

INSPECTION REPORT

STL Reinspection

30 May 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. STL is a large private training provider which was established in 1984 to provide work-based training in Sheffield. It is a privately owned company limited by guarantee. It has training centres in Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham, Chesterfield and Derby. STL provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships, and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in retailing and customer services, business administration, hospitality, health and social care, and hairdressing.

2. The senior management team comprises the managing director, the director, the quality assurance manager, the human resources manager and the finance manager. The managing director is responsible for the company's strategic direction. The director is responsible for the implementation of the company's objectives. The quality assurance manager is responsible for co-ordinating and improving the training programmes and is jointly responsible for staff development with the human resources manager. The human resources manager is also responsible for the management of equal opportunities and health and safety. The finance manager is responsible for budgets and contracts. There are five training programme managers who are specialists in their area of learning and five training centre managers responsible for the recruitment of learners. A skills co-ordinator is responsible for the co-ordination of additional learning support. The company currently employs 117 staff, of whom six are part time.

3. Until shortly before the original inspection, in February 2002, the care training provision was subcontracted to an external training provider. A new care training programme manager and two new care assessors have since been appointed. STL fund its training provision through South Yorkshire and Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

4. There are 110 learners on the health and social care training programmes. Three learners are working towards NVQs at level 2 in health and social care. There are 80 foundation modern apprentices and 27 advanced modern apprentices. All learners are employed in a wide range of residential care homes, nursing homes, or residential homes for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Training is provided at four of the five training centres and to individual learners in the workplace. The care assessors carry out regular assessments in the workplace and review learners' progress every 12 weeks.

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ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	10
Number of learner interviews	25
Number of staff interviews	20
Number of employer interviews	7
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. STL was originally inspected in February 2002 and leadership and management, equality of opportunity and the retailing and customer service provision were judged to be satisfactory. Quality assurance, business administration and hospitality were good, and hairdressing was outstanding. Health and social care was judged to be very weak. At the end of the reinspection process, the quality of work-based learning in health and social care was found to be outstanding.

GRADES

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

	Original	Reinspection
Health, social care & public services	5	1
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	5	1

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 1

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	110	1

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

Strengths

- significant improvement in achievement of qualifications
- excellent development of learners' skills and understanding
- good induction
- particularly effective assessment and verification of qualifications
- very good support for learning
- very good resources to support learning
- good progression into careers and higher level learning
- highly successful improvement of provision

Weaknesses

- some weak review practices

Achievement and standards

6. There has been a significant increase in learners' achievement of qualifications during the past 12 months, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. In the six months after inspection, the care training team was restructured and a new care training programme manager and two new assessors were appointed. The whole care team began an effective weekly staff development programme which was delivered by the hairdressing training programme manager and the quality assurance manager. Hairdressing was judged to be outstanding at the original inspection. During this six-month period, of the 32 modern apprentices who left the care programme, 15 per cent achieved their modern apprenticeship framework. However, during the six months leading up to reinspection, of the 113 modern apprentices who left the care programme, 58 per cent achieved their modern apprenticeship framework. According to ALI data, this figure is more than double the figure nationally. Furthermore, this improvement in the achievement rate has been achieved in only 15 months. Of the three NVQ level 2 learners who left during this period, two achieved their qualification.

7. Learners are confident and professional in their work and are able to work independently. There is good use of short-term target-setting to help learners progress and to measure their progress and achievement. Learners are making good progress and

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some are achieving their targets well in advance of the completion date.

Quality of education and training

8. There is excellent development of learners' skills and understanding. The four teaching and learning sessions observed were graded as good or very good. Training staff work well with learners who participate fully in lesson activities. Sessions are clearly linked to key skills, the NVQ and work practices. Appropriate teaching methods are used to promote and extend learning. The pace of learning meets individual needs. Teaching and learning materials are used effectively. Employers and learners are confident that the standard of care received by clients, improves as learners acquire new skills and understanding. Research carried out by the learners for their NVQ and key skills gives them a deeper insight into specialist areas of care, such as Parkinson's disease and the control of infection. Most employers provide a wide range of training, much of which is relevant to the NVQ. STL ensures that all learners receive the statutory-required training in health and safety, and moving and handling.

9. Induction is good. It is well structured, memorable and effective and provides a good foundation for the learners' NVQ programmes. All learners receive an induction which effectively takes account of their different needs. There are very detailed guidelines for induction which ensure a standardised approach across the organisation. This includes very detailed aims, flow charts of activities, detailed lesson plans, resource lists, interview guidance notes and guidance on e-learning assessment. Learners take a variety of assessment tests which effectively determine the most appropriate programme of study, their individual learning styles and their additional literacy, numeracy or key skills support needs. Of the 110 current learners, 36 have been assessed as requiring extra support. Of these, 13 are receiving literacy and/or numeracy support from the basic skills tutors and 23 are receiving additional support from their assessor. Learners take part in a problem-solving exercise, after which they are given feedback on their problem-solving and communication skills. Throughout the induction, the emphasis is on encouraging learners to work together, and ensure they have a full understanding of all aspects of their training. Learners are given a detailed information pack and are aware of equal opportunities issues and the appeals and complaints procedure. During the past six months, work-placement tasters were introduced for all new non-employed learners. These involve a series of visits from the recruitment team to check on the suitability of the learner for the programme of study and the appropriateness of the work placement for the learner. This successful initiative has contributed to the significant reduction of the number of learners who leave within the first 13 weeks of the programme. Once a learner has settled into a work placement, they complete a job analysis questionnaire with their employer and assessor which is effective in ensuring they are on the correct level of NVQ and in choosing an appropriate set of option units which match the learner's job role.

