

INSPECTION REPORT

Dales Agriculture and Rural Training

07 August 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

DALES AGRICULTURE AND RURAL TRAINING

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 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
- **learndirect** 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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

Dales Agriculture and Rural Training

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Dales Agriculture and Rural Training (DART) was established in 1999 to provide work-based learning in Derbyshire. DART provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships, and national vocational qualification (NVQ) training in agriculture, mixed farming, livestock production, small animal care and horticulture. DART also offers NVQs in veterinary nursing and has begun a pilot project to train employed adults with no qualifications towards NVQs in horticulture. DART does not own any training centres and uses hired venues close to learners' work placements, or employment premises.

2. DART's director manages the organisation and shares ownership of it with his wife, who is a non-executive director. The director is responsible for the strategic direction and financial management of the organisation and for overseeing the arrangements for the quality assurance of the training provision. There are 16 other members of staff, 11 of whom work in specialist areas such as horticulture, agriculture, animal care, environmental conservation and assessor and verifier training. Two of these specialists are full-time employees, and nine work part time. Three members of staff work on a casual basis as specialist tutors, assessors or verifiers. There is a full-time administrator and part-time assistant administrator. Seven members of staff act as internal verifiers.

3. DART funds its training through Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Assessment and off-the-job training for the NVQ in veterinary nursing are carried out by a subcontractor. The Derbyshire areas from which DART recruits its learners have a minority ethnic representation of less than 1 per cent, according to the 2001 census, compared with approximately 9 per cent for England and Wales as a whole. In 2001 the proportion of school leavers in Derbyshire achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 52 per cent, compared with 47.9 per cent for England as a whole.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Land-based provision

4. There are 103 learners on land-based training programmes. Twenty-three learners are advanced modern apprentices, 19 are foundation modern apprentices and 61 are working for NVQs at level 1, 2 or 3. One learner is from a minority ethnic group. Four of the learners have been identified as having disabilities. Just under one-third of learners have additional learning and/or social needs. Nearly three-quarters of the learners are employed. Learners work in a variety of land-based settings throughout the area.

5. DART uses a number of hired venues throughout Derbyshire for off-the-job training. Off-the-job training and assessment on the veterinary nursing NVQ are subcontracted to another local training provider. All assessment is carried out in the workplace and is arranged at times to meet the needs of learners and their employers. Learners' progress is

reviewed in the workplace every four to six weeks.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learner interviews	39
Number of staff interviews	22
Number of employer interviews	26
Number of subcontractor interviews	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	30

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, DART's leadership and management are satisfactory. Its approach to equal opportunities and quality assurance are also satisfactory. The quality of work-based learning in land-based programmes is good.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

Land-based provision	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Learners gain valuable skills during their training programmes**, frequently becoming valued employees at their work placements. For example, two learners have been given responsibility for the day-to-day management of their employers' farms. Learners can gain a wide range of additional qualifications, including training in lift truck driving, sheep shearing and the safe use of chainsaws. Over 80 additional qualifications have been gained by learners since September 2002.

8. **Retention and achievement rates for advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in farming are good.** Most learners who started during 1999-2000 completed their advanced modern apprenticeships and most learners who started in 2000-01 completed their foundation modern apprenticeships. Most learners are making satisfactory progress towards completing their frameworks. However, current learners on farming programmes are making slow progress towards key skills qualifications. Achievement rates for those learners following NVQ programmes in farming are poor.

9. **The retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners in veterinary nursing programmes are good.** All but one of the level 2 learners who have completed programmes since 1999-2000 have successfully achieved their NVQ. Most of the learners who have not completed their programme are still in learning. All but two of the level 3 learners who have reached the end of their programme have successfully achieved their NVQ. All the other learners who have not achieved the NVQ remain in training. Some achievement rates on animal care NVQ programmes are poor.

10. **Achievement rates for modern apprentices in horticulture are poor.** Of the 12 learners who have begun a modern apprenticeship since 2000, only one learner has completed the full modern apprenticeship framework and few learners remain on programme. However, all four level 1 NVQ learners have achieved the qualification, and three have gained employment.

Quality of education and training

11. **DART arranges good work placements** which provide a wide variety of relevant experience to learners. Work placements are carefully selected to match each learner's specific needs. Employers are enthusiastic and support learners well. Learners are able to collect good evidence of the particular tasks they perform in the workplace for their portfolios.

