

INSPECTION REPORT

EDA Training

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

EDA Training is the training section of Hull City Council's economic development agency. It is based in the city of Kingston upon Hull. It offers work-based learning for young people in painting and decorating, engineering, business administration, information and communications technology, printing and sign-making and Life Skills. It also provides training in warehousing and distribution, but this was not inspected as there were too few learners.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, training in painting and decorating is satisfactory, and in business administration, printing and sign-making, information and communications technology and Life Skills it is good. Engineering training is unsatisfactory. EDA Training's leadership and management and quality assurance are good and its arrangements for equality of opportunity are outstanding.

GRADES

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	1
Quality assurance	2

Construction	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Business administration, management & professional	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

EDA TRAINING

Information & communications technology	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Visual & performing arts & media	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good strategic and operational planning
- highly effective use of management information to support learning
- highly effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- good support for learners
- good quality work placements in business administration, information and communications technology, printing, and sign-making
- good integration of key skills with vocational training in business administration, information and communications technology and sign-making

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks in most work-based learning programmes
- insufficient work placements in painting and decorating and information and communications technology

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of employers in learners' progress reviews
- clearer lesson objectives in off-the-job training

THE INSPECTION

1. Eleven inspectors spent a total of 44 days with EDA Training (EDA). A range of management documents was examined, including contracts with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), EDA's business plan, policies and procedures for health and safety, equal opportunities and quality assurance, staff training plans, records and materials, minutes of meetings, and achievement data. Inspectors interviewed 126 learners, visited 40 work placements and conducted 51 interviews with staff and 35 with employers. Inspectors also examined 65 individual learning plans and 63 learners' portfolios. They observed 27 learning sessions. EDA produced its first self-assessment report in 1998 and has carried out annual self-assessment since then. Its most recent self-assessment report was produced in December 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Construction	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Business administration, management & professional	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Information & communications technology	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Visual & performing arts & media	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	4	5	2	0	0	0	11
Total	0	9	14	4	0	0	0	27

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. EDA contracts with the Humberside LSC for the provision of work-based learning for young people and for Life Skills training. EDA's main premises are near the centre of Hull and it has four other sites in the city. Its senior staff are based in the city council's offices. EDA employs 62 staff, of whom five work part time. It trains 427 learners in the areas inspected.

3. In 2000, the population of Kingston-Upon-Hull was 254,300, a decline of around 12,000 from the 1991 census figure. The national unemployment rate in May 2002 was 3 per cent. In the Yorkshire and Humberside region it was 3.7 per cent, while in Kingston upon Hull it was 6.6 per cent. The percentage of unemployed people aged 18-25 increased slightly from 27.7 per cent in May 2001 to 28.2 per cent in May 2002 compared with a national figure of 27.5 per cent. The proportion of the local population working in public administration, education and health is 25.9 per cent, while 22.6 per cent are employed in distribution, hotels and restaurants, 21.7 per cent in manufacturing and 15.4 per cent in banking and insurance.

4. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 28 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. Around one in 10 young people left school without any qualifications, which is double the national average. The proportion of 16-year-olds in full-time further education in 2000-01 was 57 per cent, while nationally it was 71 per cent. At the time of the 1991 census, the percentage of the population of Yorkshire and Humberside from minority ethnic groups was 4.4 per cent and in Hull it was 1.2 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

5. Very few learners achieve all the targets on their modern apprenticeship frameworks. The rate is particularly poor in engineering. Many learners who leave the programme early or who do not achieve their main qualification go into employment or further education. There is very good support for learners in all areas of learning by EDA's staff and by employers. The quality of work placements is good but too few are available in painting and decorating and in information and communications technology (ICT). Off-the-job training is good and key skills are integrated well with vocational training in business administration, in ICT and in print and sign-making.

Life Skills

6. Learners achieve their personal learning goals and are well supported by EDA's staff. There are good learning resources. Training is flexible, and provides learning opportunities in occupational settings that successfully develop learners' personal, social and vocational skills. Learners' progress is not sufficiently monitored. Regular progress reviews are carried out, but records of reviews lack detail. Some learners are unclear about the extent of their achievement, particularly in basic skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

7. EDA is part of Hull City Council's regeneration services department and is strategically led by the head of regeneration services. He is supported by the training initiatives manager and by five centre managers. EDA employs 62 staff, including 49 assessors and eight administrative staff. It has equality of opportunity and quality assurance policies as well as policies and procedures on health and safety, staff training and development, and complaints and appeals. Self-assessment reports have been produced annually since 1998 and there are six-monthly reviews of self-assessment. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in December 2002.

STRENGTHS

- good strategic and operational planning
- highly effective use of management information to support learning
- highly effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- comprehensive and thorough quality assurance arrangements

WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks in most work-based learning programmes

8. There is good strategic and operational planning at EDA. Senior staff in the organisation have carried out extensive analyses of local labour market shortages and identified potential areas for skills development. Staff have a good understanding of local learning needs and have ensured that EDA responds to them. For example, following a market analysis in 2000, EDA decided to phase out motor vehicle and building training, and to focus on those areas with local skills shortages. In engineering, where retention and achievement rates have been poor, EDA has formed an association with local engineering employers specifically to remedy this. Strategic planning influences operational planning. The training initiatives manager implements Hull City Council's strategic policies in relation to learning. Centre managers are well aware of local circumstances and understand their communities well. All staff have a good understanding of the city council's strategic direction and vision.

