

INSPECTION REPORT

Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited Reinspection

17 June 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 **learnirect** 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

Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited is a private limited company, based in Whetstone, North London. It was originally founded to supply temporary and permanent dental nurses to dentists, in and around Greater London. It has provided training for dental nurses since 1999, and publicly funded training began in September 2000. There are 72 work-based learners following the national vocational qualification (NVQ) in oral health care at level 3. They are all employed in London dental practices, and they receive fortnightly off-the-job training at the company's offices. Training is funded by contract with the London North Learning and Skills Council.

Overall judgement

The ALI's inspection in December 2001 found that the quality of work-based learning in health, social care and public services (dental nursing) was unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the provision were also unsatisfactory. Arrangements for equality of opportunity were satisfactory, but quality assurance was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

Grades awarded

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

	Original	Reinspection
Health, social care & public services	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED REINSPECTION

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- good internal communications
- very effective partnerships with dental practices
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good assessment practices

KEY WEAKNESSES

- weak strategic and business planning
- inadequate collection of feedback from learners
- inadequate support for additional learning needs
- slow progress for some learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better monitoring of equality of opportunity
- more effective teaching strategies
- better resources to support learning
- more effective progress reviews

THE REINSPECTION

1. Reinspection was conducted in two stages. The first visit was over the period 31 March to 1 April 2003. The second stage was completed on 16 and 17 June 2003. Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited (Temp Dent) had prepared a revised self-assessment report for inspectors to examine. Ten dental practices were visited and four employers were interviewed. Inspectors interviewed 19 learners and examined 22 portfolios. Twenty-five learners' files and individual learning plans were examined. Inspectors carried out 12 interviews with staff and observed and graded two 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
Health, social care & public services	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Health, social care & public services	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

STRENGTHS

- good internal communications
- very effective partnerships with dental practices
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

WEAKNESSES

- weak strategic and business planning
- inadequate collection of feedback from learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better management of additional learning support
- better monitoring of equality of opportunity

2. Internal communications are good. This strength was recognised during the first inspection. In January 2003, the executive director appointed an agency manager and became the full-time NVQ co-ordinator. There are effective NVQ co-ordination meetings each week for full-time staff, and monthly staff meetings attended by all employees of Temp Dent. These meetings are appropriately minuted and the minutes shared with the relevant staff. The NVQ co-ordinator meets with all staff at some point during the week, acting as an effective communication link between full-time and part-time members of staff. All employees have access to training information on the shared computer network at Temp Dent. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and there is effective teamwork within the company. Good internal communications have contributed to the significant improvements in the quality of the provision since restructuring took place in January 2003.

3. Temp Dent has very effective partnerships with dental practices. This strength was recognised during the inspection in December 2001. There are strong, well-established partnerships between the company and London dental practices, enabling them to work together for the benefit of the learners. Staff have a wide range of contacts within this specialised field of work and use them to promote training and to benefit learners. There is a clearly written agreement between Temp Dent and employers, informing employers about the NVQ programme and off-the-job training, and emphasising the importance of health and safety and equality of opportunity in the workplace. Employers are well informed about the NVQ programme and value the positive effect of off-the-job training on the learners and their work in the practices. Close links with employers also help to promote effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

Tutors and assessors work closely with employers to ensure that learners have opportunities to gain evidence for all aspects of their qualifications.

4. The management of the NVQ programme has significantly improved since the first inspection in December 2001 and most aspects are now satisfactory or better. Temp Dent has recently recognised that support for learners with additional learning needs is inadequate and has implemented changes to improve it. In April 2003, the company arranged for staff at a local further education college to reassess learners previously identified by Temp Dent as having additional learning needs. Learners making slow progress were also tested to identify if they required literacy, numeracy or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) support. The tests will be used for all new learners enrolling at Temp Dent. Fourteen learners were identified as having literacy or numeracy needs below level 1, and two learners require ESOL support. Learners with literacy, numeracy or ESOL needs are offered a two-hour training session, one evening every two weeks, at Temp Dent's premises, starting in June 2003. These learners have been issued with specific individual learning plans for the learning support programme. One part-time tutor at Temp Dent has recently achieved a qualification in supporting learners with dyslexia.