12. Off-the-job training resources are satisfactory. Training is provided in workplaces and in hired centres in local communities. The range of learning resources provided is adequate. Portfolios are well organised and show a satisfactory range of evidence including photographs of practical tasks being carried out.

13. **Support for learners is particularly good.** Staff are easy to contact and work flexibly, often meeting learners during weekends and evenings to provide assessment and additional help. Staff have a wide range of relevant industrial experience and are well qualified. Learners are assigned a tutor/assessor whose particular experience and skills meet their individual needs and circumstances. Learners receive regular visits every four to six weeks to review progress and welfare. Learners with additional learning and/or social needs receive more frequent visits to help them with their portfolio and are also assigned a mentor. However, learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are not developed sufficiently.

14. **The subcontracted training in veterinary nursing is good.** Tutors provide clear,

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helpful teaching materials, good individual support and thorough examination preparation. Learners can work independently in the well-equipped training rooms and staff provide individual guidance. On other programmes, off-the-job training is satisfactory. In some otherwise satisfactory sessions where learners worked confidently, the tutor did not check that all learners understood the material, or reiterate key points.

15. **Induction arrangements are poor.** Some learners have a poor understanding of essential issues such as the nature and component parts of their programme or timescales for achievement. No standards for the content, timing or delivery of induction are set and there is insufficient effective reinforcement of issues. Many animal care learners have not completed their induction course. However, the support provided by tutors enables learners to settle into work quickly and gain confidence in performing tasks and working with others.

16. **Target-setting for learners is weak.** Progress reviews concentrate on learners' personal effectiveness and do not clearly evaluate their progress towards their qualification. Learners are not set clear achievement targets which should be met by their next progress review visit. Feedback from the employer is used, but written comments are not sufficiently detailed.

Leadership and management

17. **The strategic leadership of DART is good.** The company has a clear strategic plan for the next three years. Its aims include maintaining the organisation's significant growth and continuing to increase the number of work placements and learners from under-represented groups. DART has flexible employment practices and clear strategies to continue these through an increased use of information technology (IT). Some staff are already using laptop computers supplied by the organisation. The management has highlighted the slow progress of some learners and extra resources are being provided to rectify this.

18. DART's day-to-day management of its learning programmes is satisfactory. Communication between staff is effective. Frequent meetings involve staff in discussions, although not all staff attend and not all action points are followed up.

19. **The development and deployment of staff is effective.** Staff development activities are planned annually. Staff have gained a variety of extra qualifications to help the organisation meet its development needs and increase its flexibility. DART has a good range of specialist staff to ensure that relevant knowledge and experience is available for each area of learning. DART also recruits and trains learners' workplace supervisors as assessors to increase the effectiveness of on-the-job assessment.

20. **DART does not plan sufficiently for the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills.** Although it has a policy to support learners' literacy and numeracy development, there is insufficient formal recording of the specific needs of each learner, or monitoring of the effectiveness of the support given. Learners are given additional help with NVQ portfolio construction, but insufficient emphasis is given to improving

their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

21. **Good arrangements are made for learners who have a diversity of needs.** Learners are appropriately placed with employers who have suitable experience of working with young people. Extra tutors give good support to learners, often outside normal working hours.

22. DART's promotional materials stress the importance of equality of opportunity. Recent marketing initiatives have successfully increased the number of young women in agriculture training. Equal opportunities policies are clear and learners receive information about equality of opportunity at induction. However there is insufficient training after induction and learners' understanding of the issues is limited.

23. **Internal verification of land-based programmes is satisfactory.** Records are kept up to date and show that errors in assessment are identified and corrected. Effective plans ensure that all learners' files are sampled. However, some sampling plans do not cover all the assessed units.

24. DART has a satisfactory self-assessment process, which involves all staff and workplace assessors. Inspectors agreed with most of the findings in DART's self-assessment report, but highlighted additional weaknesses, particularly in quality assurance.

25. **DART's quality assurance system is incomplete.** Some aspects of training have been standardised and improved as a result of critical discussions between staff. However, there is insufficient guidance about other key training procedures and too few systems to monitor the quality of training.