9. There is highly effective and systematic use of management information to support learning and continuous improvement. Data are used by all staff to monitor performance and to identify areas for improvement. A recent change to learners' application forms is beginning to provide staff with a comprehensive database of retention and achievement data. EDA has used benchmarking of local and national training providers to compare and improve their training provision. Centre managers make informed use of data on retention and achievement rates and have a thorough

understanding of trends over time. They are well aware of those areas of learning where additional resources could most usefully be deployed to raise achievement levels. Staff regularly visit similar providers who have been inspected, in order to identify good and poor practice.

10. EDA has a comprehensive staff development and appraisal procedure. All staff have six-monthly appraisal interviews with their line managers. Appraisals identify training and development needs which meet corporate and individual objectives. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Training and development is regarded as an integral part of work activity for all staff. Most have taken part in training events in the past six months. Feedback from staff who attend training events is analysed and appropriate action is taken where necessary.

11. EDA's internal communications are highly effective. There are monthly and quarterly meetings for all staff. Centre managers have monthly meetings which have standing agendas and are comprehensively minuted. Agenda items include surveys of employers and learners, management information, trends in retention and achievement rates, early leaver analysis and best practice. Monthly site meetings follow the same agenda as the managers' meetings and are highly effective in keeping staff aware of retention and achievement data, financial performance and feedback from learners and employers. Most training sessions include an opportunity for learners to give an evaluation. The rate of response from employers to questionnaires has been low. Staff have recently been given individual targets for improving this.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 1**

12. EDA's promotion of equal opportunities is highly effective. It has its own equality and diversity strategy and also uses Hull City Council's equal opportunities in employment policy and equality for all policy statement. The equality and diversity strategy comprises a strategy diagram and a strategy statement based on the national equality and diversity strategy. Each training centre has its own equal opportunities manual that includes sections on discrimination, bullying and harassment, and complaints and grievance. Learners who have a complaint that relates to equal opportunities can also use Hull City Council's grievance procedure. All staff and learners receive training on equal opportunities at induction. The handbook for learners contains sections on diversity and citizenship. All staff involved in interviewing receive training in recruitment and selection procedures.

13. EDA's equal opportunities policies are reviewed annually by the equal opportunities working party. This meets monthly and provides relevant up-to-date advice, guidance and training. The working party includes representatives from each of the five training centres, and is responsible for devising and implementing systems to promote, implement and manage equal opportunities. It identifies resources and provides monthly updates to the equal opportunities manuals and the staff and learners' handbooks. The working party issues guidelines for all staff about equal opportunities statements to be used in marketing and publicity materials. Staff receive equal opportunities training whenever legislation is updated. The training is recorded on staff files. Staff and employers have the opportunity to take an online course in basic equal opportunities. There is particularly good use of non-stereotypical images during equal opportunities induction and on all promotional material produced by the provider.

14. There is good monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace and equality of opportunity is reinforced throughout learners' programmes. The monthly updates from the equal opportunities working party are discussed at learners' progress reviews. The progress review document has an equal opportunities section that records the passing on of the monthly updates to the learner and employer. This has been a recent introduction and is being monitored closely. Employers are given a sample equal opportunities policy or encouraged to develop their own. They are also given additional information on the business case for equality. Learners display a good grasp of equal opportunities issues. Staff are constantly developing strategies to increase learners' awareness of equal opportunities. For example, a citizenship certificate has recently been piloted in one training centre, and discussions have been held about a national advertising campaign to highlight the issue of racism in football.

15. There is good use of equal opportunities data to monitor learners' progress and prevent stereotyping. A new system has been introduced of monitoring learners' application forms. Each form contains an equal opportunities monitoring slip. This is collected by the quality assurance team and the information on it is entered into a database. The data are used to monitor the consistency of retention and achievement rates among different groups of learners and this information is used to plan recruitment.

Recruitment information has been used successfully to attract funding for initiatives such as attracting women into ICT. Positive action is being employed to encourage women into ICT and engineering.

16. EDA is piloting a disability statement which will be sent out with application forms and course information to all applicants for training, whether they are identified as disabled or not. This statement is to be shared with other training providers by the local LSC. EDA's training centres provide good access for people with restricted mobility. Specialist equipment, particularly in ICT, is available if required.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 2**

17. EDA has a quality assurance team and a well-structured quality assurance manual that details its quality assurance framework and policy. A copy of the manual is available to staff at each training centre. The manual outlines the control of documents, covers key training processes and contains guidelines and policies on staff induction, equality and diversity, health and safety and customers' feedback. Twice a year, staff are required to confirm that they have read and fully understood the quality assurance manual. They are informed of any changes to the quality assurance arrangements at their monthly site meetings. All staff display a thorough understanding of the quality assurance system. EDA has a strong culture of continuous improvement, and quality assurance procedures are effectively used to manage the key training processes.

18. The self-assessment process includes staff, learners and employers. There is six-monthly self-assessment based on actions from the monthly site meetings and local and national initiatives. The development plan is updated through the self-assessment process. The development plan includes targets and outcomes. It identifies responsibilities and is costed where appropriate. Actions from the development plan are allocated to members of the quality assurance team, or to appropriate key staff. The quality assurance manual is changed if necessary.

19. EDA has an established process for the observation and assessment of training. This is used to identify improvements and staff training requirements. All staff have a six-monthly appraisal where their development needs are identified and individual targets are set.

20. The quality assurance team carries out thorough, six-monthly internal audits of the quality assurance procedures. During the most recent audit, a member of the equal opportunities working party joined the team to carry out an equal opportunities audit. Incidents of non-compliance are recorded and the information is passed to the centre managers. This can result in action-planning and/or further staff development. Internal verification is thorough and systematic. The quality assurance system is highly effective in ensuring the quality of the training programmes for the vast majority of learners.

