

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KEY Training Services (Kent County Council) Reinspection**

**18 July 2003**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## KEY TRAINING SERVICES (KENT COUNTY COUNCIL) REINSPECTION

### 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

KEY Training Services is a part of Kent County Council's youth and community service. It provides training in business administration, information technology, retailing, customer service and warehousing, hospitality and catering, hairdressing, health and social care, and foundation programmes. It offers modern apprenticeships, national vocational qualifications (NVQs), Life Skills and New Deal programmes. Provision in land-based industries, Prince's Trust Volunteers and New Deal Gateway to Work has ceased since the previous inspection. There are currently 463 work-based learners, 47 on a Life Skills programme and 100 New Deal clients.

There are five training centres throughout Kent, with the central administration base in Maidstone. KEY Training Services is managed by the assistant head of youth and community 16+ programmes, who has a team of four senior managers. Each training centre has an administrator who works with the central team. Training provision is funded by Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus.

### Overall judgement

The ALI's inspection in October 2001 found that foundation programmes and arrangements for equality of opportunity were good. Training in retailing and customer service, information and communications technology and hospitality was satisfactory. Business administration, hairdressing and care and childcare training was unsatisfactory, as were leadership and management and quality assurance. At the end of the reinspection process all aspects of provision were found to be satisfactory or better. More specifically, training in information and communications technology is satisfactory, with all other aspects of provision good, and foundation programmes being outstanding. Leadership and management and quality assurance are good, and arrangements for equality of opportunity are outstanding.

### Grades awarded

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	2	1
Quality assurance	4	2

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	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	3

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2
New Deal 18-24	3	2

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Contributory grades:		
New Deal 18-24	2	1
Life Skills	2	1

## KEY TRAINING SERVICES (KENT COUNTY COUNCIL) REINSPECTION

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- very good off-the-job training
- particularly good support for learners
- wide range of good work placements
- excellent promotion and awareness of equality of opportunity
- well-planned implementation of strategic vision
- good communications throughout the organisation

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- slow progress towards qualifications for some learners
- poor target-setting for learners
- poor rates of retention and achievement in three areas

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of individual learning plans
- more use of on-the-job training in some occupational areas

## THE REINSPECTION

1. The reinspection of KEY Training Services (KTS) was carried out in three stages by 10 inspectors, using a total of 31 inspection days. The first stage was carried out on 7 February 2003, the second stage on 17 and 18 March 2003, and the final stage on 16 to 18 July 2003. The inspectors conducted 127 learner interviews, 86 staff interviews and 39 employer or supervisor interviews. Sixteen learning sessions were observed, and 92 individual learning plans and 96 portfolios examined. The inspectors visited 23 work placements and five provider sites. KTS had prepared a self-assessment report in October 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	5
Information & communications technology	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	6
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	6
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	6
Foundation programmes	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Information & communications technology	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	5
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	6
Foundation programmes	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

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

### STRENGTHS

- well-planned implementation of strategic vision
- good communications throughout the organisation
- very effective staff development
- excellent understanding and awareness of equality of opportunity
- outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity
- very good observation system for teaching and learning
- frequent and widespread celebration of learners' achievements

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of the progress review process

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of strategies to improve retention and achievement

2. KTS has successfully planned and implemented clear strategies to overcome the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. This is partly recognised in the self-assessment report. KTS has significantly improved programmes which were weak, but had substantial learner numbers. It analysed recruitment and funding data to identify and discontinue courses that were no longer viable. It has formed a wide range of links with other Kent County Council organisations, Connexions, the local education authority and the youth service to achieve its vision of widening participation by the learners who are hardest to reach. Strong links have also been forged with voluntary organisations. KTS is developing a virtual learning environment to increase access to learning for those in remote areas and to provide learners, employers and staff the ability to access training information and resources 24 hours a day. KTS has developed effective staff development systems and procedures to support its strategy of easy and open access to learning. Analysis carried out by KTS shows that it has succeeded in attracting high numbers of learners from areas of significant deprivation. Managers now oversee all five sites, which reduces duplication of resources and makes management processes more consistent. Work-placement liaison advisers and tutors are now helped by mentors who offer pastoral and literacy, numeracy and language support, and ensure that learners' individual needs are effectively met.

3. KTS has further developed its strength in communications and this is recognised in the self-assessment report. Regular, frequent, well-minuted and actioned meetings take

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place in and across centres, functions, areas of learning and levels of responsibility. Procedures for communication with employers and other partners are clear. KTS staff communicate constantly with learners, and ask for their feedback at the end of teaching sessions and programmes. Learners' progress is charted on the walls of many classrooms, and their views and work is displayed in the centres. Learners have access to other youth services for information on areas such as drugs awareness and teenage pregnancy. If they are absent, they are telephoned by their work-placement liaison adviser.