26. Management information is not used sufficiently to monitor performance. Retention and achievement rates are not systematically monitored and specific targets are set for improvement.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic leadership
- effective development and deployment of staff
- good arrangements for learners with diverse needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning for individual literacy and numeracy needs
- insufficient use of management information to monitor performance
- insufficient training for learners in equality of opportunity

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- incomplete quality assurance systems

Land-based provision

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates for modern apprenticeships in farming
- very good retention and achievement rates in veterinary nursing
- good achievement of additional qualifications in farming
- good use of work placements
- particularly good support for learners
- good off-the-job training for veterinary nursing

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeships in horticulture
- poor induction arrangements
- weak target-setting
- insufficient development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT DALES AGRICULTURE AND RURAL TRAINING:

- the knowledge and experience of staff - 'they know what they are talking about'
- the support they get from staff
- that training is available at work - 'the flexibility of the classroom coming to me'
- meeting other learners and sharing experiences
- the opportunity to take additional qualifications
- that their training is making them feel more confident
- friendly and helpful staff - 'lecturers are cool'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK DALES AGRICULTURE AND RURAL TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the variety of farms offering placements for wider practical skills development
- the amount of off-the-job training in farming
- the use of specific achievement targets in action plans
- the amount of notice given for off-site training days

KEY CHALLENGES FOR DALES AGRICULTURE AND RURAL TRAINING:

- develop quality assurance systems to cover all aspects of training
- use management information to monitor performance effectively
- develop strategies for planning and teaching literacy and numeracy
- improve equality of opportunity training for learners
- improve target-setting during progress reviews

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good strategic leadership
- effective development and deployment of staff
- good arrangements for learners with diverse needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning for individual literacy and numeracy needs
- insufficient use of management information to monitor performance
- insufficient training for learners in equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance systems

27. The strategic leadership of the organisation is good. A clear and detailed strategic plan sets out DART's aims for the next three years. The organisation has grown by over 160 per cent during the past four years and one of its aims is to maintain the growth in learner numbers and work placements for learners. Another key aim is to continue with effective initiatives to increase enrolments from under-represented groups. The management team have highlighted the slow progress of some learners and are devoting extra resources to help them to complete their programmes as soon as possible. Staff understand the strategic aims of the organisation and contributed to the development of the three-year plan.

28. The development and deployment of tutors and assessors is effective. DART's staff are particularly well qualified, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Most staff have appropriate degrees, teaching qualifications, assessor and verifier awards and substantial experience in their area of learning. A plan of staff development activities is produced annually. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to further staff development. They have gained a variety of extra qualifications to help the organisation meet its development needs and increase their flexibility. DART employs a good range of specialist part-time staff to ensure that specific knowledge and experience are available for each area of the business. There are currently over 20 workplace supervisors in training with DART to become work-based assessors.

29. The operational management of DART is satisfactory. Staff meetings are held every four to eight weeks and the minutes of meetings record proposed actions and those responsible for them. However, not all action points are followed up in subsequent meetings and not all staff attend the meetings, though all receive copies of the minutes. Laptop computers have recently been issued to staff so they can use email, improving communication. DART's director meets with a different tutor/assessor each month to

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examine portfolios of evidence and discuss learners' progress, as well as opportunities for extra staff support and other relevant issues. The organisation manages its finances and resources effectively and has an operational surplus for emergencies and developments.

30. DART does not sufficiently plan for the development of literacy and numeracy support. A policy sets out a statement of intent to support the development of all learners' literacy and numeracy skills. In some instances, learners receive additional visits by their assessors to help them to complete the necessary evidence for their NVQ portfolios. However, there is insufficient emphasis on the development of the learners' basic literacy and numeracy skills. The specific literacy and/or numeracy support needs of each learner are not sufficiently recorded and there is not enough monitoring of the support given. Few staff have received training to develop their knowledge or key skills and literacy and numeracy training. This weakness was highlighted in DART's self-assessment report.

31. DART does not use management information sufficiently to monitor learners' performance. Retention and achievement rates are not systematically monitored at subject level. No targets for improvement are set at subject level, at assessor level, by categories such as gender, or for those learners who have been identified as needing additional learning support. Staff do not have a clear understanding of the retention and achievement rates for their learners, on either the NVQ or the modern apprenticeship programmes. Overall targets for retention and achievement rates are quoted in the strategic, business and development plans, but these are inconsistent and unclear.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

32. DART uses appropriate promotional material which contains statements about its commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion. These statements specify that DART wishes to increase the number of young women and young people from minority ethnic groups in farming and agriculture. DART is working with Connexions and local schools to increase awareness of the range of opportunities within the area of learning. DART also uses a network of local providers to promote work-based learning to school leavers. The organisation is working with a number of schools in West Derbyshire in an initiative to test the introduction of an alternative curriculum for Key Stage 4, involving level 1 NVQ learners.

