

INSPECTION REPORT

Derwent Training Association

25 September 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 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
- **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

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

Derwent Training Association

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Derwent Training Association (DTA) was founded in 1988 to promote and extend training opportunities for people in engineering. It is a company limited by guarantee and was registered under the name of North Yorkshire Training Services Ltd. It operated under that name until May 1998 when the name changed to Derwent Training Association. DTA's training centre is based in Malton, North Yorkshire. It trains modern apprentices and learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in engineering. Since 2001, DTA has occupied purpose-built premises on the outskirts of Malton.

2. DTA is managed by a board of directors of companies, who are members of the association. The senior management team consists of the training centre manager and the business manager. The training centre manager is responsible for training and the overall management of the company. The business manager is responsible for finance and co-ordination of the administration team. There are seven other staff comprising five teaching staff and two administrative staff. Two members of staff have limited management positions, covering workshop management, management of the assessment process and monitoring of learner progress. One further member of staff is responsible for the technical developments in advanced technology.

3. DTA funds its training provision through North Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Ryedale area, from where DTA recruits its learners, has a minority ethnic representation of less than 1 per cent, according to the 2001 census, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally. Unemployment in the Ryedale area is 1.5 per cent, compared with 5.2 per cent nationally. The proportion of school leavers in North Yorkshire achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in 2001 was 58.3 per cent, compared with 47.9 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. There are 57 learners on engineering programmes, 56 of whom are advanced modern apprentices and one is working towards an NVQ at level 3. All learners are employed by local companies. Learners attend weekly off-the-job training at DTA. Apprenticeship training is planned to be completed within 42 months. Assessment takes place in the workplace twice a month. Reviews are carried out after one month of starting training and then every 10 weeks.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	9
Number of learner interviews	13
Number of staff interviews	20
Number of employer interviews	8
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	6
Number of partner/external agency interviews	1
Number of virtual learner questionnaires returned	1
Number of visits	8

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. DTA's leadership and management are good, as is its approach to equality of opportunity. The quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The quality of work-based learning in engineering, manufacturing and technology is good. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

GRADES

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

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Achievement rates are good.** All learners who remain on programme complete the advanced modern apprenticeship framework, normally within the planned timescale. Learners gain very good practical skills and additional qualifications that are valued by employers. All learners achieve their key skills.

7. **Learners achieve a good standard of work in the training centre and in the workplace.** There is particularly good work in fabrication and computer-aided machinery

processes.

8. Retention rates are satisfactory. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Three-quarters of the learners who started in 2002 remain in learning. Just over half of all learners who started between 1997 and 2000 were retained to the end of their programme. Redundancies have affected the rates. Seven learners were made redundant in 2000, although six of these were found alternative employers by DTA. However, they were still identified as leavers for the purposes of data collection.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Total	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3

9. **Learners gain good practical skills.** All learners who attend the first year in the training centre complete up to three additional units at level 2 of the NVQ. Learners have the opportunity to follow a range of additional courses. These courses give them extra skills and qualifications in areas such as computer-aided design and electrical installation. DTA offers reduced fees to members of the association and free additional courses to its modern apprentices.

10. **Most learners achieve their key skills within the first 12 months of their apprenticeship.** A project-based approach to teaching and learning allows learners to apply their taught sessions to the workplace and the application of key skills.

11. **There are very good resources to support learners.** There has been much investment in equipment which allows learners to work on computer-aided equipment. The equipment exceeds that likely to be found in many engineering workshops. Some local companies use DTA's equipment for the manufacture of specific component parts. The training centre and its resources are well used by local employers. DTA's staff are well qualified. There are sufficient assessors and internal verifiers. The ratio of assessors to learners is one assessor to seven learners.

12. **Particularly effective documents are used to record training and assessment activities at level 2 of the NVQ.** However, there is some poor recording of information, in particular on individual learning plans. The review process at level 3 of the NVQ is weak and there is no common approach to the recording of progress and action-planning.

13. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners complete a series of basic tests to assess their suitability for the modern apprenticeship in engineering. Every effort is made to ensure that the employer meets the learners' needs and career goals. There is no separate assessment of additional needs in literacy, numeracy and language.

14. **There is insufficient planning during the on-the-job training.** Opportunities to learn

new skills are restricted by poor planning and by insufficient knowledge of the skills and tasks required to complete the advanced modern apprenticeship.

15. The systems for providing learners with support for literacy, numeracy and language are adequate. Individual support sessions are provided for individual learning needs and additional support sessions are provided if a need is identified. Small group numbers allow all learners to have individual support if necessary.

Leadership and management

16. **DTA manages the day-to-day running of its programmes well.** There is good communication among all staff and with employers. Regular meetings are held twice a month with all staff and are well minuted.

17. **DTA has developed good partnerships with local employers, colleges and schools.** DTA's staff are used to deliver learning sessions on the local colleges' higher national certificate (HNC) programmes and to provide staff development to local employers. Good partnership working has allowed the development of a GCSE in engineering in conjunction with local schools. Recent activities have led to the enrolment of 25 female learners onto the school link programmes. There are effective partnerships to promote engineering to young people. Significant efforts have been made to develop partnerships with other providers to produce progression routes for modern apprentices.

18. **There is well-managed support for learners' pastoral needs** to help them to stay on the programme. All staff are accessible, and concerns and problems are dealt with in a sensitive and timely way.

19. The management information system is satisfactory. The system is well managed and kept up to date. Learners' achievements and progression are well recorded and displayed on a notice board in the general office. The data are used to identify under-representation of minority groups and to plan strategies to resolve it. NVQ data from previous years were insufficient to make a judgement on the retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners.

20. **DTA's management of equality of opportunity is good.** The policy has recently been revised and is comprehensive and up to date. Recent staff development has taken place and a new policy has been written and training provided for all staff. Learners are generally aware of equality of opportunity and of the complaints procedure, but their understanding is not fully monitored throughout their training.

21. **There is good access to DTA for people who have restricted mobility.** There is a disability access policy which ensures there is provision for learners to have additional support when taking initial assessment tests.

22. Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is well managed and the report follows the 'Common Inspection Framework'. All staff are fully involved in the process which is a regular agenda item at staff meetings. The self-

assessment report largely reflects the company, but some of the weaknesses were not recognised by the company, in particular the weak quality assurance strategy. The self-assessment process has led to improvements and changes, such as the rewriting of the policy on equality of opportunity. Staff have a good understanding of policies and procedures, although some of these are not clearly written and some are not clearly covered by the quality assurance manual. There are insufficient systems to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning and the review processes. Good practice in teaching and learning is not formally shared.

23. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. The process is well planned to ensure that it meets the needs of the awarding bodies. Learners are given useful feedback by their assessors. Verifiers ensure consistency through regular meetings with assessors and by written feedback.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good internal and external communication
- very good partnership working
- well-managed support for pastoral needs
- well-managed arrangements for equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- weak strategy for quality assurance

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good acquisition of skills and additional qualifications
- very good resources
- good management of programmes

Weaknesses

- some poor use of individual learning plans and progress reviews
- some weak planning of on-the-job training

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION:

- regular visits to the workplace
- good support and guidance
- the atmosphere - an adult environment
- technically challenging training
- being able to take extra courses
- the quality of the equipment
- good practical training and teaching

WHAT LEARNERS THINK DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION COULD IMPROVE:

- less written work
- less background knowledge

KEY CHALLENGES FOR DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION:

- further develop the quality assurance system to provide a more comprehensive coverage of all policies and procedures
- extend and develop the good work started on equality of opportunity
- improve the paperwork and recording of progress reviews