5. Strategic and business planning is weak. The first inspection identified clear aims, objectives and values as a strength of the organisation. As Temp Dent has grown in size and complexity, these informal aims, objectives and values are no longer a strength. There is no formal strategic plan and no clear links between informal strategic planning by the NVQ co-ordinator and the operational management of Temp Dent. For example, it is not clear how operational decisions will contribute towards the long-term strategy of the organisation. There is no formal business plan and insufficient target-setting. Targets are set for retention, achievement and entry to employment, but not for any other aspects of the training provision. There is a satisfactory staff appraisal system and some effective training has taken place, but there are no clear links between the staff development plan and the future business needs of the company. There is insufficient staff awareness of the aims and objectives of the company, although all staff are clear about current operational issues.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

6. Equality of opportunity is well promoted by Temp Dent. The first inspection identified that staff and learners had a good awareness of equality of opportunity. The reinspection process also identified this strength and found that Temp Dent had improved its promotion of equality of opportunity. The company has detailed equal opportunities policies which are issued to all staff and learners during induction. These policies are reviewed annually and have been updated to reflect current legislation. There are effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints. The agreement between Temp Dent and the dental practices requires the employer to have an equal opportunities policy, or to use Temp Dent's policy. There has recently been some good training for all staff on equality and diversity, including guidance on how to teach and assess topics relating to equality of opportunity. All learners take an NVQ unit on equal opportunities early in their programme and have a good awareness of equal opportunities and of the complaints and appeals procedures. Promotional materials produced by Temp Dent emphasise the importance of equality of opportunity within the company. Recruitment procedures for staff make clear reference to the importance of equality of opportunity.

7. The first inspection identified inadequate monitoring of the implementation of equality of opportunity. The monitoring of equality of opportunity has been much improved and is no longer a weakness. Data are collected on the age, gender, ethnicity and disability status of learners. These data have been used to analyse participation rates and the profile of learners who leave the programme without achieving their qualification. There has been no equivalent analysis of learner progression and achievement. Assessors check that employers have an equal opportunities policy and that equality of opportunity is included as part of induction to the workplace. Progress reviews are used to monitor the implementation of equal opportunities policies and to re-emphasise learner awareness of the complaints and appeals procedures.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 3**

8. The first inspection identified insufficient formal arrangements for quality assurance as a weakness. These arrangements have been significantly improved. Comprehensive quality assurance procedures are now in place, covering almost all aspects of the training process. There are currently no procedures for monitoring the recently subcontracted provision for additional learning needs. There are now good audit procedures and these are implemented effectively. Many aspects of quality assurance are now satisfactory. These include the monitoring of training and internal verification. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. All employees of Temp Dent were involved in the production of the latest self-assessment report. Inspectors' judgements matched many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report. Temp Dent has produced detailed development plans. These plans were used effectively to monitor and improve the quality of the provision between the first inspection and the reinspection. Some of the other quality assurance procedures have been introduced during the past six months, which is too recent to be able to judge their effectiveness.

9. The collection of feedback from learners is inadequate. The formal evaluation of learners' experiences is weak. Questionnaires are issued to learners after induction, at the mid-point of the programme and on exit from the programme. These questionnaires are produced and analysed by a local further education college. Some of the questions refer to aspects of college provision and are not relevant to learners at Temp Dent. Feedback is not sought about some parts of Temp Dent's training provision. There have been delays in the analysis of feedback. The information gained from the questionnaires is of little use for improving the provision. This weakness has been recognised by Temp Dent and there are plans to modify the methods used to collect and analyse feedback. There is some informal monitoring of learner feedback during progress reviews. The arrangements for gathering feedback from employers are satisfactory.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	72	3

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

STRENGTHS

- good assessment practices
- very effective support for learners from employers

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate support for additional learning needs
- slow progress for some learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more effective teaching strategies
- better resources to support learning
- more effective progress reviews

10. The first inspection identified the weakness of an inflexible approach to workplace assessment. Temp Dent has made significant improvements to this aspect of its provision and there are now good assessment practices. Assessment takes place at least once every four weeks. Assessment plans are flexible to suit the needs of learners and employers, and some assessments take place at weekends. A detailed assessment plan is developed for each learner when the previous assessment is completed. This enables learners to easily identify what they are expected to achieve by the time of the next assessment. The feedback provided at assessment is very thorough and supports effective learning. Assessors clearly identify the performance criteria that have been assessed and this enables the learners to monitor their own progress. Assessors offer effective support to learners to help them complete their assignments. If assessment opportunities are limited at a particular dental practice, assessors ensure that learners can carry out work in alternative practices in order to fulfil the requirements of the qualification. Additional assessments are provided to support those learners making

slow progress. There are weekly meetings of assessors at Temp Dent and these meetings are used to share good practice.