21. All work placements have an initial assessment visit which includes a health and safety audit, risk assessment and check for equal opportunities policies. The visits are recorded and reviewed.

Good Practice
<p><i>Each training centre has well-developed equal opportunities policies. At one centre the policy is particularly well presented. It is produced in a suitable font, layout and design and uses an appropriate style of language for its particular learners.</i></p>

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	19	3

22. EDA offers national vocational qualifications (NVQ) training in painting and decorating. There are 19 learners, of whom 11 are working towards NVQs at level 1, seven towards NVQs at level 2 and one towards an NVQ at level 3. Eighteen of the learners are men and one is a woman. Learners are referred from EDA's Life Skills training programme. All learners have an induction, with an initial assessment of their basic skills. Their additional learning and support needs are identified during this process. All learners have additional learning or social needs. Two instructors carry out all off-the-job training, assessment and internal verification. They are occupationally qualified and hold assessors' and internal verifiers' awards. Learners attend full-time training at EDA's training centre until they find a work placement. There are nine learners on work placements. They attend off-the-job training for at least one day a month. The painting and decorating tutors carry out progress reviews at eight-weekly intervals. A qualified member of EDA's staff checks all employers' health, safety and welfare arrangements.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		25		16		21									
Retained*	0		11	44	6	38	8	38								
Successfully completed	0		9	36	6	38	7	33								
Still in learning	13		6	24	0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- particularly effective support for learners
- well-planned and structured training
- high standard of learning materials
- good monitoring of learners' progress

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient work placements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of employers in learners' progress reviews
- further development of lesson plans

23. Staff demonstrate good understanding of individual learner's needs. They provide particularly effective individual support for learners. Learners are able to talk to staff in confidence about training and personal matters. Arrangements for support are discussed at length during learners' progress reviews, and summaries of discussions are recorded in a constructive and supportive way. Learners have additional reviews if there are problems with their behaviour, timekeeping or health and safety practices, and clear actions are proposed to rectify the problems. Staff have helped learners to find accommodation and prepare for interviews. EDA's basic skills support is good. Learners receive regular coaching, which builds their confidence and improves their reading and writing skills. One of the painting and decorating instructors is qualified to help learners who need literacy support. There are measurable improvements in learners' written work as a result of the support they receive. Effective support has also been provided for a learner with short-term memory loss.

24. The painting and decorating programme is well planned and structured. There is a good mix of practical and background knowledge training. When they are on work placement, learners work independently using activity packs to record their knowledge and understanding. The packs contain handouts and questions to suit learners' preferred learning styles. Before starting their NVQ, learners have a four- to six-week trial period, during which staff assess their attitude, timekeeping and ability to get on with other learners. Learners complete a health and safety induction during this period to ensure they work safely when they begin their NVQ training. They are actively encouraged to record all training activity by completing job cards which are clearly linked to the NVQ requirements. Learners' progress review paperwork shows the action taken to ensure the job cards are completed. Learners also complete a monthly work record to summarise their activities. All records of activity are effectively used as evidence for the NVQ and are fully traceable through learners' portfolios. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of how to record evidence.

25. Learning materials are of a high standard. Learners have access to well-presented,

easy-to-understand learning packs. They use them as reference documents when completing written tasks. The packs contain clear pictures and diagrams, many of them in colour. These include a wide range of manufacturers' information sheets. Some packs also contain samples of materials, which enable learners to recognise different surfaces without having to rely on complex specifications.

26. Learners' progress is monitored and recorded well. Staff use wall charts to record successful completion of both NVQ units and activity packs. The charts are clearly displayed in the workshop. Practical and background knowledge achievements are colour coded allowing learners to see their progress at a glance. Progress is also recorded in learners' portfolios. As a result, learners have a good understanding of how much they have achieved, and are motivated by it.

27. Retention and achievement rates are poor. In 1999-2000 and 2000-01, the average retention rate was 38 per cent, and in 2001-02 it improved to 44 per cent. All 13 learners who started the programme in 2002-03 are still in learning. Since 1999, 18 per cent of learners who have left the programme entered employment, 6 per cent entered further education and one returned to school. Since 1999, the average achievement rate has been 36 per cent. A number of learners who started training programmes in 2001-02 are still in learning. Learners have the opportunity to gain additional qualifications in manual handling, fire awareness and basic health and safety.

28. There are work placements for fewer than half of the learners. Learners without work placements sometimes find it difficult to maintain their commitment and interest. There are two learners who have no opportunities to gain the site-based evidence required by their level 2 NVQs. Attendance rates at the training centre are satisfactory.

29. EDA's assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Internal verification is carried out continuously, and includes the observation of assessors and the verification of learners' portfolios and other sources of evidence. Sampling plans cover a range of learners and NVQ units. There are regular standardisation meetings. Detailed feedback is given to assessors and recorded appropriately.

30. Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. However, employers are insufficiently involved, and do not receive copies of the records. They do not know what targets have been set for learners, or what tasks learners need to do. Records of employers' comments are superficial and make little reference to learners' progress with their NVQs.

