

REINSPECTION REPORT

Three A's Pertemps Training Limited Reinspection

22 July 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

THREE A'S PERTEMPS TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

| SEVEN-POINT SCALE | FIVE-POINT SCALE |
|-------------------|------------------|
| grade 1 | grade 1 |
| grade 2 | |
| grade 3 | grade 2 |
| grade 4 | grade 3 |
| grade 5 | grade 4 |
| grade 6 | grade 5 |
| grade 7 | |

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

Three A's Pertemps Training Limited Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Three A's Pertemps Training Limited (Three A's) is a private company established in 1983 originally to provide training for young people with learning difficulties. The company operates from premises in Attleborough, Nuneaton and also from centres in Coventry and Rugby which are branded as City Skills and CV21, respectively. At the time of the reinspection, the company employs 37 staff and is providing work-based learning for 255 young people, most of whom are on the foundation Entry to Employment (E2E) programme, which has been offered since August 2003. The remainder are following programmes leading to modern apprenticeships or national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer service and transportation or hospitality, sport, leisure and travel.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

2. There are 28 learners in administration, 18 in business administration, six in management and four on professional programmes, three in accounting and one in teaching and training. Of these, 11 are advanced modern apprentices, 10 are foundation modern apprentices and seven are on NVQ programmes at levels 2, 3 and 4. Most of the learners are employed, some of them with Three A's. The two unemployed learners are in work placements at Three A's and a subsidiary, City Skills, in Coventry. Learners can start their programmes at any time of the year. All the learners have initial assessments of their occupational, literacy, numeracy and key skills. Learners participate in an induction programme, either at the Nuneaton office or in their workplace. The training officer visits workplaces to provide training, guidance and support, to observe learners, and to plan and carry out assessments. She also carries out regular workplace progress reviews, which are recorded and involve employers or workplace supervisors. A tutor for literacy and numeracy also visits and provides training in the workplace for learners who need additional learning support. Off-the-job training in key skills and background knowledge is given individually at the company's premises, or the training centre if preferred by the learner. All other training is carried out on the job by workplace trainers, mentors and supervisors.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

3. There are 17 learners on customer service and distribution operation programmes. Six are following customer service foundation modern apprenticeships, and five are following customer service advanced modern apprenticeships. Three learners are following the new level 4 NVQ in customer service. Two learners are following foundation modern apprenticeships in distribution operations and one learner is following an NVQ only in distribution operations at level 2. Since the previous inspection in March 2003 there have been three new assessors covering customer service and distribution operations programmes. There are four active assessors and one active internal verifier. Two assessors have left this area of learning since the previous inspection. All learners are employed with local employers and are mostly recruited through enquiries by employers. Training officers and the marketing department also approach employers to recruit learners onto programmes. A visiting training officer delivers an induction on the employers' premises. Most learners are trained on the job for the occupational skills of the apprenticeship, and supervisors and training officers mentor and provide information to assist the learner with background knowledge and key skills. Distribution learners attend a forklift truck course, which is delivered by a local subcontractor. Training officers visit learners at least once a month to assess the NVQ and key skills, they also review progress with the learners every 12 weeks. Learners attend key skills tests at Three A's in the Nuneaton office. Occasionally key skills tests take place at employers' premises.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. There are 28 learners on hospitality programmes, 21 of whom are foundation modern apprentices, four are advanced modern apprentices and three are on other work-based learning for young people. Thirteen are taking qualifications in bar work, 11 are working on food preparation and four are on other hospitality courses. The learners are trained and assessed at work for vocational work and their key skills. Most of their vocational training is carried out by their supervisors and managers, although this is supplemented with training by the Three A's training officers at their regular visits to the workplace. Training officers also provide training for key skills. Assessments are carried out at work by the Three A's training officers. Technical certificates are taken in workshops at Three A's centres. The large number of level 1 learners who were based in the Three A's centre during the previous inspection have now been subsumed into the E2E provision and are no longer part of the hospitality area of learning.