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good internal and external communication
- very good partnership working
- well-managed support for pastoral needs
- well-managed arrangements for equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- weak strategy for quality assurance

24. Communications among managers, trainers and administrative staff are good and this was recognised in the self-assessment report. Regular, well-minuted meetings on a range of topics are held twice a month. Actions from these meetings are planned and recorded and all staff are made aware of progress. There are also frequent, well-minuted meetings with partner organisations. Effective use and monitoring of an internal communications file ensures that all staff are kept well informed. Good use of a noticeboard in the general office ensures that staff are kept up to date with learners' plans and progress. The notice board informs staff of forthcoming tests and of test results. Monthly board meetings keep directors informed on all aspects of DTA. Good communication with employers ensures that they are well informed of learners' progress, absences and lateness. Issues around learners' behaviour at work or at the training centre are dealt with promptly. The recent creation of a marketing team has further improved communication with employers and the wider community. There has been a 23 per cent increase in learner numbers this September.

25. DTA works very effectively with other providers and partners to develop progress and provision to meet local engineering needs. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. The training centre manager has a clear vision of where the company is going and uses the partnerships to meet this vision. Good use of the links has been made to enable staff development and updating. There are strong links with schools, colleges and local providers. DTA provides school links programmes, work-experience opportunities and further training opportunities to young people. Good links with local schools have allowed the development of a GCSE in engineering and the increased participation of girls. The development of a construction GCSE is planned. Creative initiatives allow 16-18 year olds in full-time further education to access engineering training through a student apprenticeship programme. Good links with local colleges have enabled learners to access additional training. DTA has provided staff to local colleges for specific skills. Effective use of local links has been used to provide specialised support with information and communications technology (ICT) to a learner

who developed a sudden and severe disability. They have also helped to secure employment for six advanced modern apprentices who were made redundant by their first employer. Support for employers is extensive and includes provision of staff training at DTA and at the employers, and the loaning of staff. Advanced modern apprentices can access additional training at the centre at no cost to the employer. Good links have been established with Connexions.

26. Well-managed support enables learners to remain on programme. The training centre manager ensures that all staff have adequate time to meet with individual learners if necessary. All staff are accessible to learners and are experienced in meeting their pastoral needs. Learners' concerns are dealt with in a timely and sensitive way. Accessible support has ensured that learners can complete their apprenticeship. Good informal support to learners who have dyslexia and/or numeracy problems has encouraged them to complete their advanced modern apprenticeship framework.

27. DTA manages its resources effectively. The business manager sets and monitors the budget and provides monthly, detailed financial statements to the board. The budget is sufficiently detailed to enable the managers and the directors to quickly identify potential areas of shortfall and act upon them. Annual budgets are prepared taking into account the strategic plan and forecasted income and expenditure. The purpose-built accommodation meets the training needs. There is plentiful, modern equipment which allows learners to have an excellent learning experience.

28. The management information system is satisfactory. The system is well managed and there is effective monitoring of learners' progress. Staff are updated each week on learners' progress and an effective, colour-coded wall chart in the general office ensures that all staff can monitor progress. The management information system provides information on learners' ethnicity, gender, retention and achievement and is used to identify under-represented groups and to plan activities to reach these groups. There is an effective cross-referencing system which validates the data on the computer and which is well referenced and easily accessible to all staff. Some previously recorded NVQ data are inaccurate.

29. The training centre manager has developed a comprehensive initial assessment which identifies learners' abilities in engineering. Learners are assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills as part of this initial assessment and selection process. The entry requirements for advanced modern apprentices mean that few learners with additional learning needs start on the programme. Appropriate support is available for those who have a disability which might affect their performance in the tests, for example applicants who have dyslexia. Arrangements for support for learners are not formally in place, but instructors work with very small groups, are given more than sufficient time with groups of learners and are able to provide effective additional tutoring when this is needed.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

30. DTA's management of equality of opportunity is good. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Over the past year the company has identified two members of

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staff to take forward the equality agenda. The policy has been updated, following participation in an LSC-sponsored project, building on best practice from inside and outside the company. The new policy is clear and comprehensive, and includes a well-written policy on harassment. It includes reference to all relevant legislation and covers learners and staff in the company. The policy was introduced to all staff through an awareness-raising training day, and has been sent to employers and learners. The company now produces an equality and diversity action plan each year, which targets areas in need of improvement, for example improving employers' awareness. Most of the actions specified in the 2003 plan have been actioned.