31. Teaching is satisfactory or better. The painting and decorating workshop is adequately resourced and provides learners with appropriate learning opportunities. Session plans are used, but they do not clearly describe how sessions will be effectively concluded.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	89	4

32. EDA Training has 89 learners on engineering programmes, including foundation and advanced modern apprentices and NVQ learners. There are 38 learners following EDA's induction programme before being found a work placement. The remaining learners are either employed or already in work placements. EDA has links with approximately 50 local employers and work-placement providers. All learners do two initial assessment tests. Modern apprentices all begin their programmes at the same time, whereas NVQ learners can start at any time of the year. Engineering NVQs are offered at levels 1 and 2 in fabrication and welding, performing engineering operations, mechanical engineering and engineering production. On- and off-the-job assessment is carried out by EDA's staff. Advanced modern apprentices take NVQs in engineering production at level 3. These are assessed entirely in the workplace. Key skills for modern apprentices are taught and assessed off the job. Modern apprentices also do additional technical qualifications to support their NVQ. Assessors carry out reviews of learners' progress in the workplace every eight weeks. A sample of assessment decisions is internally verified.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		23		14		15									
Retained*	0		0	0	0	0	9	60								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0								
Still in learning	0		9	39	8	57	7	47								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	17		6		5		1									
Retained*	0		0	0	0	0	0	0								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0								
Still in learning	11		0	0	0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	36		54		56		50									
Retained*	0		7	13	17	30	15	30								
Successfully completed	0		7	13	17	30	15	30								
Still in learning	33		20	37	1	2	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good off-the-job training
- good links with schools and employers

WEAKNESSES

- very poor achievement and retention rates
- slow progress by many learners
- unnecessary delays in gathering evidence for NVQs

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more realistic target-setting for more able learners
- more frequent updating of learners' plans

EDA TRAINING

33. EDA's staff have a good understanding of the needs of their learners. Trainers provide individual training sessions for learners which are linked to their vocational training. For example, where there are weaknesses in numerical ability, learners are given calculations to perform that relate to their practical work. There is an open access policy for applicants to the level 1 NVQ programme and most recruits have few or no academic achievements. There is a strong commitment by staff to encouraging level 1 NVQ learners to develop knowledge and skills. Work placements are selected to ensure that the learners' ability matches the employers' requirements. Learners who do not complete their NVQ or modern apprenticeship framework within the funding period are allowed to continue their training and receive support from EDA's engineering centre. Meetings are held to discuss learners whose behaviour causes repeated difficulties and determine an appropriate course of action. The meetings are intended to ensure that the learners are treated fairly and given every opportunity to improve. They take place before any formal disciplinary action is considered.

34. The off-the-job practical and classroom-based training is good. There are good resources at the engineering centre. All the training staff are vocationally experienced and hold, or are working towards, recognised teaching certificates. All the observed training sessions were good. A classroom session on health and safety was highly participative, held the learners' attention and used practical examples that related closely to the learners' experience. The session ended with a written test and task, which reinforced the learning and was administered in an informal and effective manner. The standard of practical work is good and learners are trained to perform tasks to the quality standards of their employers. Learners' logbooks, which record the work produced in the training centre, are up to date.

35. EDA has good links with local employers. The work-placement officer spends one day a week visiting client companies in order to maintain contact and give employers the opportunity to discuss their learners. Any problems are reported back to the appropriate staff member at the training centre. The training centre manager helped to set up a sector group of companies to identify methods of meeting the local skills shortage in engineering through better recruitment practices. One result of this is that EDA now approaches a wider range of schools to attract school leavers with higher levels of GCSE achievement. The work-placement officer regularly visits seven schools in the Hull area, four of which have been classed as failing. The centre operates a work taster scheme that enables young people at school to try out engineering work. This scheme has been enthusiastically received and has resulted in several pupils selecting engineering as a vocational qualification. The centre is also working with a number of schools to provide vocational GCSEs which starts in September 2003.

36. There is good basic skills support for engineering learners. All learners do an initial test, and a separate test developed by the training centre. Learners identified as having additional support needs receive extra individual and small group training sessions.

37. EDA's achievement and retention rates in engineering are very poor. Since 1999, no learner has completed all the requirements of a modern apprenticeship framework.

There are no accurate data on learners' achievement before 1999. Of the 53 advanced modern apprentices who have started programmes since 1999, less than half are still in training. Of the 29 foundation modern apprentices who started during the same period, none has been retained for the planned duration of their training, and only one has achieved an NVQ. Sixty-five per cent of the foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 are still in training. Of the 50 learners who started in 1999-2000, only 18 per cent gained a level 1 NVQ and 12 per cent gained a level 2 NVQ. Of the 36 learners who started training programmes in 2002-03, 92 per cent are still in learning.

38. Many learners make slow progress. Of the 35 advanced modern apprentices on the programme, 18 are out of their funding period. Many of these are over a year out of funding. Other learners are approaching the end of their funding, but still have much of their modern apprenticeship framework to complete. Learners' progress reviews have not been used to encourage unit achievement, and EDA does not set demanding targets for learners. Timescales for achievement are too long, and are not modified for more able learners.

39. There are unnecessary delays in gathering NVQ evidence. Learners are working at good employers, on a wide range of relevant engineering tasks. Learners do not collect evidence for their technical qualification alongside their NVQ. There are many examples of learners who have not used the available opportunities to collect NVQ evidence. One learner is constructing complex welded structures, which could generate most of the evidence required for his level 3 NVQ. None of this evidence was being collected, although it will have to be gathered later from other jobs.