4. KTS has built on its strength of effective staff training and appraisal. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Staff members' progress is reviewed, and their development needs are identified, every six to eight weeks. Records of these meetings are detailed, and outcomes are monitored at the next meeting. Concerns are frankly described, and resolved by disciplinary action when needed. Reviews are supported by useful yearly appraisal in which training objectives are agreed with individuals. KTS makes good use of Kent County Council's training resources and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Some staff have completed core curriculum and key skills training, as well as training in health and safety, learner retention and information technology (IT).

5. There is good celebration of learners' achievements. Award ceremonies to celebrate successful achievement are held every three months, and are attended by employers, as well as learners' guests. Achievement is also celebrated on a daily basis through displays of certificates awarded in the training centres, and by the progress charts in classrooms. Individual attainment of skills or employment is shown in displays of comments made by learners on their progress and success. There is also an award for 'employer of the year' to celebrate successful work placements and regular sharing of good practice, within and across areas of learning.

6. KTS has implemented many strategies to raise poor retention and achievement rates. These strategies include a week-long induction programme, which has significantly reduced the number of learners who leave in their first six months. Mentors are now allocated to learners who are thought to be at risk of leaving early, and work-placement liaison advisers contact learners on the first day of their absence. Most areas of learning now show improvement in retention and achievement rates, although this is not significant in two of the occupational areas. Three of the areas show slow progress towards completion of the framework.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 1**

7. The organisation has an equal opportunities policy and procedures which are comprehensive, up to date and easily available to staff, learners and employers. The training and quality assurance manager is responsible for equal opportunities.

8. KTS is outstanding in its promotion of equality of opportunity. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. The organisation works closely in partnership with organisations such as Connexions, schools and youth and community groups and attends promotional events to attract learners from under-represented groups into training. KTS has recently developed very good links with a Kent County Council outreach worker who has arranged for staff who work in Mosques and community buildings to promote training for asylum seekers and people from minority ethnic groups. In Gravesend the proportion of learners at KTS who are from minority ethnic groups has risen from 3 per cent in 2002 to 12 per cent in 2003. There is also a training initiative to support teenagers who are pregnant. KTS has identified new and interesting training and employment opportunities such as television repair and car maintenance. KTS continues to place training centres in areas of greatest deprivation and recruit a significant number of disaffected learners. Clients on foundation programmes can progress to level 1 NVQs. KTS staff have an excellent understanding and awareness of equality of opportunity. The induction process now includes a more thorough initial assessment of learners' individual support needs and provides a very detailed understanding of equality of opportunity, rights and responsibilities. A wide range of very good learning materials, including assignments and videos is now used and external speakers have a significant input. Learners remember the induction and show a very good understanding of equality of opportunity. KTS has an extensive range of supportive work placements, which 40 per cent of its foundation clients currently attend for two days a week. Additional support in the workplace is provided by work-placement liaison advisers and tutors and is recorded and monitored effectively. Mentors and drop-in workshops provide additional support for the development of literacy, numeracy, language and key skills. There is a very effective programme of staff training in equality of opportunity which includes training in child protection and how to deal with conflict and aggression.

9. Work-placement liaison advisers ensure that employers are aware of the detailed employer guidance information which relates to work-based learning and, in particular, equality of opportunity. It covers the roles and responsibilities of individuals to counter discrimination and harassment.

10. KTS successfully recruits learners into non-stereotypical roles, such as men into hairdressing. Staff recruitment policies and practices reflect those of Kent County Council and are well established and unbiased. KTS funds a full-time senior administration officer who provides the organisation with very effective up-to-date advice and guidance on equality of opportunity. Its complaints procedures are well recorded, and complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved. KTS collects data relating to learners' age, gender, ethnicity and disability. It has also now introduced a survey which identifies leaver destination and enables comparative analysis

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of entry into sustainable employment across different vocational areas. Although KTS has compared local population statistics with its own learner base and set targets to improve recruitment from under-represented groups, there is little routine analysis of achievement or success rates for different groups.

11. Physical access to most training centres is adequate, but in some buildings access to upper floors is still difficult for people with restricted mobility. Training continues to be offered in an alternative room when necessary.

