

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **West Oxfordshire District Council**

**05 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
- **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

## West Oxfordshire District Council

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. West Oxfordshire Training Services (WOTS) is a service of West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). WOTS was established in 1984 initially to offer 12 youth training places. Since then, it has been involved in a range of government programmes and currently offers mainly youth programmes. WOTS receives corporate services from WODC including human resources management, training, and health and safety. WOTS is based in a single location on the edge of Witney.

2. WOTS has reduced the range of training it offers over the past three years and now concentrates mainly on advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in business administration, sport and leisure, retailing, customer service and transportation, health, social care and public services and a small number of foundation learners. Entry to Employment (E2E) training is due to start in the autumn.

3. WOTS is managed by a head of service who reports to a strategic director at WODC. WOTS has a three-year rolling service plan. The WODC senior management team and cabinet approve and review the plan. WOTS is subject to WODC's best value review process which is carried out by the performance and review team. There are two training managers at WOTS who report to the head of service. One training manager is responsible for the care programme and the other training manager for the other areas of learning. There is an office manager for WOTS. There are 10 full-time and one part-time staff. WOTS subcontracts training and assessment in all programmes.

4. WOTS's programmes are funded by the Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) for Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Learners are located throughout central England. Access to public transport in some remote rural areas can create difficulty for travelling to work and attending training. Unemployment levels are low in West Oxfordshire at less than 1 per cent. Warehousing and transportation jobs have increased rapidly in the recent past with the development of the M4 motorway. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in west Oxfordshire is 1.6 per cent, compared with Oxfordshire as a whole at 4.9 per cent and 9.1 per cent nationally.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### **Business administration, management & professional**

5. There are four advanced modern apprentices in business administration, three in management and two in accounting. There are four foundation modern apprentices in business administration and three learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) training programmes. Training and assessment for accounting programmes is subcontracted to a local college. Some business administration training and assessment is subcontracted to another local training provider. Accounting learners attend off-the-job training at the college, while all other learners are visited in the workplace each month for

training and assessment. WOTS's staff visit learners to review progress and coach them for key skills. All learners are employed.

### **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

6. There are 26 learners in customer care and warehousing, all of whom are employed. In warehousing, there are five foundation modern apprentices and one advanced modern apprentice. In customer service, there are nine foundation modern apprentices and 10 advanced modern apprentices. One learner is working towards an NVQ at level 3. Learners work in a range of businesses in west of Oxford and all receive on-the-job training from their employers. There is no formal off-the-job training. WOTS's staff visit learners each month and sometimes more often. Learners attend WOTS's training centre for key skills tests. Transport is provided when required.

### **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

7. There are 16 foundation modern apprentices in sport and recreation. Five are working towards a level 2 NVQ in coaching, teaching, instructing (gym), 10 are in operational services and one is working towards activity leadership. There is one advanced modern apprentice. All learners are employed in sports and leisure centres. At the time of the inspection, WOTS had very recently taken over the training and assessment from a subcontractor. All training takes place in the workplace and includes individual coaching and employer training.

### **Health, social care & public services**

8. There are 58 learners on care programmes for the elderly including care for those with learning disabilities and promoting independence programmes. There are 19 advanced modern apprentices and 32 foundation modern apprentices. There are seven learners working towards NVQs at level 2. Those learners who need to take the key skills qualification are given individual or group training, mainly in the workplace or at workshops in the providers' premises. All learners are employed in a range of care settings, NHS trusts, national charities, residential homes and homes for adults with learning disabilities. The company provides some off-the-job training, as and when needed. Individual coaching is provided for learners in their workplace. Assessment visits are planned at monthly intervals, but for those with access to work-based assessors, this is more frequent. WOTS's staff carry out progress reviews every three months.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	24
Number of learner interviews	37
Number of staff interviews	22
Number of employer interviews	26
Number of subcontractor interviews	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	32

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. The quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the leadership and management are unsatisfactory, as is the approach to equal opportunities and quality assurance. The quality of learning in customer care and warehousing is satisfactory. However, the quality of learning in administration is unsatisfactory, and in sport and recreation and care, is very weak.

## GRADES

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	5

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	5

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

10. **There is clear strategic direction for the training.** Staff are aware and involved in the process of planning the direction. There is a three-year service plan which is discussed and reviewed, and good external links with strategic partners. Staff training and development is closely linked to the service plan objectives.

11. **There are good achievement and retention rates in administration for advanced modern apprentices.** For example, in all but one-year achievement levels in accounting have been 75 per cent or above. In business administration the overall achievement levels for advanced modern apprentices are satisfactory, although they have declined over recent years. Retention rates are good for administration advanced modern apprentices. In 2000-01, seven out of nine learners were retained and of those seven, five completed the framework. There are poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices in administration, and retention rates are declining. In 2000-01, 36 per cent of learners completed the framework. In business administration, learners' work meets the requirement of the standards. Portfolios contain an appropriate range of evidence. Progress towards the achievement of key skills is satisfactory.

12. **There are good achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices in customer care.** The average achievement level over the past three full years has been over 80 per cent. Retention rates are also good. Learners in customer care and warehousing achieve a good level of skills. There is a good standard of evidence in well-presented portfolios.