Good Practice

A small company that manufactured ornate fencing needed a welder to perform an intricate task. EDA took a sample of the work, analysed the task and trained a learner to perform the task to the quality and quantity standards required. The learner was offered a work placement which resulted in him being employed by the company.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	64	2

40. EDA provides training in business administration to 64 learners. Twenty are advanced modern apprentices, and of these, 19 are employed. There are 34 foundation modern apprentices, of whom 27 are employed. There are also 10 learners on NVQ programmes at level 1. All learners begin their programme with a one-day induction, followed by a period of study in the training centre. This period varies according to individual learners' needs, but tutors normally arrange a work placement after four to six weeks. During their time in the training centre, learners develop skills and learn to use software packages which prepare them for their work placement. Once in a work placement, learners attend training sessions in the centre at times that are negotiated with their employer. The normal attendance pattern is one day a fortnight.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	10		10		5		29									
Retained*	0		1	10	5	100	25	86								
Successfully completed	0		1	10	2	40	18	62								
Still in learning	10		8	80	1	20	1	3								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		20		28		16									
Retained*	0		8	40	24	86	5	31								
Successfully completed	0		2	10	11	39	3	19								
Still in learning	17		12	60	5	18	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		5		4		2									
Retained*	0		0	0	1	25	2	100								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	1	25	2	100								
Still in learning	8		2	40	0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- outstanding support for learners
- flexible arrangements for off-the-job training
- good integration of key skills training and assessment with the introductory and vocational training programmes

WEAKNESSES

- low rate of achievement of foundation modern apprenticeship frameworks

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better planning of some learning sessions
- better-presented handouts in learning sessions

41. The level of support given to learners by EDA's staff is outstanding. This includes support with training and personal problems. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report. All the business administration staff are well qualified, with an appropriate teaching qualification and assessors' and verifiers' awards. Some hold higher degrees. Others hold specialist qualifications, for example in learner support. The staff's commitment to high standards has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the support provided for learners. Learners praised both of their tutors and other staff in the centre. Employers value the quality of information from, and the ease of communication with, the tutors. Formal reviews of learners' progress are conducted in the workplace at eight-week intervals, and visits are also made by tutors to observe the production of work. When necessary, tutors make additional visits to discuss problems with learners or employers. One tutor made weekly visits over a period of

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time to a learner who was experiencing significant difficulties and was likely to leave the programme. Progress is monitored systematically and thoroughly, and discussed with learners. Learners' progress reviews are efficient, comprehensive and highly focused. Tutors know their learners very well and are quick to detect possible problems or barriers to progress. Retention and attendance rates have recently improved. Learning sessions are at least satisfactory and often good. Learners make effective use of the facilities at the training centre to complete their portfolios of evidence. They are very well supported in this by their tutors. Assessment and feedback are very thorough, and the internal verification process is good. The standard and range of evidence presented in portfolios is good.

42. Employers are highly supportive and are selected with care. Attention is paid to the needs of each learner. Employers are aware of the requirements of the NVQ. They negotiate learners' attendance at the training centre according to their workload. The tutors are adaptable and co-operative, and have good relationships with the employers. Some employers have altered their company's recruitment practice as a result of the positive experience of taking on a learner. Some employers have promoted learners in the workplace. In many instances, employers spoke of requesting a second learner when they first moved on to a different level of NVQ programme. Workplace supervisors actively support learners in developing their skills. They make it possible for learners to carry out the tasks they need to in the office at a time suitable for assessment. Tutors negotiate this as a result of the action-planning process during learners' progress reviews.

43. The timing and number of training sessions at EDA's training centre are flexible for all learners. Most attend the centre for one day in every fortnight, but there are many instances where additional days have been negotiated. This is usually before a key skills test, or in order to complete portfolio work to meet a target. Tutors are always available to give advice and support. The key skills co-ordinator makes appointments as necessary to advise learners about the collection of evidence. Individual support for numeracy can be requested at any time, and additional group sessions have been held recently.

44. There is good integration of key skills training and assessment with the introductory programme and the vocational training. The new framework for business administration demands achievement at level 3 in the key skills of communication and information technology (IT). Staff have responded to this by devising a work-based project on health and safety which enables learners' key skills to be assessed while they are developing their knowledge of, and skills in, using various software packages. Initial assessment shows that very few learners are able to claim exemption from the tests. Tutors are provided with excellent paperwork for monitoring learners' progress. This is regularly updated and provides a good basis for discussion of progress with learners and employers during progress reviews. Literacy and numeracy are supported effectively through the key skills work on each programme.

45. There is a low rate of achievement of foundation modern apprenticeship

frameworks. Of the learners who started in 1999-2000, only 19 per cent achieved all the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. In the following year, the achievement rate improved to 39 per cent, but remained unsatisfactory. The self-assessment process did not identify this weakness. The achievement rate on advanced modern apprenticeship programmes was satisfactory for those starting in 1998-99, at 52 per cent, and good for those starting in 1999-2000, at 62 per cent. The number of advanced modern apprentices has reduced significantly, from 29 in 2000-01 to 10 in 2002-03. Numbers on NVQ programmes have been low until very recently. EDA has encouraged Life Skills learners to progress to level 1 NVQ programmes in business administration, and has dedicated staff resources to supporting these learners, particularly in finding suitable work placements. All early leavers are tracked and contacted. Many leave to enter full-time employment.

46. The planning of some learning sessions is incomplete. Lesson objectives are not always shared with learners and learners are not always given a context for the exercises they are asked to complete. This area for development was recognised in the self-assessment report.

47. The standard of handouts used in learning sessions is satisfactory. However, some worksheets are poorly photocopied and difficult to read. Learners do not always use them for future reference.