### Quality assurance

### Contributory grade 2

12. KTS has developed effective quality assurance systems to support its improvement strategy and overcome many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Observation of teaching and learning was recognised as a weakness in the self-assessment report. KTS has now introduced a thorough system of observation. Observations are planned in advance to enable the observer to prepare adequately, and to ensure all teaching staff are observed. To ensure objectivity, sessions are observed by staff from other occupational areas. The observation form is effective in ensuring that learning as well as delivery is evaluated. The comments are detailed, and follow good practice criteria developed by KTS using information gathered from educational websites and publications. Staff whose sessions are awarded the top grade are sent a letter and a small reward, and are asked to share good practice at staff meetings. Lower grades are improved by staff development. Well-kept records of observations give managers an overview of staff performance. The database used to record results enables those in charge of an area of learning to have regular reports on their staff. The assistant head of youth and community 16+ programmes signs all observation records.

13. A newly created post of quality assurance manager has effectively overcome many of the inconsistent quality assurance practices. The self-assessment report incorporates analysis of learner and employer questionnaires on the quality of provision. It is regularly updated, and new actions for improvement are set. Staff are well informed about quality assurance arrangements. They are given targets which are regularly monitored and a disciplinary process is used to rectify poor performance. For example, the marketing managers have recruitment targets, and they give the work-placement liaison advisers targets for recruitment and work placements to be identified. Assessment practice and internal verification procedures are now formalised, and are good in most areas of learning.

14. Monitoring of the learners' progress review process is insufficient, and this is reflected in the weaknesses of several areas of learning. Reviews take place, but their effectiveness in setting short-term action plans and ensuring that learners and employers know what learners need to do to progress is not carefully monitored. There is insufficient checking to ensure that reviews reflect the specific learning needs of the learners.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	58	2

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

#### STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- particularly effective internal verification practice
- very good employer involvement with learning process
- good work placements

#### WEAKNESSES

- poor retention rates
- ineffective progress reviews

15. KTS's staff and employers give learners good support. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Work-placement liaison advisers interview learners and find suitable work placements for them. Thorough initial assessments identify learners who have additional needs, and mentors who offer extra academic and pastoral support, are allocated in addition to tutors. Employers have a good knowledge of the programme framework and allow time for the learners to attend off-the-job training. When one learner had her off-the-job training rearranged at short notice, the employer encouraged her to report for work and then helped the learner update her portfolio. KTS's staff visit the learners regularly in the workplace and offer appropriate and effective support. One learner who was unable to attend an induction morning at KTS had their induction rearranged at their workplace by their tutor. Most learners said they would have found it difficult to complete the framework without support from KTS's staff.

16. KTS has particularly effective internal verification processes in place. It produces comprehensive internal verification plans for monthly, quarterly and six-monthly periods. The plans cover observation of lessons, workplace assessments and portfolio inspections and are copied to all the business administration staff. Written and verbal feedback is given and extra training is available for staff if necessary. Assessment practice is now much improved. Regular and accurate sampling takes place and portfolios are examined thoroughly. Internal verification recommendations are always carried out.

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17. KTS has developed very good working relationships with a wide range of employers. Work placements are good and many learners who start on temporary contracts progress to full-time, permanent employment. There is a wide range of work placements, which learners can move between after consultation with tutors and work-placement liaison advisers. On-the-job training is effective and employers show a strong commitment to the training programme. Many of the placements offer a stimulating environment and include a range of employment tasks. Most learners are carrying out responsible tasks and many learners work without direct supervision.

18. The frequency of the progress reviews is satisfactory. However, they are often carried out ineffectively. Most reviews examine past performance and do not set short-term goals to help learners' progress towards their qualification. There is little evidence that self-development plans are used. Learners who have higher academic qualifications achieve at the same pace as less able learners and display frustration with this. Historically this has been due to staff shortages which has now been remedied. While communication between the employer, learner and KTS is satisfactory, many reviews do not involve all three parties. The review process does not combine learners' progress in on- and off-the-job training and offers no individual plans for achievement before the next review. Some of these weaknesses were identified in KTS's development plan.

19. Retention rates are poor and this was acknowledged in the self-assessment report. A range of initiatives to improve retention rates has been introduced but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. Over the past three years, approximately 60 per cent of modern apprentices and 70 per cent of NVQ learners have left the training programme early. Achievement rates for those who remain in training are satisfactory and approximately 20 per cent of those who have completed the training programme have remained with their employer.

**Information & communications technology****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	3

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

**STRENGTHS**

- comprehensive assessment practices
- good off-the-job training
- good work placements

**WEAKNESSES**

- some poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- poor retention and achievement rates

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- earlier introduction of key skills training
- closer monitoring of authenticity of evidence

20. Assessment practices are comprehensive and this is recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners see their tutors at the training centre each week for a three-week period, after which the assessor visits the learner in the workplace each week for the following two weeks. This pattern is repeated throughout the year. Learners have detailed, short-term action plans, although there is some inconsistency between assessors in how often the plans are updated. Some assessors update the plans every week, but some give verbal feedback and only update plans once all actions have been completed. Observation takes place at KTS's training centres and in the workplace. Assessor observations are very detailed and learners are given detailed and constructive written feedback.