13. **The achievement and retention rates for advanced and foundation modern apprentices are poor in care programmes.** Since 1997, of the 26 learners who have left the programme, four have completed the framework. For foundation modern apprentices, of the 51 learners who have left since 1997, four have completed the framework. The pace of training is too slow in some cases.

14. **There are very low levels of achievement for foundation modern apprentices in sport and recreation and a decline in the retention rates.** In 2001-02 the achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices was 17 per cent. Retention rates have fallen by at least 20 per cent from 75 per cent in 2000-01 to a maximum possible 55 per cent in 2002-02. Work in portfolios is unsatisfactory.

15. **The achievement rates are poor for foundation modern apprentices in customer care and warehousing.** In 2001-02, only 25 per cent of learners completed the framework.



## Quality of education and training

16. **The employers in customer care and warehousing are supportive.** Opportunities for training are available and are taken up by learners. Individual on-the-job coaching is effective. In sport and recreation, employers are supportive of learners and their flexible arrangements help learners gain experience.

17. **The assessment practices are very weak in sport and recreation programmes.** Work has been assessed as meeting the standard when it clearly does not and the range of evidence is insufficient. Assessment-planning is poor and sometimes does not take place at all. Learners have little understanding of how they are to be assessed. Accreditation of prior learning is carried out inconsistently.

18. **The assessment practices are weak in care programmes.** Records of assessment are poorly completed and there are no clear judgements about competence. Records are often undated and unsigned. Specimen witness signatures are not recorded. Assessment-planning is poor and feedback to learners is too slow.

19. **Internal verification in care is poor.** There is poor communication and inadequate support for work-based assessors. There is insufficient monitoring of assessors' work and some assessors have not been observed. Standardisation meetings have not been taking place. Records of internal verification are poorly completed. Assessors are unclear about internal verification procedures. Sampling plans are not thorough.

20. **Internal verification in sport and recreation is poor.** Procedures have not been followed and the contract management of the subcontractor is ineffective. The internal verification sampling plan is incomplete and is poorly implemented. Assessors are not given adequate feedback or guidance. Poor assessment practices have not been identified. Standardisation has been ineffective.

21. Induction, assessment, key skills training, literacy and numeracy skills coaching and additional support is satisfactory in business administration, and customer care and warehousing. Employers are involved satisfactorily in sport and recreation and administration programmes.

## Leadership and management

22. **The operational management of training is ineffective.** In care, and sport and recreation, there is poor management of training. In business administration it is unsatisfactory. Managers have not identified plans or actions to deal with the poor achievement and retention rates and falling recruitment levels. Target-setting for staff teams has been ineffective. Weaknesses in training and assessment have not been identified. Contract management of subcontractors is unsatisfactory.

23. **The equal opportunities policy is not implemented effectively.** There is no action plan for its implementation. There is insufficient staff training and updating on equal

opportunities. Review and reinforcement of awareness with learners is ineffective. There is no systematic follow up to monitor employers' knowledge of equal opportunities policies and practices.

24. **The monitoring of the quality of training is inadequate.** There has been insufficient observation of the quality of training and learning. The current quality assurance arrangements are incomplete and monitoring has not identified weaknesses in the application of training procedures. The quality assurance of assessment is weak. The quality assurance of subcontracted provision is ineffective.

25. **There is poor management of the sport and recreation programmes.** Subcontracted training and assessment is not managed effectively. Performance targets have not been set and the standard of service has not been monitored. Roles and responsibilities are not clear and little planning of training takes place. Achievement levels are very poor and only very recently has action been taken to improve matters.

26. **The management of training is poor in care.** There is no overall planning of training. Communication with employers and work-based assessors is poor. Important changes to the care programme have not been adequately introduced. Little has been done to deal with underachievement and poor retention rates. Poor assessment and internal verification practices have not been identified.

27. **Programme management in business administration is unsatisfactory.** Insufficient action has been taken to improve the programme and to deal with declining recruitment, achievement and retention rates for foundation modern apprentices. There is insufficient planning of individual learning programmes.

28. The management policies and procedures are satisfactory. The policy for equal opportunities and the monitoring of recruitment, progress and achievement is satisfactory. The strategy for quality assurance is appropriate, and feedback is collected from learners and employers. Internal communication and teamwork are satisfactory. Management information systems are suitable, and management reports are produced in a timely manner. Internal verification is satisfactory in business administration and customer care.