Information & communications technology**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	136	2

48. EDA provides training in IT for 67 foundation modern apprentices, 38 advanced modern apprentices, and 31 learners on NVQ programmes. Twenty-seven foundation and 17 advanced modern apprentices are working towards NVQs in using IT at levels 2 and 3 respectively. Forty foundation and 21 advanced modern apprentices are working towards NVQs in installation and support of IT at levels 2 and 3 respectively. The 31 learners on NVQ training are working towards an NVQ in IT repair centre services at level 2. Learners are recruited to the programmes through local advertising, careers events, referrals from employment agencies, and as a result of taking part in work experience at one of EDA's training centres. More than half the modern apprentices are in work placements. During their work placement, most learners attend the training centre once a week to work on their portfolios and receive individual support from a tutor as required. Learners on the NVQ programme are trained at another training centre, where they refurbish redundant computer equipment for the benefit of community organisations and local schools, and repair faulty computers brought in by customers. Sixty-eight per cent of the NVQ learners are identified as having additional learning needs.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		34		8		16									
Retained*	0		3	9	5	62	14	88								
Successfully completed	0		1	3	1	12	3	19								
Still in learning	8		25	74	2	25	3	19								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	21		56		59		49									
Retained*	0		15	27	43	73	20	41								
Successfully completed	0		3	5	23	39	19	39								
Still in learning	19		38	68	10	17	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		44		16		19									
Retained*	0		0	0	6	38	11	58								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	5	31	10	53								
Still in learning	1		26	59	4	25	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good off-the-job training
- good quality work placements
- particularly effective support for learners
- good implementation of key skills training
- good assessment practice on IT servicing

WEAKNESSES

- poor rate of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient work placements for IT servicing learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of employers in learners' progress review process
- further development of lesson plans in IT servicing
- more focus on long-term targets during learners' progress reviews

49. EDA provides good off-the-job training. Modern apprentices have a six-week introductory programme to prepare them for entry into the IT employment sector. The introductory programme is well planned and structured to provide an effective blend of background knowledge and practical training. It also offers stimulating training sessions to develop learners' personal skills, enhance their employability, and increase their confidence. It is supported by well-developed lesson plans, which identify objectives, resources, and tutor guidance for each lesson. NVQ learners on the IT servicing programme are trained at a different centre, following a programme which is also well structured, and includes vocational and non-vocational training. All training is given by appropriately experienced, qualified and skilled tutors, who make effective use of physical resources at both the training centres. There are three intakes a year onto the modern apprenticeship programmes, and open access to the IT servicing programme. Learners develop appropriate vocational skills and knowledge, together with good personal skills to help them enter, and make progress in, employment. The IT servicing centre is set up to replicate a commercial servicing organisation, where learners repair redundant computing equipment and carry out computer repairs for customers. Learners conduct themselves in accordance with accepted employment practice. For example, they are responsible for exercising appropriate stock control, and complying with electrostatic discharge procedures. Off-the-job training was not identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

50. Learners have good quality work placements. Modern apprentices take part in jobsearch towards the end of their introductory programme, and most progress into a work placement soon afterwards. There are work placements in a wide range of well-resourced small and medium-sized enterprises, offering learners an extensive and varied range of work opportunities. Most work placements are able to provide job roles which meet the NVQ evidence requirements but if this is not the case, tutors arrange for learners to gain further experience at another work placement. Work-placement providers are committed to the development of learners, and give excellent support and encouragement. They value the training learners receive on the introductory programme. There are particularly good relationships between tutors and work-placement providers. Inspectors found many examples of learners progressing into contracted employment at their work placement. The good quality of work placements was not identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

51. There is particularly effective vocational, pastoral and financial support for learners. EDA pays the learners a training allowance during the six-week intensive training period. The staff successfully use their extensive links with employers to secure work

placements. Once in their work placement the learners are visited frequently and can also contact EDA's staff by telephone and email. While on work placement learners attend the training centre weekly for off-the job-training or tutorial sessions. Productive working relationships exist between the learners, employers and EDA's staff. The tutors are aware of, and are often able to influence, the learners' day-to-day tasks and level of responsibility in the workplace. Some former learners are now tutors at EDA. Good support for learners was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

52. Key skills training begins during induction. Care is taken to identify any previous achievements that can be used as proxy qualifications. An effective initial assessment identifies the level of support each learner needs. Learners are involved in the process and understand the results and the decisions made. Where this is a realistic target, learners are encouraged to take a higher level key skills award than required by their modern apprenticeship framework. From the start of the programme, learners attend appropriate key skills development sessions that are integrated with the vocational training. Training resources are available on EDA's intranet, and learners use these effectively. Well-devised assignments provide efficient assessment opportunities. Many learners make substantial progress with key skills during the early weeks of their programme. Tutors monitor their progress effectively. All learners have a good understanding of their own progress. Key skills achievement rates are improving. EDA identified the key skills initial assessment process as a strength in the self-assessment report.

53. There is good assessment practice on the IT servicing programme. Assessments are planned well and the process is clearly understood by learners. Assessors' records of observations are particularly detailed, with appropriate cross-referencing to the NVQ standards. Learners' portfolios include a good range of diverse evidence, with particularly well-written personal statements and annotations in support of their evidence. Learners use their portfolios as valuable reference material. Assessment on the modern apprenticeship programmes is satisfactory. Internal verification is satisfactory on all programmes.

54. The achievement rates for modern apprentices are poor. In the period from 1999-2000 to 2000-01, 8 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 40 per cent of foundation modern apprentices achieved the targets on their modern apprenticeship frameworks. However, 38 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 53 per cent of foundation modern apprentices achieved NVQs at level 3 and level 2 respectively. There is good progress into employment. Ninety-three per cent of advanced modern apprentices get jobs and 61 per cent of foundation modern apprentices either progress onto the advanced programme or get jobs. Learners develop good practical and personal skills and knowledge. Some also achieve additional, relevant qualifications. Retention rates for modern apprentices have improved. In the period 1999-2000 to 2000-01, 75 per cent of advanced and 56 per cent of foundation modern apprentices were retained for the planned duration of their programmes. A further 18 per cent are still in learning. The IT repair programme began in 2000-01 and no one has yet reached the intended completion date. At the time of inspection, 57 per cent of learners were

still on programme. The poor achievement rate was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

55. The literacy and numeracy support available to learners is satisfactory. Most learners on the IT servicing programme have additional learning needs. Support is provided through planned, scheduled lessons, and through appropriate individual coaching by the learner's own tutor or a specialist.