21. Off-the-job training is good. KTS recognises this in its self-assessment report. Training is carried out in small groups which gives each learner a high level of individual attention. Tutors use individual questioning effectively to identify learners' skills at the start of their training, and adapt the programme to meet their specific needs. Tutors give clear explanations, are patient, and have a good rapport with learners. Training materials are well designed, with clear explanations supported by demonstrations on the computer screen. Evaluation sheets are sometimes used to seek learners' feedback on

the quality of specific training sessions. Computer resources are satisfactory.

22. Work-placement liaison advisers carefully match learners to placements which meet their individual needs. This is partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Interesting work placements are available with employers ranging from small businesses to local councils and hospital trusts. Learners are very happy in their placements and value the good opportunities for learning and progression that they provide. Employers are willing to spend time with learners who need extra support. Ninety per cent of learners on work placement are offered a permanent job. KTS recognises exceptional employers with its 'employer of the year' award.

23. Some co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is still poor. Some workplace supervisors are not aware of the requirements for NVQ and key skills achievement. KTS has recognised this and has recently issued a new handbook to all supervisors, which the assessors discuss in detail with them. Supervisors were also invited to a seminar at KTS's premises, but response was poor. Some supervisors are not involved in identifying or verifying workplace evidence and have insufficient knowledge about off-the-job training or what progress learners have made on their portfolios. There is an informal discussion with tutors, but employers rely on learners to inform them of their off-the-job training activities. There is no system to ensure that new supervisors are given information about the training programme and progress of existing learners. On- and off-the-job training are not always adequately linked. Supervisors are involved in progress reviews, but workplace training is not always linked to the course programme and details are not fully recorded on the individual learning plan.

24. Retention and achievement rates have fallen over the past two years. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices and NVQ learners in 2000-01 were 50 per cent and 71 per cent respectively. Achievement rates are unsatisfactory. Although half the modern apprentices in 2000-01 were retained, only just over a third completed the framework. Some learners make slow progress towards their qualification and have had their programme extended to enable them to achieve.

25. Provision for key skills training is satisfactory. Mentors adequately support the literacy and numeracy needs of learners. However, key skills training and assessment are not introduced at the start of the programme, and dealing with specific skills needs is delayed. The gathering of portfolio evidence is started late in the programme. Learners are not entered for their key skills examinations early enough, and some have had the length of their programme extended while they await their results.

26. KTS's assessors have been made aware by external verifiers that evidence needs to be signed by the learner, and workplace evidence verified by the supervisors, to ensure its authenticity. This is being carried out satisfactorily, but the monitoring is insufficient to ensure it is done consistently during portfolio-building rather than at the end of the programme.



**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	73	2
New Deal 18-24	46	2

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

**STRENGTHS**

- particularly high standard of work placements
- good off-the-job training
- good portfolios of level 1 NVQ work
- good support for learners

**WEAKNESSES**

- poor achievement rates for customer service foundation modern apprentices
- poor employment rates for New Deal clients

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better use of witness testimonies in NVQ at level 2
- increased guidance for work-placement providers

27. Learners on an NVQ at level 1 make satisfactory progress towards their learning goals. Many learners progress considerably in relation to their prior attainment and respond well to the training they are given. NVQ retention and achievement rates are satisfactory and vary between 44 per cent and 59 per cent. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices have varied between 17 per cent and 39 per cent.

28. Work placements are of a particularly high standard. The shops and other organisations, including charity shops, provide good work experience and effective learning opportunities for learners and clients. In most placements there is good on-the-job instruction for learners. Most employ well-qualified and experienced supervisors who oversee learners' work and give effective direction. This enables learners to develop their basic work skills so that they can make a useful contribution to the workforce as quickly as possible. In charity shops, the learners on an NVQ at level 1 operate the tills, prepare displays, advise customers and price the products. Managers and supervisors are good role models. Many of the work placements organise job rotation to enable learners to develop wider experience. This gives learners and clients

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the opportunity to collect a broader range of evidence for their NVQ portfolios. However, there are insufficient witness testimonies. The range of work activities increases the range and diversity of assessment opportunities. However, work-placement providers are not given enough information on the training and assessment standards.

29. Off-the-job training continues to be well planned and effectively taught. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and lessons are stimulating. Tutors are well qualified and experienced, and employ a good range of teaching skills. Day-release sessions which focus on the vocational elements are organised effectively. Lesson plans are effective and show planned learner outcomes. Tutor explanations are consistently clear and concise. Question and answer techniques are used well to reinforce learning and check understanding. Good use is made of assignments. Learning materials are extensive and are used for assessment as well as teaching and learning. Classes are small enough to allow a good standard of individual instruction. Key skills are taught as part of the occupational training and are an integral part of the vocational elements. Literacy, numeracy and language needs are assessed at entry and individual needs are dealt with on a personal basis. There is good use of mentors for this purpose in classrooms.