29. Key skills developments have been managed satisfactorily. Improvements have led to increased numbers of learners passing the key skills tests. Appraisal and staff development policies and procedures are satisfactory. Premises are appropriate and well managed. Transport and other resources to support learners are used appropriately.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- clear strategic direction for training

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective operational management of training
- inadequate monitoring of the quality of training
- ineffective implementation of the equal opportunities policy

### **Business administration, management & professional**

#### **Strengths**

- good achievement rates for learners in accounting
- good retention rates on advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ programmes

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement rates and declining retention rates for foundation modern apprentices
- inadequate progress reviews
- insufficient planning of individual learning programmes
- ineffective management of programmes

### **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

#### **Strengths**

- good achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices in customer care
- particularly supportive employers
- good development of skills evident in well-presented portfolios

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices
- insufficient planning of individual learning programmes
- insufficient use of learning materials

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### **Strengths**

- good on-the-job support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- very poor achievement and retention rates
- very weak assessment practices
- poor internal verification
- inconsistent use of accreditation of prior learning
- unsatisfactory management of the programme

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- good development of personal and learning skills by learners

### **Weaknesses**

- very poor achievement rates for modern apprentices
- poor retention rates
- very weak assessment practices
- very weak internal verification
- poor management of the care programme

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:**

- being able to work towards a qualification and earn money
- the time off work to study
- the approachable and helpful staff
- the first aid course was great fun
- being able to work at my own pace

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL COULD IMPROVE:**

- keeping in touch by telephone and calling back
- 'the way key skills are done is like being back in school'
- clearer paperwork
- 'the way NVQs are done'
- monitoring progress and providing better teaching and support
- more regular assessor visits
- better planning to ensure completion on time
- better communication between the provider and subcontractor
- more in-depth meetings with the assessor
- more information about the programme and qualifications

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:**

- identify viable actions to redress the poor achievement rates in care and sport and recreation
- increase number of learners who remain in training and achieve within target dates across all programmes
- establish and maintain effective assessment and thorough internal verification systems in care and sport and recreation
- improve planning for individual training programmes, including on- and off-the-job training
- establish and maintain good learner review practices.
- improve the operational management of training programmes, particularly in care and sport and recreation
- establish and maintain better management control of subcontracted training
- fully implement and review the equal opportunities policy
- widen the scope of the quality assurance arrangements and implement them effectively

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 4**

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- clear strategic direction for training

#### Weaknesses

- ineffective operational management of training
- inadequate monitoring of the quality of training
- ineffective implementation of the equal opportunities policy

30. There is a clear strategic direction for training. Managers and staff at WOTS, together with the WODC officers and members, contribute to the development of the strategic plan. WOTS as a service of WODC is part of a well-established strategic planning process. WOTS produces a three-year service plan, which is regularly reviewed and updated. WOTS has good external links with strategic partners and engages regularly in planning and reviewing the needs of various groups of learners in the area. WOTS's managers and staff are involved in periodic reviews. Once a year there is a full review of programmes and activities which involves the whole staff team. New areas of work are considered and information about the WODC areas training needs are reviewed. There are clear objectives in the plan which provide a good basis for determining priorities. The objectives are linked to WODC's overall strategic direction and mission statement. Targets and service levels are specified in the service plan. Staff are well informed about the direction and future plans. Staff training and development is closely linked to the business strategy. For example, the whole staff team have recently been involved in training and development in preparation for the new E2E programme.

31. Operational management of the training programmes is unsatisfactory. There are areas in each programme and in some cases the whole programme where there are poor, very poor in some cases, achievement and retention rates. Recruitment is also falling in two areas. There are declining achievement rates across all four occupational areas. There is no effective management action to improve the learners' outcomes in each area of learning. Most training takes place on the job, but there are inadequate arrangements to plan, monitor and link this training to occupational standards. The targets for improvement in programme performance, retention and achievements rates is not effective. Poor achievement rates in care programmes have been recognised, but little has been done operationally to deal with the problem.

32. Contract management of subcontracted training and assessment is ineffective. Contracts with subcontractors do not include performance targets for retention and achievement. There is unsatisfactory monitoring of individual progress and

achievement. Service level agreements state that there should be monthly meetings between WOTS's staff and subcontractors to discuss the learners' progress, but the meetings do not take place at planned intervals and do not focus sufficiently on individual learner's achievements. Instances where learners make slow progress are not reported and acted on in sufficient time.

33. The management of three out of four programmes is unsatisfactory, and in care is poor. The care training manager and one member of staff have been absent for long periods and have now left. At the time of the inspection, replacement staff had not been appointed, although recruitment was due to take place. The management of the programme during this period of six months has been problematical. Staff have covered absences, but inevitably there has been too much work. The day-to-day operational management of the programme has not been sustained. Communications have not been effective with employers and work-based assessors. Roles and responsibilities have not been clear. Management control of key processes, such as internal verification and assessment have not been effective. There has been inadequate managerial intervention to maintain appropriate programme development and quality assurance. For example, there are no arrangements for the introduction and establishment of technical certificates and associated training arrangements into the care programmes.

34. The quality assurance strategy is satisfactory, but it is not effectively implemented. Quality assurance monitoring procedures do not cover the full scope of the training process. The equal opportunity policy statement is satisfactory, but again it is not effectively implemented. Internal communications are satisfactory. Management and staff team meetings now take place regularly, but in the recent past, staffing difficulties have resulted in less-frequent formal meetings. Targets for programme performance are discussed and agreed with the staff team. They do not offer improvement targets which are challenging.

35. There is a satisfactory staff appraisal process. The staff development policy and practices are appropriate. The current schedule for staff appraisal has gone past the planned 12-monthly cycle. The management information system is satisfactory and management reports are produced on time to summarise key information on learners and programmes.