Foundation programmes

5. Following changes to pre-vocational training provision for young people nationally, Three A's replaced its Life Skills programme with E2E in August 2003. There are 182 E2E learners at three sites in Nuneaton, Coventry and Rugby. Learners are able to access a wide variety of activities that include outdoor activities, residential courses, motor mechanics, multimedia music and graphics, sports coaching and music making. Courses are offered in practical skills such as bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, catering, and plumbing. Learners can also gain additional qualifications in information technology (IT), housekeeping, food preparation and cooking, distribution operations, basic food hygiene, health and safety and adult literacy. The training programme has no fixed start or end dates but most learners stay on the course for an average of 31 weeks. Learners attend for a minimum of 16 hours each week. Learners are referred to Three A's by Connexions.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of inspectors | 8 |
| Number of inspection days | 32 |
| Number of learner interviews | 90 |
| Number of staff interviews | 60 |
| Number of employer interviews | 21 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 3 |
| Number of visits | 24 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. At the previous inspection, the quality of leadership and management and quality assurance was unsatisfactory, but equality of opportunity was satisfactory. Work-based learning was very weak in business administration, management and professional and retailing, customer service and transportation, and unsatisfactory in hospitality, sport leisure and travel. The foundation programmes were good. At the end of the reinspection process, business administration, management and professional was good, retailing, customer service and transportation and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel were satisfactory, but foundation programmes were very weak. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance were all unsatisfactory. Three A's has been referred to Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for emergency action.

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GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

| Leadership and management | 4 |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Equality of opportunity | 3 |
| Quality assurance | 4 |

| Business administration, management & professional | 5 |
|---|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 5 |

| Retailing, customer service & transportation | 5 |
|---|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 5 |

| Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel | 4 |
|---|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 4 |

| Foundation programmes | 2 |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Life Skills | 2 |

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

| Leadership and management | 4 |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Equality of opportunity | 4 |
| Quality assurance | 4 |

| Business administration, management & professional | 2 |
|---|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 2 |

| Retailing, customer service & transportation | 3 |
|---|----------|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 3 |

| Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel | | 3 |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Contributory grades: | | |
| Work-based learning for young people | | 3 |

| Foundation programmes | | 5 |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Contributory grades: | | |
| Entry to Employment | | 5 |

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **The recent achievement rates in business administration are good.** The achievement rate has significantly improved in the year leading up to reinspection with 19 learners completing frameworks.

8. **Completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks in hospitality is poor.** At the previous inspection, none of the learners were completing the full framework and achievement was a key weakness. Although the achievement rate is still low, there has been significant progress. Seventy-three per cent of the learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship in 2003-04 are still in learning and many are now making rapid progress. Little additional work is needed for these learners to complete the full framework.

9. **Achievement rates in E2E are poor.** Since the start of programme, 9 per cent of learners have completed the programme and the maximum possible achievement in the current year is 17 per cent. At present, 29 per cent of learners have progressed into further training or employment. Most of the learners make slow progress and there is no clear process to measure learners' achievements in the non-accredited sessions.

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 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Foundation programmes | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 17 |
| Total | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 17 |

10. **The employers in business administration are well engaged.** Employers provide good work experience and fully support the learners to fulfil the requirements of their training. Employers are fully conversant with the requirements of their learners' programme and their role in meeting them. Many learners benefit from a workplace mentor and all receive good workplace training and demonstrate good practical skills.

11. **Individual training in business administration is particularly effective.** The training

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officer gives good individual training during workplace visits which usually take place every four weeks. More frequent visits are made as the need arises. The training officer has a good understanding of the learners' ability and is assisted by a tutor for literacy and numeracy when additional support is needed.

12. Support to secure employment in retailing and customer service is very good from employers and Three A's staff. Employers support learners when they have particular difficulties with confidence or more specific problems such as reading difficulties. Employers persevere with learners who take a long time to settle into working life, are patient when mistakes are made and do not react negatively. Very recently, learners on the customer service programmes are benefiting from completing the employers' rules and regulation checklist as this enables them to research their own rights and responsibilities and gives them more knowledge for the qualification they are following. Training officers offer support and guidance to learners who are having difficulties in the workplace and give extra support to redeploy them.