31. The company is active in promoting equality of opportunity, but this was not sufficiently recognised in the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified that learners are generally well aware of the company's policy and of the complaints procedure. An effective session on equality and diversity is included in the induction for new learners. It makes good use of video presentation to illustrate the impact of discrimination. Learners' recall and understanding of the induction is checked at subsequent reviews. However, this understanding is not further developed, so learners in their third year have not advanced their understanding of equality. Most employers are aware of DTA's requirements for equality of opportunity, but few have been involved in recent discussions on the topic.

32. DTA is conscious that its engineering courses are dominated by male learners. There were no female modern apprentices at the time of the inspection, nor were there any learners from minority ethnic groups. There are management information reports which analyse the learner intake and applicants by gender and ethnicity. The company has made strenuous efforts to recruit women. It participates fully in a project which provides information and encouragement to schoolgirls so that they will consider a career in science or engineering. DTA runs its own engineering taster days for school pupils at times selected to enable girls and young people from minority ethnic groups to attend. Through its work with schools, 26 female learners have been enrolled on to GCSE engineering courses since 2001 and it is hoped that many of these will progress to modern apprenticeships in due course. The company's marketing literature includes prominent pictures of female learners and minority ethnic learners in order to help break down stereotypical images. The proportion of minority ethnic people in the Ryedale and Selby area is less than 1 per cent.

33. The modern purpose-built training centre provides good facilities for learners who have a disability, including a stair lift and toilet facilities suitable for wheelchair users. The company has a disability access policy, which allows additional help to be made available for applicants with a disability when taking selection tests. Support for these learners is not formally planned, but is provided to individual learners when they need it.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

34. DTA has developed an effective self-assessment process. The report provides a generally accurate account of the company's provision and closely follows the 'Common Inspection Framework'. All staff are involved in the writing of the self-assessment report,

which is a regular agenda item at the monthly staff meetings. The report provides an accurate account of the company's activities, and is generally supported by evidence. Learners' views are collected from questionnaires and feedback meetings. The company analyses data on the performance of other, similar organisations, in order to reach a judgement about its performance. The self-assessment is used to produce a development plan to resolve the weaknesses and build on the strengths. The report is shared with the board of directors for their comments and suggestions before submission to the LSC. A number of improvements have resulted, such as the development of a new employer handbook which has been cited as an example of good practice by the LSC. The induction process for new learners has been developed to make it more interesting and memorable. However, inspectors identified some weaknesses which had not been identified by the self-assessment process.

35. DTA has a set of quality assurance policies which are well understood by staff. However, there is no overall strategy to assure quality. Policies are reviewed annually by the board of directors, although there is no formal timetable for this. Policies are in place for some, but not all, aspects of training. For example, there is a policy and procedure for selection and induction, but not for delivering on- or off-the-job training. Where policies exist, their operation is not formally monitored or audited to ensure that they are being applied correctly, although policies and procedures are a regular agenda item at staff meetings. In addition, staff communications are sent out to individuals to read and sign, and copies are kept on file in the administration office. Some policies are insufficiently clear and focused, and procedures are not sufficiently detailed to ensure consistent practice. Recently, many procedures have been reviewed by putting them into a flowchart which makes them easier to follow, but most of those concerned with training delivery are still to be reviewed.