36. The managers of WOTS are clear about their responsibilities for providing literacy and numeracy support and have taken steps to strengthen the organisations' capacity. The current provision satisfactorily meets learners' literacy and numeracy needs, but the initial assessment process does not always identify needs early enough. Individual support is provided by training staff when needs are identified. One member of staff has a qualification in literacy and numeracy training.

37. There is a range of satisfactory policies and procedures for the administration of training, initial assessment, assessment, internal verification and progress reviews. There are learning resources and textbooks in the training centre, but learners are insufficiently aware of these. The procedure for progress reviews has been recently re-specified and



staff have been working with managers to implement the new guidelines. However, at the time of the inspection, reviews and records of reviews were less than satisfactory in most programme areas. Resources are managed adequately. WOTS's training centre and resources are appropriate and further work is continuing to refurbish training rooms. There are 14 laptop computers which are used by learners in the training centre and at work.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 4**

38. WOTS has a written equal opportunities policy which is reviewed periodically and is working towards the equality standard for local government. The service plan recognises the contribution that WOTS can make in achieving WODC's corporate aim, which is to reduce inequality and widen opportunity. The manager of WOTS is involved in the development and review of policy and practices on the implementation of equality of opportunity. He is a member of the council's working party on equal opportunities.

39. Some aspects of the current equal opportunities policy are not implemented effectively. The policy sets out a number of principles and identifies actions that are to be taken to meet the requirements of the policy. However, there are no supporting plans to implement these actions. A number of aspects of the policy are not being applied satisfactorily.

40. In the recent past, there has been little staff training or updating on equality of opportunity. Over the past 18 months all new staff have had equal opportunities included in their induction, but there has been little follow up. Recent management meetings have not formally dealt with the policy and procedures. There is a general awareness of the need to challenge stereotypical recruitment patterns and attitudes in training. However, there is no formal means by which this is implemented. Some of the images used in marketing materials are not helpful in relation to reduce stereotyping in occupational training.

41. Review and reinforcement of equal opportunities with learners is ineffective. Learners are given information and guidance at induction on aspects of diversity and equal opportunities, but it is not followed up effectively with learners. There is no regular review to check understanding. Most learners have limited understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to equality of opportunity and little recall of the induction material. Records of review do not contain any details on learners' comments on equal opportunities.

42. There is no follow up to monitor employers' equal opportunities practices. Employers are given information, and checks are made to ensure employers have adequate equal opportunities policies when they start a training programme with an employer. If employers do not have a policy, the employer is informed of the requirements of WOTS's policy and is given a copy which is contained in the learner's handbook. WOTS's employer records and files do not record this and there is no formal follow up or monitoring of employers' practices.

43. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for monitoring and reviewing data related to equality of access, learners' achievement and progression by different groups of learners. It has been recognised that more is required to attract and recruit learners who have a disability. There are actions specified in the current development plan to deal with these issues, but as yet, little progress has been made. WOTS's staff are very aware of the issues which affect young people in rural areas, particularly those who live in isolated areas. Transport difficulties are dealt with sensitively and responsively. Individual learners have had good support in some cases to assist their travel to work and training.

44. WOTS is involved in an appropriate range of activity to promote social inclusion and provide suitable learning opportunities for clients who have diverse needs. WOTS is involved in the local widening participation group and actively networks with youth agencies, probation services and other organisations. There are regular meetings and frequent contact with Connexions and employment services to plan and review the provision for learners who have diverse needs.

#### **Quality assurance**

#### **Contributory grade 4**

45. WOTS has a quality assurance strategy which is supported by policies, procedures, audits of systems and files, and monitoring and observation of training. Staff are aware of the quality assurance policy. There has been recent staff discussions and review of the quality assurance arrangements. Some work has been carried out to identify areas for improvement and to introduce changes, but staff absences have had a negative impact on the continuation of this work in the recent past. The arrangements for the training in key skills have been reviewed by WOTS and a number of improvements have been identified. Targets have been set and reviewed. These measures have had an impact on learners and the number of learners who pass key skills external tests has increased.

46. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in April 2003. There is effective consultation with staff as part of the self-assessment process, but employers and subcontractors are not asked to contribute directly to the process. Regular questionnaires are sent to employers and learners to collect their views about the training. The responses are analysed and are used to make judgements, which are included in the report. Some of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors were recognised in the self-assessment report. However, some of the weaknesses, particularly achievement and retention rates, planning of training, quality assurance and assessment, were considered by inspectors to be more significant than was recognised in the self-assessment report. The grades given by the inspectors were lower than those given in the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified a number of weaknesses which were not included in the report and a number of the strengths were no more than normal practice.

47. There is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The quality assurance arrangements are incomplete and are not applied consistently across all areas. There are no arrangements for monitoring the quality of on-the-job training. Procedures for planning training are not carried out consistently. Quality assurance arrangements do

not have sufficient impact on improving the training provision. Quality assurance audits and monitoring have not identified inaccuracies in paperwork and inconsistencies in the application of some procedures. The programme of observations for staff activities and of subcontractors' staff have not been completed due to staff shortages.

48. The quality assurance of the assessment process is weak in two programme areas. Policies and procedures for internal verification are not being applied correctly in care programmes, and sport and recreation. Inspectors identified weaknesses in assessment practices in three out of four programme areas. These weaknesses have not been identified by the quality assurance and audit activities.

