. One employer has selected a learner to pursue a legal qualification. Many of the learners on programmes for young people are not in employment. These learners are given suitable work placements and a good proportion of them eventually gain full employment. Over the past four years, the proportion of learners moving into jobs has risen from 25 per cent to 43 per cent. Learners in employability training gain a wide range of skills that will help them to get a job. These learners develop their confidence, self-esteem, and jobsearch skills as well as their vocational skills. Learners in employability training have supportive work placements. They are given good guidance in well-recorded progress reviews that fully involve employers.

26. Many learners benefit from gaining extra qualifications in information technology (IT). Training in IT has improved since the original inspection. Of the learners who do not have a job when they start their training, about 48 per cent achieve a qualification or a combination of qualifications in word processing and using spreadsheets and databases. Learners taking extra qualifications in IT benefit from well-planned training and good resources. Learners work in small groups and receive individual tuition, which increases their motivation. Some employed learners are also working towards extra qualifications in IT.

27. At the original inspection, retention and achievement rates were a weakness. These are still a weakness. Since 2000, only one advanced modern apprentice out of 16 has completed the modern apprenticeship framework and only 18 foundation modern apprentices out of 106 have completed the framework. Over the same period, just five of the 53 learners taking NVQs only have achieved their qualification. However, 75 per cent of the foundation modern apprentices who started their training in 2002-03 are still in learning.

28. During the past six months, many learners have started to make faster progress but some learners are still making slow progress towards the targets on their individual learning plans. There have been various staff changes and some learners have had three different assessors. Some learners have made slow progress in developing their key skills. Both learners and NTS are sometimes unclear about exemptions from key skills tests. Some learners have completed few units of their NVQs and are unclear about their progress. NTS has recognised many of these problems and is taking steps to put them right.

29. At the original inspection, co-ordination of on- and off-the-job learning was a weakness. NTS has taken many steps to put this right and the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is generally satisfactory.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	18	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	29	2

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

**STRENGTHS**

- good support for all learners
- good progress by adult learners
- good assessment on programmes for young people

**WEAKNESSES**

- poor achievement rates on programmes for young people

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better information for employers on progress by learners on programmes for young people
- greater development of teaching skills by staff in retailing and customer service

30. NTS and employers give learners good support. This was a strength at the original inspection and remains a strength. Assessors and trainers visit learners at work at least every two weeks and often more frequently. They record and monitor learners' progress effectively and quickly identify any personal problems. Assessors and trainers either help learners with personal problems themselves or refer them to a suitable agency. Materials have been translated for some learners who speak English as an additional language. NTS offers learners practical help with personal difficulties. For example, it has a clothes bank for learners who do not have suitable clothes for their role at work. Initial assessment is accurate. This ensures that young people are placed on suitable programmes and set achievable goals, and that adults are working towards achievable qualifications that will help them gain employment. Learners have a high regard for NTS's staff and feel able to consult and confide in them. Employers are also supportive and provide good individual coaching to help learners carry out their roles at work. Employers offer pastoral support. They help learners to fit into the working environment if they are new to employment or are returning to it. Workplaces have good resources and provide good examples of commercial practice. Some employers of learners on programmes for young people are not fully aware of learners' progress.

31. Adult learners are making good progress. Of the learners recruited in 2002-03, 49 per cent have gained a recognised qualification that will improve their opportunities for employment. A further 10 per cent are still working towards a qualification. Since April 2003, 40 per cent of learners have achieved a recognised qualification and a further 30 per cent are still working towards a qualification. During this period, 67 per cent of learners who have worked towards lift truck qualifications have already achieved them and a further 26 per cent are still in training. Of the learners who have been working towards light goods vehicle qualifications, 16 per cent have achieved them and a further 50 per cent are still in training. The proportion of learners who find a job is satisfactory at 38 per cent and is increasing. On some transport programmes, a good proportion of learners obtain a job, at 55 per cent. This has increased from 25 per cent earlier in the year. However, on one retailing programme, only 13 per cent of learners find jobs. Learners increase their confidence and improve their social skills through good work experience. They are strongly motivated and are keen to use their new skills to find employment. At the original inspection, rates of progress by adult learners were slow. This weakness has now been put right.

32. Assessment is good on training programmes for young people. Assessors make clear decisions and provide constructive feedback. Evidence is varied and well presented. It is accompanied by assessors' detailed comments and judgements. At the original inspection, learners' understanding of the assessment process was a weakness. Learners' understanding is now good. Learners' portfolios contain varied work of satisfactory quality. Learners are achieving their NVQs and their key skills qualifications early. NTS now starts to teach key skills early in learners' training programmes. This teaching is well integrated with learners' vocational training. Assessors provide mentoring and coaching for learners in their workplaces. Learners are set short- and medium-term targets. Their progress is closely monitored and the targets are amended if necessary. NTS makes good use of learners' previous achievements. These are sometimes used to accredit learners with complete units. Internal verification is effective and ensures that assessors adopt good practices and work to a good standard. Staff are suitably qualified and have vocational experience. Some staff have recently updated their vocational experience. However, few staff in retailing have either general qualifications in teaching or specific qualifications in teaching literacy, numeracy and language.