13. Support for learners in hospitality is good. There are regular visits to the workplace by training officers, in many cases two weekly or weekly. The frequency depends on the needs and the wishes of the individual learner. The visits are arranged at suitable times and take account of work patterns. When appropriate, visits are arranged outside normal working hours in learners' own homes. Some learners with additional needs are referred to a support tutor. The training officers provide pastoral support and when appropriate learners are referred for specialist or professional support from the Three A's counsellor.

14. Personal support in foundation is good. Three A's employs a dedicated support officer to work with individual learners and to support staff in dealing with pastoral problems. All learners are informed about the support officer and each learner has an individual meeting with the officer to find out if they need additional support. The learning support officer often accompanies learners to job interviews or appointments with external agencies. There are strong links with external agencies to provide practical support for learners who are less likely to remain on the programme because of drug or alcohol misuse, homelessness, debt, offending behaviour or other difficulties.

15. The programme of activities in foundation is good. It has been extended and developed since the previous inspection to meet the needs of E2E learners. Learners participate in activities to develop their practical and social skills, self-confidence, motivation and to help them find work. Multi-media workshops, driving, and a residential course are successfully attracting learners. The football skills course and the sports sessions are particularly effective in involving learners. Some courses, such as drug awareness, family planning, personal hygiene and independent living skills, help learners take responsibility for their own actions and future. There are frequent activities to develop learners' employability skills. Learners develop practical skills in the construction and IT workshops. Three A's responds positively and quickly to learners' requests and ideas for new activities.

16. Technical certificates in customer service have been introduced late. Three A's does

not have approval to offer the taught guided learning hours section of the certificates. There has been no training organised in anticipation of the topics to be covered, and internal verifiers and assessors do not fully understand the requirements as yet.

17. Short-term targets for learners in hospitality are insufficiently focused. Although training officers discuss with learners the work they should be doing between visits, the records do not always identify appropriate specific, measurable targets for the learner.

18. Teaching in foundation is unsatisfactory. Tutors have developed learning plans, but these are not always used. Many have insufficient detail to provide an effective structure for the session. In the weaker sessions, tutors do not stimulate learners' interest and their progress and participation is poor. Learning is rarely assessed or marked and the standard and quantity of learners' work is unsatisfactory. Learners' participation is not effectively managed by tutors. Use of abusive language is not sufficiently challenged and there are no clear parameters for acceptable behaviour in many sessions. Some of the accommodation is too noisy and there are many distractions. Some learning resources are incomplete and there is an insufficient range of teaching techniques used to stimulate and challenge learners.

19. Action-planning and target-setting in foundation is weak. Although there has been recent staff development in this area, targets are still vague and do not allow learners to progress effectively. For some learners, reviews are not carried out on time. Many reviews contain comments that relate to the general improvement of skills with no specific details or timescales for achievement. Frequently, targets are not linked to individual objectives that are set out in the E2E Passport.

20. The development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills in foundation is inadequate. Since the previous inspection, Three A's has produced an action plan to guide the development of literacy and numeracy support. A co-ordinator is now in place but has only recently started the literacy and numeracy training. Other teaching staff provide informal support for literacy and numeracy, but they do not have relevant qualifications to teach these skills. All learners are initially assessed for literacy and numeracy, but there is no subsequent diagnostic assessment to identify specific needs. Language skills are not assessed and there is no provision for development of language. There has been insufficient identification of the opportunities for learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other programme activities.

Leadership and management

21. The provider works effectively with a wide range of partners. The managing director and other senior managers are actively involved in a number of local forums and associations of local providers. Learners who want to progress to areas which are not offered by the provider are given guidance and support to enable them to attend other local providers. Managers are also active in a number of initiatives and programmes concerned with disaffected young people and excluded school pupils in the local area.

22. The provider markets its provision to under-represented groups to reflect local

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needs. Equal opportunities data is used effectively to compare the learners with the local population and to market the company's provision to those groups. The provider has successfully marketed its provision to the targeted learner groups for the E2E programme at Connexions and events including those in special schools in the area.