49. There has been ineffective quality assurance of subcontracted provision. Weaknesses in subcontracted training and assessment have not been identified. The procedures for monitoring and quality assuring subcontracted training and assessment have not been followed. There is an over-reliance on the quality assurance procedures of subcontractors. The schedule of meetings to review subcontractors' performance has not been followed. Agendas for meetings that have been held do not cover the topics specified in the procedure for monitoring subcontractors.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	16	4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good achievement rates for learners in accounting
- good retention rates on advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ programmes

#### Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates and declining retention rates for foundation modern apprentices
- inadequate progress reviews
- insufficient planning of individual learning programmes
- ineffective management of programmes

#### Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates are good in accounting, management and administration. Since 1998, retention rates have improved from 67 per cent to 78 per cent. Achievement rates for accounting programmes are good and range from 75 per cent to 100 per cent, except for one year only when two of the four learners achieved the qualification. There are also good achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices in administration, although the rates have declined from 100 per cent in 1998-99 to 60 per cent in 2000-01.

51. There are poor achievement rates and declining retention rates for foundation modern apprentices in administration, and this was recognised in the self-assessment report. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices were 36 per cent in 2000-01. Retention rates have declined from 75 per cent in 1998-99 to 55 per cent in 2000-01. The rates of achievement in NVQ programmes have been good up to 2000-01. Since then eight learners have started, three have achieved the NVQ and three are still in learning.

52. Evidence in learners' portfolios is appropriate. Some learners are developing their personal and occupational skills effectively and are taking more responsibility in their job roles. Other learners are insufficiently challenged in relation to their prior learning and experience. Some are not significantly developing their skills, although they are making satisfactory progress towards achievement of their main qualification. Key skills are being achieved satisfactorily.

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		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	5		6		9		17		3		11				
Retained*	1		1		7	78	12	71	2	67	9	82				
Successfully completed	1		1		5	56	12	71	2	67	9	82				
Still in learning	4		5		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		8		11		11		8		1				
Retained*	1		2		6	55	6	55	6	75	1	100				
Successfully completed	0		1		4	36	6	55	6	75	1	100				
Still in learning	2		2		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	5		3		16		45		10		1				
Retained*	2		2	67	15	94	42	93	9	90	1	100				
Successfully completed	2		1	33	15	94	36	80	8	80	1	100				
Still in learning	3		0	0	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

53. Progress reviews are unsatisfactory. They do not effectively evaluate and monitor learner's achievement against their individual learning plan. The learner's plan is not always referred to, or updated during the review process. Learners have insufficient information about their overall progress. Some employers are not directly involved in progress reviews, although they are asked to provide written comments. There is inadequate monitoring of health and safety, and equal opportunities during progress

reviews. Recording of the reviews is insufficiently detailed and target-setting is poor. There are insufficient measurable targets and milestones against which progress can be measured. Short-term targets do not have clear, detailed objectives, and timescales do not sufficiently challenge some learners.

54. There is insufficient planning of individual learning programmes. Most learners are initially assessed, but the results are not always used to develop individual programmes of learning. Too much of the initial assessment is informal and subjective. There are insufficient guidelines or criteria on the choice of methods. Not enough is done at the start of the learners' training to identify on-the-job training opportunities. Individual needs and job roles are not always effectively identified to enable suitable plans to be developed. Outcomes from initial assessment are not formally recorded on learning plans. There are no structured plans for on-the-job training and assessors are not always aware of what training is planned or carried out at work. There is little formal off-the-job training and no structured training plans for administration and management learners. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the planning of the overall training programme. There is little planning to identify links between workplace activity and NVQ requirements.

55. Learners' induction is satisfactory and helps them to settle into their training programme. Learners have a good understanding of the requirements of their programme and are aware of their rights and responsibilities. They have a basic understanding of equal opportunities and health and safety. Learners have an induction pack for reference. Individual coaching in the workplace is satisfactory.

56. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Learners have good access to industry-standard equipment in their workplaces. Arrangements for key skills are satisfactory. Key skills are introduced early in the training programmes and are an integral part of the NVQ. Learners are coached in key skills by their assessors during workplace visits and are given practise papers to help them prepare for key skills tests. Transport is provided for learners to attend key skills tests at the training centre.

## **Leadership and management**

57. Management of programmes is unsatisfactory. Target-setting for staff, particularly in relation to retention and achievement rates, is inadequate. WOTS identified poor achievements for foundation modern apprentices in administration. However, there are no actions planned for improvement. There is no plan to deal with declining recruitment in this area of learning, although the organisation intends to pilot NVQs and focus more on management training. There is no system to ensure assessors routinely update their industry experience.

58. Quality assurance is ineffective. Records of reviews with learners do not follow specified guidelines. Subcontractors are not adequately monitored. Contracts and subsequent contract reviews do not contain targets for retention and achievement rates. There are no systematic arrangements for monitoring on- and off-the-job training. Monitoring and reinforcement of equal opportunities with learners, employers and

subcontractors is inadequate. Learners are asked if they have any problems during reviews, but understanding is not checked in any depth.