33. DART has grown significantly in recent years. Six young women are now in training and although this is not substantially more than the average for land-based training providers, it is more than DART has had in the past. Performance data were collected and analysed against learners' gender on all programmes in 2000-01. The performance patterns revealed by the analysis, and in particular the effectiveness of the support for young women, have been discussed, but no formal action plan has been developed. DART has only one learner from a minority ethnic group, which reflects the low representation of minority ethnic communities in the local area.

34. Equal opportunities policies are the responsibility of the director and are updated regularly. The staff handbook outlines the equality and diversity policy and refers staff to

a more extensive version. Statements within this policy clearly explain key definitions such as equal treatment, direct and indirect discrimination and different forms of harassment. Equality of opportunity is a standard agenda item at meetings. Some staff have received training about equality of opportunity and have shared this training at staff meetings.

35. DART has good arrangements for the diverse needs of learners. The director has an extensive network of employer contacts within the land-based sector and uses it effectively to give learners the most appropriate range of experiences and training. All learners are carefully matched with placements. Learners identified as needing extra support are allocated a mentor to provide additional pastoral support, monitor progress, and liaise with the tutor. Staff have a very flexible approach to meeting learners' needs and often provide support outside normal working hours. Learners with additional social and/or learning needs are placed with employers who have experience of working with young people with diverse needs. For example, one farm owner has extensive experience of working with young people from the pupil referral unit, ex-offenders and people with learning difficulties. One such learner has been placed with this provider and is receiving highly structured and appropriate training in agriculture at NVQ level 1.

36. Monitoring of the subcontractor includes adequate checking of equality of opportunity. Employers' understanding of equality of opportunity is assessed together with their health and safety procedures, when they accept a learner, by use of a simple checklist. This information is kept on file but some employers' understanding of the subject is limited and some could not recall equality of opportunity being discussed.

37. Learners do not receive sufficient training about equality of opportunity. Induction includes discussion of the subject, but few learners interviewed could recall very much about the discussions. Learners have a limited understanding of equality of opportunity issues. No training is given after induction and DART only gives cursory checks on learners' understanding. For example, learners' progress review sheets do not prompt tutors to check if learners have any concerns or to reinforce work covered during induction. Recent questionnaires for learners did include questions to check for problems relating to harassment and bullying. Although no summary report has been written yet, points raised by two learners have been followed up.

38. DART has no training premises of its own. It hires suitable premises for off-the-job training at reasonable distances from learners' homes with appropriate access for learners with disabilities.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

39. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. Up-to-date internal verification records demonstrate that any errors in the assessment of portfolios are identified and rectified. Assessors are observed while conducting assessments with learners and descriptive reports are produced, some of which contain good developmental comments for the assessors. Verification takes place throughout a learner's training programme and sampling plans effectively ensure that all learners' files are sampled. However, some of

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the sampling plans do not cover all of the assessed units. There is no formal audit procedure to ensure that developments in the assessment process are adopted by staff.

40. DART's subcontractor carries out formal observation of its teaching, but DART does not systematically monitor the outcomes. The overall monitoring of the subcontracted training provision is good, however. The director meets regularly with learners and the managers of the subcontracted provision to assess the progress of learners. In one case, this monitoring led to the discontinuation of a placement with an employer who had not provided the required learning environment. The learner was then transferred to an appropriate employer placement.

41. DART's arrangements for the quality assurance of its training provision are incomplete. Overall, the quality of the provision is good. However, DART has no overall quality assurance policy, or a set of procedures detailing how the quality of training provision will be systematically maintained. One area, the completion of job sheets by learners to record evidence of competence in the workplace, was highlighted as a weakness by DART's staff. Following staff discussions, an example was produced for both learners and staff to follow, to ensure consistency. This level of control does not exist for other areas, such as the initial assessment of learners, the induction of learners, or for conducting of learners' progress reviews and records of visits, or the internal verification of the assessment process. Individual learning plans do not always contain target dates for the completion of NVQ units or, where appropriate, the specific additional learning support to be given. The monitoring of progress is not set against the learner's expected rate of achievement.