11. Employers' support for learners is very effective. This strength was identified during the first inspection. Employers have a good understanding of the NVQ and are kept well informed about the progress their learners are making. All employers are actively involved in quarterly progress reviews for learners and are supportive of the qualification. All learners have a logbook in which details of on- and off-the-job training are recorded. Employers are knowledgeable about the content of off-the-job training and work closely with learners and assessors to effectively co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. Employers are particularly supportive of the assessment process and are very willing to provide numerous assessment opportunities. Some learners are allowed time during working hours to carry out work on their portfolios. Many learners are part of their employer's appraisal system and are encouraged to attend training sessions additional to the on-the-job training for the dental nursing qualification. All employers provide an induction to the workplace which includes health and safety issues and equality of opportunity.

12. There were two observations of training during the reinspection. One of the training sessions was judged to be very good. The session was well planned and the tutor made effective use of teaching resources. The tutor demonstrated good questioning techniques and learners were fully engaged in the learning process. There were regular checks on learning throughout the session. The other training session observed was judged to be poor. Learning objectives were not identified, resources were poor and learners were not sufficiently involved in the session. There was very little improvement in the knowledge and understanding of those learners attending the session.

13. Learning resources are satisfactory. There are some good models and posters which are used effectively by most tutors. Staff at Temp Dent have developed some very good learning materials to support off-the-job training, and are currently updating them to external examinations format. Learners have satisfactory access to information and communications technology (ICT) facilities at a local further education college, but there is restricted access to such equipment at Temp Dent's premises and insufficient use of ICT to support learning.

14. The first inspection identified that progress reviews were inadequate. There have been significant improvements to progress reviews since then and they are now satisfactory. There are clear guidelines on how to conduct reviews and all staff have been trained to follow the guidelines. The progress review forms have been improved and are completed satisfactorily by all staff involved in the review process. Specific targets are set, although many of these could be divided into smaller units to help learners achieve their goals. Employers are actively involved in the review process and their comments are recorded on the review forms. Individual learning plans are amended during reviews if necessary. Progress reviews are used to help in the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

15. Some learners make slow progress. Two learners who started their programmes in September 2001 have successfully achieved their qualifications. However, eight learners who started in September 2001 are still on programme and none of these have yet completed a unit. Approximately 85 per cent of learners currently on programme are making satisfactory progress. Learners must take an external examination as part of the qualification. Of the last group to take this examination, in November 2002, only 41 per cent were successful. Learners have the opportunity to retake the examination on two occasions each year. Temp Dent has recently changed its advice to learners about taking the examination, suggesting that they take it towards the end of their programmes. A formal revision programme has been planned to support learners preparing for the next external examination in November 2003. The retention rate for learners is satisfactory.

16. Support for learners with additional learning needs is inadequate. All current learners are given a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills during the enrolment process. ESOL needs are not identified. The results of this initial assessment are not always recorded on individual learning plans. Of the staff involved in this type of support, only one has a specific qualification and that is in supporting learners with dyslexia. Training materials are not amended for learners with weak literacy skills. Some staff at Temp Dent have provided informal individual support for learners making slow progress and this support is recorded in the learner file. The company had made no formal provision for additional learning needs. Temp Dent has now recognised this weakness and has recently made changes in the management of the support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL. The company has arranged for staff at a local further education college to reassess learners previously identified by Temp Dent as having additional learning needs. Approximately 20 per cent of these learners were identified as requiring literacy, numeracy or ESOL support. They have been offered a two-hour training session for one evening every two weeks, starting in June 2003. The learners have been issued with specific individual learning plans for the learning support programme.