59. Internal verification is satisfactory, but it is not used effectively to improve assessment practices. Sampling plans are appropriate and verification is carried out throughout learners' programmes.

**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	26	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices in customer care
- particularly supportive employers
- good development of skills evident in well-presented portfolios

**Weaknesses**

- poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices
- insufficient planning of individual learning programmes
- insufficient use of learning materials

**Achievement and standards**

60. The retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices in customer service are good. For the three years up to 2001, achievement has averaged over 80 per cent. More recently, there has been a reduction in the number of learners recruited, but those in learning are making good progress and most are achieving to a good standard. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices have been poor. Only four out of 16 learners achieved the full framework in 2001-02. Many of the foundation modern apprentices have made slow progress in the past and have continued beyond the target date for completion. More recently, this has improved and some good progress has been made by learners who are now clearly enthusiastic and well motivated.

61. Learners' portfolios are good. Learners' understanding and background knowledge is well developed. Thorough records of questions and answers are kept which enable learners to clarify understanding and revisit gaps in their knowledge. Learners take care and pride in collecting evidence and present it well. Most portfolios contain a range of diverse evidence, including good examples of well-written case histories and analysis of situations at work. There are good examples of problems being identified, solutions being discussed and resolved, and improvements introduced. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Portfolios include good records of observations at work, which illustrate the standard of achievement and effective referencing. Well-written witness statements also make a useful contribution in most portfolios. Most learners are able to apply workplace evidence to their key skills portfolios.



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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)</b>	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	4		10		28		87		84		48				
Retained*	0		1		26	93	79	91	80	95	29	60				
Successfully completed	0		0		22	79	76	87	68	81	20	42				
Still in learning	3		8		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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)</b>	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	18		16		9		4								
Retained*	2		8	50	4	44	3	75								
Successfully completed	0		4	25	4	44	2	50								
Still in learning	14		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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>NVQ Training</b>	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			9		9		53		21		3				
Retained*			5	56	6	67	38	72	17	81	3	100				
Successfully completed			4	44	4	44	34	64	11	52	3	100				
Still in learning			1	11	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

62. Employers give good support to learners at work. They spend time with individuals and are involved in the progress reviews. All learners develop good practical skills in the workplace. In many cases, they benefit from being given time and help at work to develop their portfolio. Some employers have given learners help with key skills and work with them to improve their use of number, communication and computer skills. Employers provide an appropriate range of activities and equipment for learners to use in

suitable work settings. Learners benefit from working with experienced and qualified employers who offer individual coaching on the job. In some cases, learners attend the company's briefings and short training courses. Some learners make good progress and are promoted to positions of responsibility. They are encouraged to progress to higher level programmes and most do so.

63. There is no initial overall planning of training to link workplace opportunities to the learner's qualification. Training needs are not systematically explored and recorded. There is insufficient analysis of work context, job role and responsibilities. There is a procedure for job analysis at the start of the training programme, but this is rarely used. When it is used, it is ineffective and provides few records against which the training can be planned. Most training is provided by employers as required and is based on appraisal at work, but it is not systematically planned with WOTS's staff. In some cases, it is not sufficiently reviewed and recorded and opportunities for gathering evidence and verifying competence are not taken. Little training is delivered by WOTS's staff, other than basic and key skills, health and safety, and first aid. A range of training modules are available, but learners and employers are mostly unaware of them.

64. There are few learning materials available to learners for developing their understanding and skills. Learners are not provided with books or handouts to support their learning. Learners and employers are unaware of the possibilities for using learning materials to support and reinforce learning. Some use is made of company-specific information from the workplace. There are laptop computers for learners to borrow. A group of learners in a warehouse use a laptop to practise key skills.

65. Time is made available at work for WOTS's staff to provide some learners, particularly those on warehousing programmes, with additional support and training to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This is carried out at work through individual coaching and is satisfactory. Key skills development is also carried out satisfactorily by WOTS's staff, mainly in the workplace. Most of the learners are successful in key skills tests during the programme. However, some learners who have achieved appropriate levels of key skills previously, are not encouraged to pursue them at a higher level.

66. Assessment practices and internal verification are satisfactory. Visits take place every two weeks initially, to establish a rapport with the learners and help them develop an understanding of the process and the route to the qualification. WOTS's staff encourage learners to take responsibility for their own portfolios. Most learners can reference their own evidence. Satisfactory assessment and action plans are agreed at each visit and all learners know what is expected of them between visits. Progress is recorded satisfactorily. Achievements are recognised, but not certificated until the end of the programme.

67. Induction is adequate, but it is not well remembered by many learners. Learners retain a copy of the induction pack which contains details of the programme and procedures. Induction mainly takes place in the workplace in groups or individually. Reviews of progress take place regularly and mostly involve employers. The reviews focus on work in progress and cover learners' current work, but they are less effective in

recording medium-term plans and targets. Equal opportunities is not well covered during reviews and most learners are unable to explain their understanding of it. Employers' equal opportunities policies and practices are not reviewed.