36. The company regularly collects information on the views of learners and employers through a questionnaire. The answers are analysed and discussed at staff meetings. In order to improve the quality of feedback, DTA has recently begun to hold informal feedback sessions with learners. Learners' comments and suggestions are recorded and acted upon in a number of cases. For example, additional computer-aided design sessions were offered in response to a request from a feedback meeting, and a refrigerator was purchased for the rest room. A notice which gives details on the points raised and the company's response, is put up on the learners' notice board. This encourages learners to participate in the review process. The company collects detailed information on the destinations of its learners after they have completed their training.

37. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. The process is well planned to ensure that it meets all the requirements of the awarding body. Learners receive good feedback from their assessors, and verifiers ensure consistency through regular meetings with assessors and by providing written feedback to them.

38. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning. The company has a system whereby each teacher's work in the classroom is observed at least once a year. The observer completes a feedback form which encourages a thorough discussion of all aspects of teaching, including the extent to which individuals' learning styles are

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accommodated. The system is useful in encouraging reflection on teaching practice. Over the past two years there have been no critical comments or areas for improvement identified. There are no formal measures to monitor the quality of training on employers' premises, or the quality of the review process. However, the good internal communication within the small team at DTA ensures that problems are recognised and dealt with.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	57	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good acquisition of skills and additional qualifications
- very good resources
- good management of programmes

Weaknesses

- some poor use of individual learning plans and progress reviews
- some weak planning of on-the-job training

Achievement and standards

39. The achievement rates are good. All learners who finish the programme complete the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. Retention rates are satisfactory. The statistics are affected by seven learners who were made redundant from one company, six of whom were found alternative employers by DTA. However, the data still identify them as leavers and new starters. There are discrepancies with the data for NVQ-only programmes. The data are insufficiently reliable to make accurate judgements. All advanced modern apprentices are employed when they start at DTA and remain with their employer at the end of their apprenticeship.

40. Learners gain good practical skills. They benefit from the small group sizes at DTA, typically four to six in a group. Employers are satisfied with the range and level of work that the learners are able to carry out. Early in their apprenticeship, learners are given responsibility for the quality of their work. There is particularly good work in fabrication and computer-aided machinery processes. Attendance is well monitored and employers are informed immediately of a learner's absence or lateness.

41. Key skills are an integral part of the apprenticeship and are normally completed in the first year of the 42-month programme. This was recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report. Learners are encouraged to use their practical experience to complete their key skills portfolios. Learners' NVQ portfolios are generally good. They are well organised and contain a range of evidence based on a range of work activities. Examples of learners' work are well displayed at DTA.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		15		22		23		22		33		31		14	
Retained*	0		0		0		3		15	68	18	55	21	68	8	57
Successfully completed	0		0		0		3		15	68	18	55	21	68	8	57
Still in learning	18		12		16		14		0	0	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

Quality of education and training

42. All of the learning sessions observed were good. Sessions are well prepared and include a range of activities. Small group sizes allow learners to receive individual support and to work at a pace suited to them. Learning sessions are well referenced to learners' work experience. Handouts are well produced, some in colour to help learners recognise component parts.

43. DTA's staff are all well qualified. There are many internal verifiers and assessors. There is up-to-date and wide-ranging equipment for learners to work on. The recent purchase of a 3D printer using ABS plastics enables learners to work on equipment which is found in the most modern engineering companies. Learners have many opportunities to work on computer-aided machinery. The range of resources is equivalent to those likely to be encountered by the learners in modern engineering workshops. The information technology equipment is good, accessible and well used. Health and safety is reinforced in most learning sessions, although in one session some learners were observed wearing inappropriate footwear.

44. The systems for monitoring training and assessment at level 2 of the NVQ are particularly good. Learners are encouraged to assess their own work and record their progress. Learners' progress is displayed using colour-coded charts, which allow staff and learners to quickly identify achievements and targets. Most learners have sufficient knowledge of their progress towards their qualification. Well-planned use of unit accreditation and assessment allows those who leave early to have their achievements recognised. Good use is made of opportunities to assess learners in the workplace. Learners are encouraged to plan their assessment in the workplace. Assessment is regular, in some instances at least weekly.