56. For learners on the IT servicing programme, there are insufficient work placements and only 16 per cent of learners are placed. While learners on this programme may complete their NVQ in the training centre, they experience a limited range of work. Most remain in the training centre for an extended period and find their work repetitive. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report.

57. Learners' progress reviews are not sufficiently focused on longer-term targets. Targets set during reviews are mainly confined to short-term NVQ activities. Learners' personal development needs, their job role at their work placement, and their key skills training are not adequately covered during the reviews. There are no measurable targets set for learners to achieve in these areas before their next review. Employers are not always present during progress reviews and many employers are not sufficiently aware of the learners' progress in the workplace.

Good Practice

To celebrate success and encourage them to persevere and achieve, learners on the IT servicing programme who complete their level 2 NVQ and maintain an attendance record of 95 per cent, receive the centre's platinum award and the gift of a refurbished computer.

Visual & performing arts & media**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	43	2

58. There are 19 advanced and 24 foundation modern apprentices in this area of learning. They are all employed by specialist sign-making companies or in the printing industry as machine printers, pre-press operators, print finishers or originators. The foundation modern apprentices have 12 months to achieve an NVQ at level 2 and the advanced modern apprentices are given 30 months to achieve an NVQ at level 3. To complete their modern apprenticeship frameworks, learners must also gain a background knowledge qualification and an appropriate key skills award. Learners are referred to EDA by Connexions, their employers or by recommendation. Foundation modern apprentices attend off-the-job training on one day a week. Advanced modern apprentices attend for one day a week for the first six weeks of their programme and one day a month thereafter. Three full-time vocational specialist staff are responsible for recruitment, induction, off-the-job training, assessment and reviews.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		5		13		15									
Retained*	0		2	40	3	23	7	47								
Successfully completed	0		1	20	2	15	5	33								
Still in learning	8		3	60	3	23	5	33								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	10		34		29		13									
Retained*	0		13	38	12	41	4	31								
Successfully completed	0		4	12	1	3	2	15								
Still in learning	9		14	41	1	3	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good training on and off the job
- particularly effective key skills training and assessment
- highly responsive training which meets local needs
- good support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for modern apprentices in sign making

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer learning objectives in lesson plans
- more online learning opportunities for print finishing
- more realistic target-setting for modern apprentices

59. All learners receive good training off the job at EDA and on the job from employers. Learners' attendance and timekeeping for training sessions is good. All learners are making good progress and many are achieving their qualifications early. Learners enjoy the training. They value the opportunity to learn and become competent in a variety of tasks. Off-the-job training sessions are well planned to ensure that all aspects of the qualifications are covered in sufficient depth to give learners a full understanding. Trainers have a high level of technical competence, relevant qualifications and recent workplace experience. EDA has good resources to support training. There is a dedicated training room which provides a good environment for learning. The room is large, light, and has colourful displays covering many aspects of

sign making and printing. Employers and trainers work together to ensure that learners have opportunities to master a wide range of workplace skills. For sign makers this includes digital printing, acrylic routing and box making, and for machine printers, lithography, silk screen process and gravure. Some employers have become more aware of health and safety, equality of opportunity issues and the environmental impact of processes as a result of the training learners have received, and have subsequently changed workplace policies or practices. Internal verification is thorough and meets all external requirements.

60. All learners in sign making and printing are making good progress towards completion of key skills awards. They enjoy the key skills lessons and understand how achievement of the qualification enhances their career prospects. Learners have an excellent understanding of what they have to achieve and how far they have progressed. An effective initial assessment of key skills is carried out at induction. The assessment comprises a self-assessment, a formal test and discussions between learner and tutor. Each learner has an individual learning plan to deal with weaknesses identified by the assessment. Although learners doing a foundation apprenticeship only require key skills at level 1, they are encouraged to work towards level 2 if the initial assessment shows that they are capable of achieving it. Most learners take the higher level. Key skills teaching sessions are timetabled into off-the-job training days. There is close teamwork between the key skills co-ordinator and the vocational tutors. Learners' progress is monitored thoroughly. Learners who require additional support because of identified weaknesses in knowledge, or because they have dyslexia or other barriers to learning, are given individual support. Key skills training and assessment is integrated with the main qualification, and evidence of key skills competence relates directly to the learner's work role.

61. EDA provides training which responds to local employers' needs. Training in sign making and printing was established to meet the needs of 45 local companies which specialise in this work. EDA is the only training provider in the country which specialises in modern apprenticeships in sign making. Sign making is a skilled occupation and all learners who complete a qualification are able to find employment in the industry. In both printing and sign making there are close relationships between EDA and employers to ensure that training meets employers' needs. These links were recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report. Employers value the experience of the tutors and most use EDA to recruit suitable learners when they have vacancies.

62. EDA provides good support for learners. Learners' progress reviews take place regularly and are thorough and effective. Short-term targets are negotiated with learners and their supervisors. Targets set from previous reviews are checked to ensure they have been met. The long-term target date for completion of the modern apprenticeship framework is not revised for learners who are progressing faster than expected. Progress reviews are used to reinforce equality of opportunity. Learners have a very good understanding of wider equality issues. There is exceptionally good planning of work-based assessment. Learners, supervisors and assessors all have a thorough understanding of when the assessment will take place, what aspect of the NVQ will be

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assessed and what equipment and material they will need. The assessments are well recorded and referenced to a number of units. Additional tutorials, individual training sessions and progress reviews take place when required to ensure progress is maintained. Assessors monitor learners' progress thoroughly. All learners are making good progress towards completion and they fully understand the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Initial guidance and induction are good. EDA has changed the initial interview to ensure that those recruited to sign making have a detailed understanding of the course and the job. Since then, there has been a large decrease in the number of learners leaving training during the first three months. Of the learners recruited since July 2002, only two have left the programme early. Learners who experience problems in the workplace are quickly found alternative work placements. Support for learners was recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report.