### **Leadership and management**

68. The management of the programme is satisfactory overall. Learners' achievements are given sufficient priority by managers and results have mostly been good. Where achievement has been less than satisfactory, it has usually been identified, action has been taken and results have improved. The programme is regularly reviewed by managers and targets are set. There are frequent team meetings when staff review their priorities and identify courses of action. Communications are effective but are often not well recorded. Changes to programmes have been managed satisfactorily. A programme review takes place and improvements have been made. Internal verification is satisfactory and there is suitable evidence of verification in portfolios. Learners can remember the meetings to discuss assessment. The schedule for sampling is not up to date. Some observation of assessment and reviews have recently fallen behind due to staff shortages. Some of the quality assurance procedures have not been applied consistently, such as the review of subcontractors' performance.

69. Recruitment of learners has declined. New programmes have been identified, such as telesales, and training centre approval has been achieved, but it is not yet being promoted. Staff development is planned satisfactorily to meet business needs and future developments. Two staff are working towards lift truck certification, which was previously assessed by a subcontractor. Staff maintain their portfolio of continuing professional development.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 5**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	5

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good on-the-job support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- very poor achievement and retention rates
- very weak assessment practices
- poor internal verification
- inconsistent use of accreditation of prior learning
- unsatisfactory management of the programme

**Achievement and standards**

70. Retention and achievement rates are very poor in all sport and recreation programmes. In 2000-01, 75 per cent of foundation modern apprentices were retained, but in 2001-02, this has fallen to 40 per cent. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices was 17 per cent in 2000-01, and the maximum possible for 2001-02 is 25 per cent. Many learners who have been in training for over nine months have covered very little of the framework. The standard of work in portfolios is very poor and contain limited sources and range of evidence.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)</b>																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			3							1						
Retained*			0						0	0						
Successfully completed			0						0	0						
Still in learning			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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)</b>																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	22		20		12		5		3							
Retained*	1		8		9	75	5	100	3	100						
Successfully completed	0		2		2	17	4	80	1	33						
Still in learning	13		3		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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>NVQ Training</b>																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			10		2											
Retained*			8	80	2	100										
Successfully completed			7	70	2	100										
Still in learning			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

71. Learners have good support and training from employers in the workplace. Induction is well covered and there are individual training sessions. Learners are encouraged to take up relevant training opportunities off-the-job when they are available and many gain certificates. Employers plan shift patterns to meet learners' requirements. Progress and achievement is recognised by promotion and an increase in salary. Industry-standard equipment is made available for learners to support their learning at work.

There is good rotation of tasks and settings to enable learners to experience and learn across a range of skills. Laptop computers are supplied to support key skills learning. Learners who have additional learning needs are given additional support with the key skills tests.

72. Assessment practices are very weak and this was identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are not confident in their understanding of assessment and the progression from learning to assessment. The standard of work in portfolios and the range of evidence is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence of advice or feedback given by assessors. Learners are not fully involved in the organisation or development of the portfolios. Assessment-planning is poor and in some cases does not take place. Where assessment action plans are in place they are unsatisfactory. They are drawn up without fully involving the learner and without sufficient regard for the context and learning opportunities available. Learners have little understanding of the way they are to be assessed, or of the requirements of the qualifications and framework. Value statements and background knowledge are not assessed. They are not understood by the learners or assessor. The assessors for sport and recreation have not achieved the assessors' award. Arrangements for countersigning the assessment decisions are not fully effective.

73. There is inconsistent use made of prior learning and qualifications. In some cases, learners' previous qualifications have not been recognised or recorded. Some qualifications from work are not acknowledged or considered as components of the framework. The procedures for recognising and accrediting prior learning and achievements are not specified clearly.

## **Leadership and management**

74. The sport and recreation programme has not been managed satisfactorily. The programme has been the responsibility of a subcontractor until very recently and this included the management and assessment, as well as the co-ordination of training. These responsibilities have not been carried out effectively. Roles and responsibilities of the provider and subcontractor are not clearly understood. WOTS has not monitored these activities sufficiently in the past. In some cases, problems were identified by WOTS's managers, but actions were implemented too slowly or ineffectively. Visits by the subcontractors' staff for assessment have been infrequent and unreliable. When they have been carried out, they have not provided sufficient guidance for learners to progress satisfactorily. Planned dates for visits have not been met and learners have not always been informed when visits have been re-arranged. Some sessions have been cancelled and there have been long periods between visits. Little has been done to identify and plan work-based learning opportunities. There is no monitoring of workplace training.

75. The responsibility for internal verification is subcontracted. The implementation of the procedures for internal verification are not well carried out. WOTS's managers have not adequately managed or monitored the quality of the internal verification. There is a defined sampling framework covering the relevant units and elements. However, some

of the learners are not listed and some have not been included in the internal verification arrangements. The target dates for verification activity, which are specified in the sampling framework, are not often met and there have been delays of several months. The range of internal verification sampling is too narrow. Frequently internal verification activity has only been based on units that were previously shown to be unsatisfactory. Other units are not sampled. Some of the internal verification sampling reports are not fed back to assessors. The written feedback recorded in the sampling reports is very brief and not very helpful. There are very few comments from the assessor. Assessors are not given enough guidance by internal verifiers.

