

REINSPECTION REPORT

WS Training Ltd Reinspection

17 December 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. WS Training Ltd is a private limited company which provides work-based learning for young people in Suffolk through a contract with Suffolk Learning and Skills Council. The company has three training centres, one in Haverhill, one in Bury St Edmunds and a smaller centre recently opened in Ipswich. WS Training Ltd was established in 1995 in Bury St Edmunds. It expanded to the Haverhill training centre in 1999 and the Ipswich centre in 2003. WS Training Ltd offers work-based learning for young people in construction, engineering and manufacturing, business administration and management (including insurance and accounts), information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer service, distribution and warehousing. Most of the training takes place at the training centres, but off-the-job training also takes place at three colleges and at employers' premises.

2. WS Training Ltd employs 23 staff including the chief executive. The chief executive has overall responsibility for government-funded training. Since the previous inspection, the company has undergone a restructure. The assistant chief executive role is now carried out by a training and employment manager and a training and quality assurance manager.

3. WS Training Ltd operates across Suffolk which is a rural county with most of the employment in the service industries. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 2.8 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. Six learners are currently on ICT training programmes. Three are advanced modern apprentices and three are foundation modern apprentices. WS Training Ltd provides learners with individual training in the workplace and group or individual training at one of their training centres. A range of additional ICT courses is available to learners. All learners have a designated mentor in their workplace. Staff visit learners in the workplace every four weeks to assess their skills, and every eight weeks to review their progress.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learner interviews	6
Number of staff interviews	3
Number of employer interviews	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The ALI's inspection in September 2002 found that the work-based learning for young people was satisfactory in engineering, business administration, and retailing, customer service and warehousing. Work-based learning in ICT was unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of WS Training Ltd was satisfactory, as were the arrangements for equality of opportunity. Quality assurance was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, ICT was found to be satisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

	Inspection	Reinspection
Information & communications technology	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	6	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- particularly good resources
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress for some learners
- ineffective recording of progress reviews

Achievement and standards

6. There is slow progress for some learners. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Although it has improved for most learners, it still affects two of them. Two advanced modern apprentices, at the time of the previous inspection, are still making slow progress. This is largely due to historical factors such as poor matching of the national vocational qualification (NVQ) to the job role and opportunities to gather evidence at work are proving difficult. Some efforts have been made to identify other avenues for evidence, but these have yet to impact on progress. The provider now uses an occupational checklist for new learners to ensure that they are able to achieve the NVQ in the workplace. Of the 12 advanced modern apprentices who have started since 1999, six have completed the framework and a further three are still in learning. Of the eight foundation modern apprentices who have started since 1999, two have completed the framework and a further three are still in learning. Of the two NVQ learners who have started since 2001, one has now achieved the qualification. Twenty-two learners have started since 1999 and of these, 41 per cent have completed the framework and a further 27 per cent are still in learning. The remaining four learners are making satisfactory progress.

Quality of education and training

7. There are particularly good resources. Both training centres are well equipped with a wide range of ICT equipment, including new flat-screen monitors. Training rooms are light and airy, well ventilated and are conducive to learning. The work stations are designed to provide ample space for learners to use work books and exercise modules.

WS TRAINING LTD REINSPECTION

An up-to-date range of software packages is available. There is good access to both training centres for people with restricted mobility. Learners benefit from interaction with more mature learners when attending commercial courses. Laptop computers are used by assessors to provide access to software packages which may not be readily accessible on the employers' premises. Assessors are suitably qualified and experienced.

8. There is good support for learners. Assessors make very frequent visits to learners and tailor them to meet individual needs. Since the previous inspection, seven learners have achieved their qualification, whereas before that only two had achieved a qualification over a three-year period. Assessors have established a very good rapport with their learners and this has contributed to improvements in retention and achievement rates. There is good use of open questions during taught sessions and individual coaching sessions that encourage learners to respond and communicate well. Assessors work closely with learners to promote ownership of their portfolios and to encourage collection of diverse evidence. Good support is provided by mentors in the workplace. All learners attend a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and key skills. Arrangements are made for learners who need additional learning or social support, but currently none of the learners need this support.

9. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Individual coaching was observed and is considered satisfactory. Learners' comments on the training they have attended are positive and they are able to clearly identify learning from the sessions. The NVQ frameworks clearly match the needs of learners. Learners attend a wide range of courses which are designed to develop their knowledge and understanding of the NVQ. Individual learning plans are regularly updated and reflect the level and range of learning that is planned for them. The induction is satisfactory, as are the arrangements for initial assessment and assessment practice.

10. There is ineffective recording of progress reviews. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, and although still a weakness, there has been some improvements, such as the involvement of employers. There is no long-term target-setting. During the assessment process, short-term action-planning takes place, but the progress review is more a means of recording what has been achieved rather than an overview of work still to be done. Records are not detailed and do not include reference to personal development needs and overall progress towards completion of the framework. The questioning of learners on equality of opportunity are not in-depth and there is no reference to specific aspects of the legislation that directly affects them.

Leadership and management

11. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Internal verification was found to be unsatisfactory at the previous inspection, but are now satisfactory. Informal observations of staff training are carried out, but the results of these observations are not recorded. While there is feedback to the staff, there is no mechanism for identifying and recording development needs and linking these findings to a staff development plan. Assessors are aware of the achievement and retention targets which are regularly discussed at team

meetings. Regular staff meetings take place and action points are recorded in the minutes.