45. There are good opportunities for learners to gain additional qualifications. Courses such as manual handling, abrasive wheel regulations, lift truck, slings and slinging are

available at the centre and workplaces. At least 80 per cent of all learners gain additional qualifications that are directly relevant to their workplace. The additional qualifications provide learners with good opportunities for promotion and progression on completion of their advanced modern apprenticeship. Learners who have specific needs or interests are supported to attend courses at local colleges. For example, one learner who needed more specific electrical knowledge, had a course at a local college identified and paid for by DTA.

46. Good working relationships have been established with employers. DTA works closely with employers to raise standards in engineering and to identify appropriate progression routes for learners. Good access to the resources at DTA provides updating opportunities for local engineering companies. There are no formal mechanisms for careers guidance, but staff are knowledgeable about progression routes and are able to give advice when asked. DTA's staff are used in local companies to provide professional updating. Good links with local schools allow 14-16 year olds to access taster days and a GCSE in engineering. Learners' achievements are celebrated at events in the local area.

47. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners complete a range of engineering and basic skills tests to establish the learners' ability to follow a modern apprenticeship in engineering. There is a thorough interview to assess the learners' interest and suitability for engineering. DTA works hard to ensure that the placement meets the learners' preferred choice. The induction process is satisfactory and is carried out over two days. Good use of a questionnaire at the end of the two days, checks learners' understanding of the main points of the induction.

48. There is poor use of individual learning plans, but this was not recognised in the self-assessment report. The plans are not kept up to date and there are no challenging targets. The plans have insufficient detail and do not reflect the individual nature of learning. Unit achievement and key skills achievement are not regularly updated on the plan. The review process at level 3 is weak. Targets are often general and do not include details of performance to be achieved. Progress reviews do not set specific short-term goals for the learners. The recording of reviews is brief. Supervisors and managers are not always involved directly in the review process and are not always aware of what the learners need to achieve. Equality of opportunity and health and safety are not fully dealt with in reviews.

49. There is poor planning of on-the-job training. This was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Planning of on-the-job training is agreed verbally but not formally recorded. On-the-job training is not planned to link with the learning taking place at the training centre. Learners sometimes learn new topics at DTA that they are not able to practise until much later in their apprenticeship. This limits the learners' opportunities to improve skills and knowledge. Some employers and learners are unaware of the range of skills and tasks required to achieve the framework, and opportunities for gaining the skills and knowledge are sometimes not taken.

50. DTA sets high levels of entry requirements for its learners and few learners are identified as having additional support needs. Informal individual support sessions are

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available for those who need additional support and for learners who have dyslexia. The mechanisms for identifying these learners are through the initial assessment, outcomes of initial key skills tests and learners' progress at the training centre. When individual support needs are identified, small group sizes enable learners to progress with their sessions at DTA. Additional support has been provided for learners who have additional numeracy needs, to enable them to complete the CNC advanced programming training.

Leadership and management

51. There is good communication between employers and DTA. Good communication also takes place between staff. All DTA's staff were involved in the self-assessment process. Programmes are well managed and provide good training for learners. The modern apprenticeship in engineering is well promoted. There are clear targets for the development of modern apprenticeship training and the development of DTA. Marketing materials reflect equality of opportunity and DTA actively targets under-represented groups. All staff are actively involved in the promotion of the modern apprenticeship programme.

52. DTA actively uses bench marking to monitor progress against other similar organisations and work-based learning as a whole. Data from the management information system are used to identify under-represented groups and to plan activities to attract more learners from these groups.

53. Internal verification is thorough and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. There is a sampling plan that clearly monitors learners' progress. Portfolios are closely monitored and sampling takes place every three months.