30. The portfolios for level 1 NVQ work are good. They are well presented and demonstrate individuality and pride of ownership by the learners. In most portfolios, learners take appropriate responsibility for cross-referencing the evidence to the occupational standards. Learners are actively encouraged by their assessors to collect good evidence of their work activities. This supplements effective observations carried out in the workplace by the assessors and evidence collected through well-structured assignments. There are also good learner statements. For example, learners explain how they handle a diverse range of customers. Learners are given a choice of either keeping their portfolios with them or keeping them at the training centre. Those learners who leave them at the centre have frequent access and have effective duplicate files with current evidence.

31. There is good support for learners and this is recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners are visited in the workplace at regular intervals, often on a fortnightly basis. They have good support on the day-release elements of the programme. Learners who need extra support are allocated a mentor who provides additional coaching and personal development. This is particularly valuable for learners who have learning difficulties. For example, those who lack confidence or literacy and numeracy skills or who have language difficulties, but can still complete the NVQ. Those who are assessed at entry with more serious literacy, numeracy or language difficulties that cannot be met by the additional support, are referred to a less demanding programme internally. Pastoral support is good and staff maintain useful contact with external agencies. Progress reviews are effectively carried out and are monitored through an effective database. Targets now feature in all individual learning plans. The internal verification arrangements that were a weakness in the previous report have been improved, and now fully meet the awarding body requirements.

32. The achievement rate for customer service foundation modern apprentices has declined to 8 per cent. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. There has been no achievement by the 2002-03 intake, but two-thirds of the learners are still in learning. There is a low rate of employment for New Deal clients. Over the past three years the rates for clients entering employment have varied from 9 per cent to 29 per cent. In 2001-02 the rate was 21 per cent. For the current year the rate of employment is 18 per cent, but 27 per cent of clients are still in learning.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	47	2

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

**STRENGTHS**

- good work placements and external links
- good support for learners
- good off-the-job training
- good achievement of additional qualifications by learners who have additional learning needs

**WEAKNESSES**

- poor target-setting for learners
- slow progress towards qualifications

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better planning of on-the-job training

33. KTS continues to maintain good links with local employers that offer a wide range of work-placement opportunities. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners are sensitively placed to match their particular needs and career aims. Most learners are unemployed at the start of their programme. Different work placements are available to learners who cannot collect specific evidence at their existing placement. KTS has built good links with other hospitality training providers and a local college. Its team of trainers regularly attends a meeting of local hospitality training providers. KTS works with other training providers to resolve difficult issues, to share good practice and plan future provision.

34. KTS shows genuine concern for the welfare of learners, who are provided with a good level of support and a caring environment, on and off the job. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners can negotiate with staff the units that are included in their programme. The level 1 NVQ in housekeeping is used well, for lower ability learners and as an introduction to the hospitality industry. Frequent personal contact and support helps to keep learners motivated. Staff and work-placement providers respond promptly and positively to learners' problems. Staff encourage learners to have high aims and provide practical support and guidance. Workplace

supervisors want their learners to succeed and offer good support. Many learners have additional literacy, numeracy and learning needs which are met through the mentoring system, and at the drop-in workshops. Staff are aware of the difficult circumstances faced by many of the learners and they help individuals to overcome problems, continue training and achieve qualifications. KTS responds quickly to feedback from learners and employers. Mentors provide learners with support for a range of activities including off-the-job training sessions.

35. Off-the-job training is good, and this was recognised in the self-assessment report. Training sessions are well planned, interesting, lively and effectively managed, with clear aims and objectives. Training rooms are pleasant and well ventilated and contain much vocational information. All learners are set challenging assignments which are appropriate to their ability, and produce a good standard of work. Staff use questioning well to check understanding and learning. Effective demonstrations in practical sessions provide learners with accurate information. In background knowledge sessions, staff regularly refer to practical situations to help learners put information in context. Staff members' and learners' experiences are used to clarify points and create interest. Visual aids are used to good effect. Trainers are supportive yet demanding of their learners and work hard to raise standards. Learners benefit from attending off-the-job training regularly.

36. Learners can follow a wide range of courses leading to additional qualifications which are complementary to their occupational area and their individual needs. This is recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report. Nearly three-quarters of learners who are working towards a level 1 NVQ achieve additional qualifications which enhance their employability. Many learners gain basic food hygiene and health and safety certificates and complete a first aid course. KTS also offers additional courses such as equal opportunities awareness, manual handling and IT for which it awards an in-house certificate. Since the previous inspection, KTS has increased the types of work-based evidence used in learners' portfolios to include witness testimonies, evidence diaries, photographs and products of work.