33. The training centre has adequate resources and satisfactory facilities for jobsearch. Learners remember their inductions and understand their rights and responsibilities. They are clear about the details of their learning programmes. At the original inspection, the monitoring of learners' progress was poor. This has now been put right. Staff are motivated and are fully involved in self-assessment and subsequent action-planning.

34. At the original inspection, achievement rates were poor on programmes for young people. Although there has been some improvement, achievement rates are still poor. For the past three years, about 25 per cent of advanced modern apprentices have completed their modern apprenticeship framework. In 1999-2000, 22 per cent of foundation modern apprentices completed the framework. The completion rate fell to 8

per cent the following year. The year after that, it rose to 33 per cent, with a further 13 per cent of learners still in training. Of the foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03, 5 per cent have completed the framework and a further 60 per cent are still in training. For learners taking NVQs only who started their training in 1999-2000, the rate of achievement was 30 per cent. In 2000-01, the achievement rate fell to 12 per cent and in 2001-02 it rose to 29 per cent. In 2002-03, 33 per cent of learners have achieved their NVQs and a further 50 per cent are still in training. At the original inspection, retention rates were unsatisfactory on all programmes for young people. Retention rates have since improved and are now satisfactory.

#### Good Practice

*NTS has provided a translator for two adult learners. Question papers, health and safety regulations and other documents were translated into Farsi for the learners.*

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	48	2

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

**STRENGTHS**

- good support for clients
- good initial assessments
- good progress by clients

**WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better planning of learning sessions

35. Clients receive good support from NTS. Relationships between staff and clients are good. Clients find staff approachable and easy to contact. Staff have a thorough understanding of clients' diverse needs and of the difficulties they face. Staff provide good individual support, both with personal problems and with problems that relate to learning. Clients have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity. This is reinforced during training sessions. Progress reviews take place regularly and clients receive detailed and specific feedback about their progress and achievements. Help with literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. A specialist worker provides good support for clients who speak English as an additional language. NTS also has a basic skills co-ordinator, who is responsible for ensuring that clients receive the support they need and that staff receive suitable training. Clients are visited regularly at their work placements. Progress reviews involve both the client and their workplace supervisor. The client and the workplace supervisor are seen individually or together, as appropriate. NTS arranges regular meetings of a clients' forum. This gives clients the opportunity to raise problems and concerns. Clients find the forum useful and feel that problems raised in the forum are dealt with.

36. NTS has a written policy on initial assessment. Initial assessments are thorough. NTS assesses the literacy, numeracy and language skills of all clients. It also assesses their other skills and abilities and identifies their preferred learning styles and interests. Clients are asked about their personal circumstances and their understanding of equal

opportunities is assessed. NTS makes good use of these tests in designing clients' individual learning plans. All staff know the results of clients' initial assessments and the timetable of any support planned. NTS has an initial assessment team that meets regularly to discuss aspects of initial assessment and to share good practice. Staff training needs are also discussed and suitable training is identified. The meetings are also used to compile feedback on external training. One member of staff has overall responsibility for initial assessment.

37. Clients are making good progress. They understand and value what they have achieved. One client said that he used to have to ask his children to write birthday card messages for his wife. Now his literacy skills have improved so much that he has been able to write the card himself for the first time. Some clients considerably improve their literacy and numeracy skills and overcome serious problems which had prevented them from gaining employment. In 2001-02, 61 per cent of clients achieved qualifications and 23 per cent gained employment. All clients work towards qualifications in literacy, numeracy and language, and some attend a preparation for work course that leads to a certificate. Clients gain confidence and self-esteem from developing these new skills.

38. Resources have improved since the original inspection. The training centre in King's Lynn now has a dedicated classroom for foundation programmes. However, the room is too small for some classes. This restricts the range of teaching and learning methods that can be used. Various materials are available for staff and clients at the Norwich training centre. These include books, tapes, leaflets, dictionaries and videotapes. Staff are well qualified and have suitable experience. Most are graduates and all staff already have or are working towards qualifications in teaching literacy, numeracy and language skills. Plans are used for all learning sessions but they do not clearly identify the learning activities that will take place or the amount of time that will be spent on them.

39. On- and off-the-job training are not adequately co-ordinated. Although NTS has good relationships with employers, employers do not always know what training and support their clients are receiving off the job. Employers interviewed during the reinspection were not aware of their clients' individual learning plans or their planned programmes of learning. For example, one employer did not know until the day before that a client was going to be receiving off-the-job training for two weeks and would not be at work. NTS and employers do not agree on specific training activities that clients will be involved in during their work placement and clients' activities are not recorded in the written agreement between NTS and employers.

#### Good Practice

*One client had poor English language skills. This meant that his understanding of equal opportunities could not be accurately assessed. This was noted in his file and additional support was arranged to help the client understand the equal opportunities questionnaire. This enabled the client to complete the questionnaire.*