63. Of 24 learners recruited to the advanced modern apprenticeship in sign making since 1999-2000, only one has achieved the full modern apprenticeship framework. Eleven remain in training and are making good progress towards completion. Of the 12 who left without completing their modern apprenticeship framework, 11 achieved one or more qualifications and left to take up employment. Of the 69 foundation modern apprentices recruited since April 1999, three have achieved all the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Seventeen remain in training and are making good progress. Of the 51 who left before completing the framework, 23 gained one or more qualifications and most left to take up employment.

64. Lesson plans are good, although the lesson objectives are not always clearly stated. Computerised presentations, group discussions and projects are used to enliven the teaching. Online learning is provided by a specialist further education college, and is used by many learners. The online learning is not yet available to support the vocational qualifications in print finishing.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	61	2

65. EDA has provided Life Skills programmes since 1998. There are 61 learners on the Life Skills programme. Learners are referred by Connexions, Jobcentre Plus or Gateway advisers. Some learners apply directly. The programme lasts for a minimum of 16 weeks. Half the learners have been on their programmes for longer than this. At the start of the programme, all learners have a brief induction before moving into an occupational area for one week. They all have an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy, and their preferred learning styles are identified. At the end of the first week, learners have an interview with their tutor and personal adviser to agree their development plan. Learners' progress reviews take place every four weeks. Some aspects of the Life Skills provision are subcontracted. There are seven full-time tutors, one part-time tutor, a manager, a support worker, a work-placement officer and two administration staff for this area of learning.

STRENGTHS

- very good support for learners
- wide range of opportunities for learners to develop personal, social and vocational skills
- good learning resources
- good rate of achievement of personal learning goals

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed evaluation of subcontracted training

66. Learners receive very good personal and training support. Tutors are very aware of the personal problems learners face, and are sensitive to their needs. They are strongly committed to helping learners overcome barriers to their learning and achieve their potential. Learners needing extra support can be referred to the specialist support

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worker. They receive help with housing, financial matters and behavioural problems. Retention rates have improved since 2001. Absence is promptly followed up by the tutors and the support worker. The support worker keeps a record of the support offered to learners, and of the agencies contacted on their behalf, such as banks, housing offices and benefits offices. Learners are also well supported during their work placements. The work-placement officer makes regular visits to learners and conducts regular progress reviews.

67. EDA's Life Skills programmes provide access to a range of learning opportunities that develop personal, social and vocational skills. Learners have the opportunity to try out various vocational skills such as joinery and engineering, and to develop occupational skills including crafts and cookery. Products made by the learners are sold at a Christmas fair. Learners develop teambuilding, personal and social skills by participating in well-structured group activities and discussions. They have the opportunity to take part in residential training and visits to places of interest. Visiting speakers give presentations on a range of relevant topics, such as drug abuse and sexual health. EDA offers a range of qualifications to improve learners' employability, such as food hygiene certificates and a basic computer literacy qualification.

68. EDA provides good learning resources. The learning environment is welcoming and attractive. The Life Skills room is well lit, colourful and full of displays of learners' achievements. The room has a comfortable sitting area with daily newspapers, magazines, books and other learning materials. Learners contribute to the planning and purchasing of furniture and decorations for the training rooms. EDA's minibus is used to take learners on external visits. Staff have a wide range of qualifications and experience which are well matched to the needs of learners. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Their qualifications include teaching, counselling, and managing aggressive and challenging behaviour. Staff have a strong commitment to personal and professional development.

69. There is a good rate of achievement of personal learning goals. Learners can achieve certification in a range of subject areas including basic health and safety and manual handling. They complete project booklets for specific subjects, and these are regularly checked. Learners can identify the progress they have made since starting their learning programme. One learner who had never tried joinery before had progressed sufficiently to make a range of objects and gain a work placement at a local woodwork company. In 2002, a significant number of early leavers progressed into employment. Others moved onto mainstream training and are working towards NVQs.

70. Learners agree a programme that is appropriate to their needs, and targets are recorded on their individual learning plans. However, the learning plans are poorly constructed. Topics are itemised but there is little evaluative comment on the learner's needs. There is insufficient detail about the specific training that will be provided and how it will be given. Regular progress reviews are carried out, but the records kept often lack detail. Some learners are unclear about the extent of their achievement, particularly in basic skills.

71. Life Skills staff are highly aware of learners' basic skills needs. Literacy and numeracy skills are an integral part of the training. Project books have been designed to help learners develop and practise skills. There are separate literacy and numeracy training sessions. Learners identified as needing extra help with basic skills are referred to a specialist tutor.

72. EDA subcontracts training for Life Skills learners in specialist areas such as uniformed services, horticulture, and hairdressing, to several local training providers. Subcontractors also provide sports and outdoor education, and provide an opportunity for a number of learners to work abroad on environmental projects. EDA monitors its subcontractors satisfactorily, but does not always thoroughly evaluate the training they provide.

Good Practice

Learners are paid a bonus of £10 or £20 as a reward for making progress. The progress may relate to effectively mentoring another learner, or meeting a personal target.