37. Target-setting for learners is poor. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. The assessor carries out progress reviews on a quarterly basis with the learner and their employer. However, the reviews are not used to update learning plans or evaluate learners' progress, but are more concerned with learners' satisfaction and pastoral support. The reviews are not sufficiently detailed and contain few clear targets. They generate and review general statements on performance. Learners do not see the reviews as a worthwhile experience. Employers and learners are not always given a copy of these reviews. Individual learning plans are not kept up to date and do not contain sufficient information to be of use in the training process. They do not clearly outline the training that the learner will receive, either from KTS or workplaces. The plans are not used as a basis for progress reviews or further action-planning, and do not reflect the individual nature of learning. Learning plans do not always record that units are achieved at different stages throughout the learning programme. Learners are aware that they have an individual learning plan, but are not aware of their progress towards

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completion of their programme.

38. Learners make slow progress towards their NVQ. Learners do not receive enough assessment in the workplace or at the training centre. Some learners are not assessed when ready because qualified assessors are not always available. Learners in work placements are not normally assessed for the first three months of the programme. Most learners are on the programme for at least 12 months regardless of their ability, and programmes are not adapted to individual needs.

39. KTS has improved its planning of training in the workplace. Learners know what training they will receive at work, and workplace supervisors know what is covered during the off-the-job training. Planning of the on-the-job training remains poor. Learners still carry out tasks which are not specifically linked to their NVQ.

**Hairdressing & beauty therapy****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	93	2

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

**STRENGTHS**

- particularly effective individual support for learners
- good work placements
- good off-the-job training
- good opportunities for additional hairdressing activities
- well-planned key skills as an integral part of programmes

**WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient setting of challenging targets in progress reviews

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better use of individual learning plans

40. Learners in hairdressing have particularly effective support, and this was identified in the self-assessment report. KTS uses a range of training methods. Learners can attend the Gillingham centre on day release for background knowledge and practical training and assessment. Alternatively, learners can have all of their training and assessment in the workplace. In this method, tutors visit learners every two weeks and in between visits, learners work through open workbooks at their own pace. Employers like the range of training methods as it is flexible and learners are not away from work for a whole day at a time. Learners have access to mentors and some learners on an NVQ at level 1 have received literacy and numeracy support, which they say has helped to improve their confidence. KTS offers drop-in sessions at the Gillingham centre for help with literacy, numeracy and language skills and assignments.

41. The range of work placements is good. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Many salons have experienced stylists who work closely with learners in the workplace and qualified assessors who carry out NVQ assessments on behalf of KTS. Learners receive useful and interesting additional training activities, such as model evenings and external training with leading manufacturing companies. Employers are supportive and allow extra time for learners to practise styling their model for

competitions.

42. Off-the-job training is now good. Sessions are carefully planned, and schemes of work and lesson plans have clear objectives. Background knowledge and practical training are given effectively at the Gillingham centre. Learners can carry out a wide range of hairdressing services on clients in the commercial salon. Practical demonstrations and instructions are clear, interactive, and supported with diagrams, and are supervised well. Tutors have a good rapport with learners and often refer to industry requirements during training.

43. Learners are encouraged to take part in KTS's annual hairdressing competition. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Finalists have the opportunity to participate in regional and national hairdressing competitions. One learner has competed at national level and has become national champion. He is also now part of the British national squad. KTS also nominates a 'trainee of the year' and learners are given awards for particular achievements or overcoming difficulties during their training. One learner who recently won a trophy said winning has improved her self-confidence and inspired her to progress. Learners can also take part in technical training given by specialist product suppliers.

44. Key skills training is an integral part of the programme. Evidence for key skills assessment is collected from that already being produced by the learner for the NVQ. The integration of key skills training was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Learners are now well aware of the key skills levels that are required for their framework. All key skills evidence is work related. Learners carry out a client survey in the workplace and evidence from this is used as part of the key skills portfolio. Learners are assessed for key skills early in the programme. For example, one learner who had been on the programme for three weeks, had observations recorded for communications skills. Portfolios are clearly referenced and learners have ownership of their evidence.

45. Retention and achievement rates are now satisfactory and are improving on the foundation modern apprenticeship and NVQ programmes. They had been identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

46. Challenging targets are not set or recorded during progress reviews. Although the review involves the employer as well as the learner and assessor, some of the employers are not given a copy of the review paperwork. Targets for soft skills, such as timekeeping, dress and communication, are set during the review process but these have no overall impact on the achievement of the main target. For example, one learner had a target to complete a unit by the next review date, but details of specific actions to achieve this were not recorded. Detailed action plans are completed with learners on an ongoing basis, but these are stored in learners' portfolios and some employers are not aware of the targets that have been set.