76. There is inadequate training and review of equal opportunities. The induction sessions are brief and learners cannot recall equal opportunities being covered in induction. Employers' and learners' understanding of the appeals procedure is poor. Progress reviews do not include checks on equal opportunities.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 5**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	58	5

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good development of personal and learning skills by learners

**Weaknesses**

- very poor achievement rates for modern apprentices
- poor retention rates
- very weak assessment practices
- very weak internal verification
- poor management of the care programme

**Achievement and standards**

77. A number of learners in care programmes have achieved good personal and learning skills. Learners are made aware of further learning opportunities and some have taken responsibility for their own learning. For example, learners have signed up for further information and communications technology (ICT) training through learndirect. They have recognised that this is necessary if they are to progress to a management or supervisory role. Some learners progress to nurse training. They have a good awareness of career development opportunities. Some learners make good progress in the workplace and are capable and confident in their job role. They take on new responsibilities and apply for more senior positions to further their career in care settings. One learner who has good skills and understanding has been appointed as team leader in a new domiciliary setting and is responsible for staff and clients. She is planning to progress to an advanced modern apprenticeship. In other cases, learners have recognised that further learning opportunities would be of benefit to them. For example, one learner who has additional literacy and numeracy needs has received individual coaching and has almost completed a level 2 NVQ. She has recognised that she needs further help if she is to progress in her career, and has enrolled for literacy and numeracy support at a local college.

78. The achievement rates are very poor on all programmes and there are some poor retention rates. There are very poor achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes. Only four learners have completed the advanced modern apprenticeship framework since 1997, during which time 28 learners have left the programme. Between 1997 and 2001, only four out of 28 foundation modern apprentices have completed the framework and one learner is still in learning. Progress towards the achievement of qualifications is slow. There are poor retention rates for foundation



modern apprentices with only 33 per cent retained in 1999-2000. On advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ programmes, retention rates are declining. On NVQ programmes, the retention rate has declined from 75 per cent in 1997-98, to 57 per cent in 2001-02.

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		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	16		12		7		1		7		4				
Retained*	2		6		4		0	0	4	57	4	100				
Successfully completed	0		1		0		0	0	2	29	1	25				
Still in learning	13		5		1		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	34		21		19		3		5		1				
Retained*	1		4		7		1	33	0	0	0	0				
Successfully completed	0		0		3		1	33	0	0	0	0				
Still in learning	23		8		1		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	1		15		7		24		22		8				
Retained*	0		8		4	57	13	54	19	86	6	75				
Successfully completed	0		3		3	43	9	38	7	32	2	25				
Still in learning	0		7		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**

79. The assessment practice is weak. There is no list of witness signatures in portfolios. Observation records are mainly descriptive and there are insufficient judgements. Many of the assessment records do not have signatures and dates. Written feedback is not returned promptly to learners, and some learners have to wait six to seven weeks to get feedback on their observations. Assessment focuses on individual units and there is little evidence of holistic assessment. Assessment-planning does not pay sufficient attention to the learners' work context. The plan is often only the work of the assessor and does not involve the learner sufficiently. For key skills, learners are not given clear feedback on the results of their mock key skills tests. They are not used to identify where learners have gaps in knowledge and understanding. The initial assessment for key skills is not always accurate in predicting successes with tests.

80. Employers offer a suitable range of learning opportunities at work and learners gain appropriate experience. Often learners take part in employer training. Learners are supported satisfactorily at work by supervisors. When required, WOTS provide training sessions and additional support for literacy and numeracy learning. However, initial assessment procedures are not consistently applied.

### **Leadership and management**

81. The management of the care programmes is unsatisfactory. Roles and responsibilities are not clear. The manager and key members of the care team have been absent for a considerable amount of time. Two members of staff, including the manager, have recently left the programme. Attempts to cover experience, management and operational gaps have not succeeded and learners have not had regular assessments or training. Expertise has been sought from elsewhere, but arrangements for subcontracting some training and assessment activity has not come to fruition. Progress reviews are unsatisfactory. Programme planning and review is weak. There has been no advance planning for the delivery of technical certificates. Employers, learners and some assessors are not clear about what is required to progress and respond to the programme changes. Off-the-job training is not planned and takes place infrequently. The involvement by employers in reviewing training is inconsistent. There are no effective strategies to deal with poor and declining achievement and retention rates. The self-assessment report and the grade did not accurately reflect the inspection findings.

82. The internal verification practice is poor. The co-ordination of the assessment team has been adversely affected by staffing shortages. There is poor communication and inadequate support for workplace assessors and insufficient monitoring of assessor practice. One work-based assessor was told about new paperwork by the learner. There are no regular assessor meetings and standardisation meetings have not taken place for some time. There is inadequate feedback to assessors. Some internal verification records are poorly completed and there are aspects not completed at all. Some assessors have not been observed carrying out their role and do not know how their work is sampled. Some learners have been training for nine months and their work has not been

sampled. Sampling plans are not thorough and do not ensure that the sample covers a range of the learners' work, some of the assessors and some of the units. The internal verification policy is inconsistently applied. There are different practices carried out in the internal verification process at different employers. In one setting there is 100 per cent sampling, in others around 20 per cent. Assessors do not always get individual feedback from their internal verifier. Units which have been internally verified are not returned promptly and this sometimes results in learners and assessors waiting up to eight weeks for a response.