42. DART has completed annual self-assessment reports since it was established in 1999. Inspectors agreed with most of the findings in its most recent self-assessment report, produced in June 2003. However, inspectors identified additional weaknesses, particularly in leadership and management, and quality assurance.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	103	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates for modern apprenticeships in farming
- very good retention and achievement rates in veterinary nursing
- good achievement of additional qualifications in farming
- good use of work placements
- particularly good support for learners
- good off-the-job training for veterinary nursing

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeships in horticulture
- poor induction arrangements
- weak target-setting
- insufficient development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills

Achievement and standards

43. The retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices and foundation modern apprentices in farming are good. In 2000-01, five of six learners who started their foundation modern apprenticeship completed their frameworks successfully. In 1999-2000, six learners started the advanced modern apprenticeship and five successfully completed the framework. In 2000-01, of 18 learners who started an advanced modern apprenticeship, 12 have completed the modern apprenticeship framework, with two learners still in learning. However, In 2000-01, of 10 NVQ learners, only five stayed to the end of their course, three of whom successfully achieved the qualification.

44. Completion rates for apprenticeships in horticulture are poor. Of six foundation modern apprentices who started training in 2001-02, only one has completed the full framework. Two of these learners have completed the NVQ only. Of the six advanced modern apprentices who have started since 2000, three are still in learning but none has successfully completed their programme. In 2000-01 the retention and achievement rate on the level 2 NVQ programme was only 22 per cent. However, of four learners starting a level 1 NVQ in 2001-02, all achieved their qualification and three have gained employment.

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45. Retention and achievement rates are very good on veterinary nursing programmes. Of 29 learners who started level 2 NVQs after 1999, 16 have reached the end of their programme and 15 have achieved their learning goals. Only two learners left without achieving anything and 11 are still in learning. Of 30 learners who have started working towards level 3 NVQs since 1999, 15 have so far reached the end of their programme, 13 of whom have achieved the qualification. The remaining 15 are still in learning. Achievement on animal care programmes is poor. Of 14 learners who started working towards level 2 NVQs in 2001-02, only four have achieved the qualification, with a further five still in learning. Learners on farming programmes are able to achieve a wide range of additional qualifications. Achievements include safe use of chainsaws, sheep shearing, telescopic lift-truck driving and artificial insemination of livestock.

46. Employers are pleased with the range and quality of work which learners are able to carry out. Some learners progress to further land-based training. Most learners are making satisfactory progress towards achieving their qualifications, but current learners are progressing slowly with key skills training on farming programmes.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	4		17		22		9									
Retained*	0		1		17		8										
Successfully completed	0		1		12		5										
Still in learning	4		13		5		1										

*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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	15		18		11		18									
Retained*	0		7		8		8	44									
Successfully completed	0		2		7		7	39									
Still in learning	9		9		1		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	49		60		43		38									
Retained*	0		35		26	60	24	63								
Successfully completed	0		31		19	44	19	50								
Still in learning	45		16		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

Quality of education and training

47. Work placements are used well and offer a wide variety of relevant experience to learners. Placements are carefully selected to match learners' needs. Employers are enthusiastic and supportive, and are keen for their learners to succeed. For example, on one work placement, the employer uses different coloured tape to help a learner with additional learning needs to recognise different oils. Some workplace supervisors are highly skilled and provide good additional information for learners. All veterinary nursing placements, and some animal care placements, have at least one qualified assessor who can coach and assess the learners in their qualification. DART provides workplace supervisors with assessor training. Good use is made of work-based evidence in portfolios.

48. Support for learners is good. DART shows a strong commitment to learners' welfare and success. Learners and tutor/assessors communicate well. Tutor/assessors are often willing to meet learners at weekends and evenings for assessment and support. The wide range of skills and experience of staff helps them to mentor those learners making slow progress. Staff make regular visits to the workplace every four to six weeks to review learners' progress and welfare, and also visit frequently to plan and conduct assessments. Learners with additional learning and/or social needs receive visits at least every two weeks to support their portfolio construction. Learners who need support are assigned an additional tutor who acts as a mentor. This support is valued by learners and employers. Books are purchased for the use of animal care learners, if needed, and their attendance at relevant shows and events is paid for by DART.

49. Good off-the-job training in veterinary nursing is provided by a subcontractor. The subcontractor's tutors are well qualified, and use well-prepared teaching materials. The training is of a good quality and relevant to learners and employers. Learners can use the books, computer software and training facility before and after training sessions, either on their own, or with individual guidance from staff. Learners are prepared thoroughly for the written examinations and are offered financial rewards if successful. In other areas of provision, training is satisfactory. Learners work with interest and are attentive, and teachers are sensitive to their needs. However, in some otherwise satisfactory

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sessions where learners worked confidently, the trainer did not check all learners' understanding or reiterate key learning points. Arrangements to use training venues near to where learners work are satisfactory. In farming and horticulture programmes, DART's staff visit workplaces to provide individual coaching and use skilled feedback and good questioning to check learners' understanding.