**Health, social care & public services****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	175	2

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

**STRENGTHS**

- effective support for learners
- good teaching resources
- well-planned and well-taught off-the-job training

**WEAKNESSES**

- slow progress towards qualifications by many learners

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better sharing of information about background knowledge with employers
- better recording of assessment and performance evidence

47. Learners continue to have effective individual support at KTS's various training centres and in the workplace. They have regular visits, usually every six to eight weeks, when their written work is assessed, individual plans are developed or reviewed, and targets are set. These visits involve the employer as well as the learner and both are encouraged to add comments and feedback to the review. Extra visits are arranged if a learner needs them. Learners are given feedback and advice on how to improve after observations or assessments. Computers are available for research and work towards key skills assignments. Mentors provide additional support for literacy, numeracy and language or key skills if learners need it. Mentors also attend off-the-job training sessions to support learners' individual needs. KTS takes care to find learners work placements which meet their individual needs. Well-matched work placements often lead to employment. KTS has established effective and innovative ways to encourage learners, including recording and displaying individuals' progress in the training centres, and presenting in-house certificates for workshop attendance.

48. The resources for care programmes was identified as an area for improvement during the previous inspection, and as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Resources in this area of learning are now good. Staff who teach care and childcare have a good range of practical equipment for demonstrations. For example, KTS has equipped a training room with a bed so that good lifting techniques can be learnt off the

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job. Training rooms also have relevant books and vocational journals, and some centres have arranged for learners to borrow books from the local library. Good materials are used during workshop sessions.

49. Learners on an NVQ at level 2 can meet tutors or assessors each week at the training centres, while learners on an NVQ at level 3 can meet them each month. Schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive, but do not outline resources to be used during the sessions. Additional workshops support learners' key skills and numeracy, literacy and language development. Training sessions are delivered using stimulating approaches which include all learners. Tutors plan sessions to respond to learners' preferred learning styles. Training sessions are well attended but they also take place at the learners' place of work when necessary. Equality of opportunity is effectively supported and linked to on-site work-placement practice. Learners are encouraged to review and evaluate training sessions, which develops their evaluation skills.

50. Many learners are making slow progress towards completing their programmes. Some learners have a poor understanding of the evidence requirements of their qualification. This is not identified in the self-assessment report. KTS has introduced a change in its assessment practice, and good practice is now shared between the curriculum areas and staff. It has started to introduce direct assessment and key skills testing earlier in the training programme, to prevent learners' completion being delayed as they wait for their results. It is too soon to judge the success of this change in practice.

51. There is insufficient sharing of information on what background knowledge training learners have received in the training centres. Employers all confirm that they have productive working relationships with KTS and co-ordination of off-the-job training is slowly improving. However, they would welcome more detailed information on the learners' training and further development of the new initiatives that KTS has implemented, such as the employers' forum. There is still an over-reliance on the learners passing on this information in an informal manner. Some of the employers have not received the employer packs. This is recognised in the self-assessment report.

52. KTS has introduced processes to improve its internal verification and assessment procedures and practices, although it is still too early to judge their overall effectiveness. The provider has identified that there is still some insufficient recording of assessment methods against range statements and assessment plans, and is offering training to continually improve these practices. Learners' written evidence was poorly referenced against the elements and performance criteria, but this has now improved. The self-assessment report and the previous inspection report identify the need to widen assessment practices and end the high dependency on written evidence, both of which KTS is now achieving. The provider's new internal verification process now gives assessors details of where improvement is needed.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 1**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	47	1
Life Skills	47	1

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

**STRENGTHS**

- excellent retention and achievement rates for Gateway provision
- very effective involvement of disaffected learners
- excellent range of learning opportunities
- stimulating range of teaching styles
- good use of resources
- outstanding support for learners

**WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate target-setting in progress reviews in the workplace

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- closer monitoring of the performance evidence sheet

53. Most strengths identified by inspectors during the previous inspection have improved further. Additional strengths relating to retention and achievement rates and teaching and learning were identified. Two areas of weaknesses concerning learning plans and accommodation are now satisfactory.