10. There are particularly effective assessment and verification practices. All assessors are occupationally qualified and experienced and most have achieved a modern apprenticeship in care. They have an in-depth understanding of the qualifications and

framework. Assessors work occasional shifts in care homes to keep their practical skills up to date. Learners are visited very frequently in the workplace, usually every two weeks, but weekly if required. Assessors are flexible in the times that they visit learners to accommodate shift patterns. Employers have a good understanding of the NVQ process and encourage the assessors to visit. There is effective communication within the team, which enables them to share best practice and resolve areas of concern quickly. Scheduled assessments are planned well. Situations frequently arise where learners perform unplanned activities while assessors are present. Assessors effectively record the evidence from the unplanned activities for the learner's NVQ portfolio. Observations by assessors of learners' workplace practice are good. Assessors expertly reference these across a wide range of units. All records of observation are clearly recorded and linked to the NVQ. Learners receive prompt and constructive feedback on assessment outcomes at the earliest opportunity. Evidence for the NVQ is also used and assessed for key skills. The activities which learners use to improve their basic skills are linked to their NVQ units. Assessors are very well supported by the internal verifier and receive regular feedback on their performance and development needs. There are regular standardisation meetings where the team share best practice. Internal verification is carried out thoroughly. There is a comprehensive monitoring system in place to ensure that the internal verifier and the assessors are fully aware of all aspects of learners' progress.

11. There is very good support for learners, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors are easily accessible to give support for personal and social issues. The good working relationships between assessors and learners helps the learners to build confidence and self-esteem. Assessors also provide advice and guidance on opportunities for employment and further achievement. Work placements are of a high standard. Workplace supervisors and staff effectively motivate learners with praise and encouragement. Through this support, learners enhance their practical skills, understanding and knowledge and are given every opportunity to put into practise what they have learned. Initial assessment identifies learners who require additional support with basic and key skills. Learners have the option of the type of support they receive. Basic skills tutors will make regular visits to the workplace or learners may attend an STL training centre for group or individual work with a basic skills tutor. Learners' progress in developing their basic skills is carefully monitored by the basic skills tutors and a report is sent to their assessor after every training session. Assessors are given training and a range of resources to enable them to provide effective basic and key skills additional support. Learners value the support they receive very highly and recognise that it helps them to stay on programme and achieve their qualifications.

12. There are good resources to support learning. Learners have the option of attending off-the-job training at an STL training centre or receiving it in their workplace. Learners who chose to train in their workplace are given individual coaching by assessors. The coaching is of a high standard. Learners are taught their practical skills and related theories well. All training rooms are conducive to learning and are available at four of STL's training centres. Staff use a good range of learning materials. All learners have a full list of available resources. Learners have access to books, journals, handouts, leaflets, and computers. These are available at the centre or can be loaned to the learners for

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home use. Access to the Internet is encouraged for learners to research projects for their NVQ and key skills. There are good materials for practical and teaching activities which are also available to learners. All learning resources are linked to key skills. Learning resources and training rooms are available in many workplaces.

13. All learners make good progress towards their qualification and are encouraged to recognise and achieve their full potential. In 2002-03, 82 per cent of learners achieved a higher level of application of number than was required to complete their framework. During this period, 52 per cent of the foundation modern apprentices who completed their qualification progressed on to an advanced modern apprenticeship. All foundation modern apprentices who enrolled with STL quickly progress into employed status. As learners gain skills and knowledge, many employers ensure that they are given the opportunity to take on additional responsibility within the workplace. Assessors give good career guidance and support to the learners. STL maintains comprehensive and up-to-date information on career options and entry requirements for higher education and career paths. Many learners have progressed into nursing, midwifery and the armed forces, and some have received early promotion within their care homes.

14. There are some weak review practices. Most employers do not take part in the review process and are not routinely given a copy of the completed review. Employers are given the opportunity to record comments on the review form, however, many do not. Whilst there is good action-planning and target-setting after each assessment visit, there is a lack of developmental commentary in the formal, 12-week review. Medium- and long-term targets are not always clearly established and some learners are unclear about their overall progress.

Leadership and management

15. There has been significant improvement to the care provision since the last inspection. Immediately following the inspection, new staff were recruited to work with managers to agree a comprehensive development plan. New staff were fully informed of the weakness identified. A manager was appointed to take overall responsibility for care. The development plan is monitored regularly to ensure targets are being met. All staff are given a high level of personal, professional and developmental support by the senior management team which is linked to the development plan. Best practice from other occupational areas is identified and used effectively to improve all aspects of the care provision. Formal and informal communications are good. There are a range of monthly meetings to discuss issues, which relate to individual learners, performance targets and quality assurance. Staff have helped to identify the wide range of resources which are now available and used by the staff and learners. STL's quality assurance arrangements effectively cover all areas of activity within the care programme. A range of data is regularly collected, analysed and used to inform progress. All staff are dedicated, motivated and committed to achieving the best possible outcome for the learner. All staff were involved in the self-assessment process. The strengths identified by STL are all reflected in the strengths identified by inspectors, however, the weakness around progress reviews was not identified by the organisation.