50. Portfolios are well organised and show a satisfactory range of evidence. A good range of assessment methods is used and there are some detailed records of observation of performance. In animal care and farming programmes, a range of evidence is used such as photographs of practical tasks carried out by the learner. However, some horticulture portfolios rely too much on insufficiently detailed accounts, written by learners.

51. Off-the-job training resources are satisfactory. Training is provided in local community centres and, for farming learners, on farms. A range of books and practical resources are used to help learning, some of which are provided by tutors. The use of working farms for placements brings additional valuable opportunities for learning and skills development, but the restricted variety of tasks mean that some optional farming units are not sufficiently covered. All animal care training is provided on the job.

52. DART provides a range of programmes to meet learners' needs. NVQ programmes are available at level 1, 2, 3 and 4, and include specialisms, such as dog grooming. Farming and horticulture learners can take additional short courses in areas such as the safe use of pesticides. DART has effectively widened participation on its programmes. It has introduced a new pilot training programme for employed adults with no qualifications. More learners with additional learning needs have joined the programme over the past year and they are making good progress.

53. Induction arrangements are poor. Although an induction course is offered to animal care learners, attendance is poor and many learners have not completed the course. Some other learners have a poor understanding of essential issues, such as the nature and component parts of their programme, or how to appeal against an assessment decision. Learners are not sufficiently aware of plans or timescales for achievement. Issues relating to equality of opportunity, such as recognition of harassment or discrimination, are also poorly understood. No standards are set for the content, style of delivery or timing of inductions, and there is insufficient effective reinforcement of content. Learners do not recall their experience of induction effectively and have insufficient awareness of their rights and responsibilities. However, the support provided by tutors enables learners to settle into work quickly and gain confidence in performing tasks and working with others.

54. Target-setting is weak. Individual learning plans are not always completed in sufficient detail for adequate, individual targets for achievement to be set. Progress reviews are completed regularly, but concentrate on issues relating to learners' personal effectiveness. They contain insufficient evaluation of progress towards specific learning goals and do not set specific targets to be achieved before the next review. Some targets are agreed verbally with learners during visits by assessors to the workplace.

However, there is insufficient recall of these targets for the learner to be able to prepare for a successful assessment. Feedback from employers is used in some progress reviews, but there is insufficient recorded detail or agreed action. Not all animal care or farming portfolios contain a summary document to enable progress towards completion to be easily checked. There is no adequate overall plan, setting out how or when the component qualification objectives will be achieved.

55. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently developed. Approximately one-third of learners have additional learning and/or additional social needs. These learners are given a screening test to identify specific needs, but this test is not systematically offered to all learners. There is no detailed assessment of learning needs, or development of a clear action plan to effectively meet those needs. DART increases support for these learners to enable them to gain their NVQ and places them in appropriate work placements. A member of staff has specialist qualifications in literacy and numeracy support and shares her knowledge with other tutors. Support includes access to word banks, help with mathematical tasks, such as long multiplication and division, assistance with completing portfolios and individual coaching. However, there is insufficient use of specialist literacy and numeracy learning resources and no structured teaching or assessment to raise individual competences.

Leadership and management

56. The management of training is satisfactory. Staff teams work flexibly to meet the needs of learners. Effective and regular communications support learners' needs and progress. Meetings are recorded appropriately, and these records include action plans. DART has supplied laptops with email facilities to staff, to help communications.

57. Internal verification is satisfactory. Detailed records are kept of internal verification activity in farming and horticulture. DART has developed new procedures for verification activities in animal care which build on existing practice and allow verification to more clearly meet scheme requirements. However, full use of these procedures is not established. Very recent verification activities include more emphasis on the continued development of assessors to improve assessment practice. Assessors in farming share good practice and complete exercises to set standards. Animal care assessors have recently started to meet together to help improve assessment practice.

58. DART does not analyse or use data sufficiently to help set challenging retention or achievement targets. Staff are not sufficiently aware of detailed levels of performance on each programme.

59. DART's staff are involved in the self-assessment process, and the views of assessors in the workplace are also taken into account in the compilation of the report. DART's director personally oversees the subcontracted programmes in veterinary nursing, visiting learners in their work placement to conduct progress reviews and checking on the operation of the programme. Formal monitoring visits to the subcontractor are carried out twice a year. On farming programmes there are no written risk assessments for the skills development activities carried out by learners in the workplace.