54. Retention and achievement rates for the two-week Gateway programme are excellent across all five KTS centres, despite some being sited in areas with social and economic problems. Retention and achievement rates for the 11 learners on the Gateway programme's access to media course are also excellent at 100 per cent. Ninety-two per cent of Gateway clients have been retained on the two-week programme, and 75 per cent have achieved the targets on their individual learning plan. Seventeen per cent are still in learning. Retention and achievement rates for the Life Skills programme are good, having improved from 37 per cent in 1999-2000 to 55 per cent in 2001-02. In 2002-03, 7 per cent of learners left to go into a job with training and 45 per cent are still on the programme. Forty-eight per cent of learners left without a recognised achievement, 11 per cent of whom left due to pregnancy. The Life Skills

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programme lasts 21 weeks on average, although some learners stay on the programme longer and are often funded solely by KTS. KTS has links with a wide range of supportive employers, many of which are linked directly to Kent County Council. Approximately 40 per cent of learners are placed in work placements which meet their needs and aims.

55. Foundation programmes continue to recruit disadvantaged and disaffected people who lack confidence, self-esteem and the skills necessary to gain employment or attend other learning opportunities. Many of the learners have a range of social problems, including exclusion from secondary education and repeat offending. KTS's staff continue to have extremely effective links with Connexions and Jobcentre Plus in all areas. They have extended contacts with the youth service, drugs advisory teams, adult education service, and other key advice and guidance networks, to ensure that learners have access to the widest range of support agencies. In the access to media programme, staff liaise very successfully with a range of media industry professionals, many of whom give their time free of charge. Learners appreciate this support and attendance on the programmes is very good, and regularly exceeds 90 per cent. KTS plays a major role in a support programme for asylum seekers called 'First Base'. Staff carry out regular reviews in the training centres and in the work placements.

56. All staff have extensive experience of working with a range of people in a variety of situations. Learners' initial assessment for literacy, numeracy and language is mainly carried out by Connexions before referral. However, the extensive induction by KTS includes an additional assessment to clearly define support needs. The support is very well managed in all centres and comprehensively recorded and monitored. Learners are given a personalised learning programme which accurately reflects their needs. They are also given a range of reviews and their programme is modified when needed. A learning support assistant attends most sessions. Staff are sensitive to learners' needs and ensure that their work is at an appropriate level and recorded in portfolios. Learners achieve in-house and national awards in many areas, including equality of opportunity and motivation and confidence. KTS regularly and frequently celebrates learners' achievements.

57. Staff use a stimulating and creative range of effective teaching methods. These include audiovisual sessions on a variety of social issues, role-play, games, outdoor activities such as team-building, small and large group work and visits to other training centres to share sessions with other learners. Staff work well with learners and are very effective in changing the style of teaching to suit the needs of the group. In some sessions, learners are reluctant to take a break and prefer to stay and complete work. Staff take great care to include learners and often let them choose the teaching and learning styles to be used. Learners benefit from external speakers, such as a midwife who visits to raise awareness of dealing with pregnancy and care for children. Attendance and punctuality rates are extremely high and learners are very attentive in classes.

58. An excellent range of learning opportunities is available. Learners on the Life Skills

programme can follow a wide range of modules, including personal health and hygiene, housing matters, budgeting, pregnancy, anger management, motivation and team-building as well as individual sessions on literacy and numeracy. The Gateway programme includes sessions on self-presentation, skills for work and motivational activities. Learners in access to media take five modules which can include tasters with employers in various occupational sectors and skills checks to determine realistic career aims. All learners take part in outdoor activities such as visits to naval dockyards, museums, and rock-climbing. Jobsearch is an integral part of all programmes and work experience is available on the Life Skills programme.

59. Learners have a good range of resources across all centres. Many staff have attended awareness courses for new curriculum areas such as the national core curriculum. KTS has purchased materials and staff have developed work schemes to support the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Extensive facilities are available through youth centres, and in one centre, learners can use an internet café free of charge. Information and communications technology (ICT) is available at all centres and forms an integral part of all training programmes. The training environment has many examples of learners' work displayed on walls in classrooms and corridors. There are excellent visual displays of learners' progress towards achievement and learners take great pride in monitoring this.

60. Some progress reviews, particularly those carried out on the workplace, have insufficient detail and measurable targets. There are some examples where records of performance evidence are signed by the learner, but sections detailing achievement are blank.

#### Good Practice

*One learner started the Life Skills programme in January with extremely low levels of confidence and self-esteem. Two months later she was placed with a local employer and within a few weeks of starting was working on reception and carrying out banking duties unsupervised.*

*A learner on the access to media programme is co-ordinating an open-air concert, including organising the acts and promoting activities, as part of his training towards employment in the music industry. The work includes fund-raising to finance some of the event.*

*Learners attend the local youth service clubs. They purchase food for the training centre and take it in turns to prepare meals for other learners and those attending the youth centre. Learners are given the opportunity to develop social, budgeting, independent living and time-management skills, in a practical environment, and collect evidence for their portfolios.*