23. Good actions have been taken to deal with the weaknesses from the previous inspection. New procedures for internal verification have been written into the quality assurance manual. Improvements in review documents include recording of units completed, clearer timescales and targets, additional supervisor and learner comments and additional questions for health and safety and equal opportunities. Review checklists are used to audit the review process and identify future actions. An effective system for monitoring the learners' progress is shared with managers, trainer/assessors and learners. Within the past three months, Three A's has introduced a number of planned quality assurance activities. Quality assurance is now a formal part of the staff induction programme.

24. The management of training is poor strategically and at curriculum level in the E2E programme. The change from Life Skills to E2E in foundation has not been well managed. Staff in this area have not been set sufficiently clear targets and there is an over-emphasis on recruitment of new learners rather than on outcomes for those on the programme. Resources, including staff, have not been planned and managed to match the numbers of learners on the programme.

25. Quality assurance is inadequately implemented. There is slow progress in the implementation of the new quality assurance arrangements. This has impacted in particular on the monitoring and quality assurance of the E2E programme, but also on the internal verification in customer care and opportunities for staff to share good practice.

26. Evaluation of the provision is insufficient to promote continuous improvement. There is insufficient formal evaluation of key training processes. Quality assurance arrangements focus on compliance with procedures rather than on continuous improvement. Criteria for measuring the outcomes of, for example, inductions or reviews, have not yet been established. The quality assurance arrangements do not provide enough information to enable Three A's to adequately assess the effectiveness of the provision.

27. The monitoring of learners' understanding of health and safety and equality of opportunity in business administration is weak. The poor questioning techniques do not explore many aspects of these topics. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of harassment, complaints and appeals procedures and know how to use them. They also have a basic knowledge of their rights under the legislation, but little awareness of their responsibilities to others.

28. There is insufficient internal verification in retailing and customer service. A number of areas of poor practice in assessment have not been identified or rectified and practices are not standard.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective partnership working
- active marketing to under-represented groups
- good actions to improve weaknesses from previous inspection

Weaknesses

- insufficient evaluation for continuous improvement
- poor management of training
- inadequate implementation of quality assurance procedures

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- well-engaged employers
- good recent achievement rate
- particularly effective individual training

Weaknesses

- weak monitoring of learners' understanding of health and safety and equality of opportunity

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- very good support to secure employment

Weaknesses

- late introduction of technical certificate in customer service
- insufficient internal verification

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor completion rate for the modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficiently focused short-term targets for learners

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good programme of activities
- good personal support

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- unsatisfactory teaching
- weak action-planning and target-setting
- inadequate development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills
- ineffective management of E2E programme

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

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

Strengths

- effective partnership working
- active marketing to under-represented groups
- good actions to improve weaknesses from previous inspection

Weaknesses

- insufficient evaluation for continuous improvement
- poor management of training
- inadequate implementation of quality assurance procedures

29. The provider works effectively with a wide range of partners. In addition to drawing on the expertise and resources of its formal partner, a large national commercial training provider, the managing director and other senior managers are actively involved with a number of local forums and associations of local providers. Learners who want to progress to areas which are not offered by the provider are given guidance and support to enable them to attend other local providers. Managers are also active in a number of initiatives and programmes concerned with disaffected young people and excluded school pupils in the local area. The centres in Coventry and Rugby have been set up using capital funding from the LSC. In Rugby the premises will be shared with another organisation, whose activities complement the E2E programme and with whom the provider already collaborates.

30. The company's strategic three-year plan and annual business plan are satisfactory. Staff contribute to business targets and objectives through an annual goal-setting day, when they work in functional and cross-functional teams to reflect on previous performance and suggest goals for the future. Staff are kept aware of developments and management intentions through comprehensive internal communications, meetings and visits between centres. Staff have clear job descriptions and well-defined responsibilities. In some areas, however, management has not been made aware of shortcomings in the provision.

31. The Three A's staff appraisal system is satisfactory. In addition to an annual appraisal, staff also have quarterly reviews or job chats with their line managers. Some training and continuous professional development needs are identified through this process, but it is too early to judge the impact on new staff. Members can attend internal or external courses once a training need is identified. The provider devotes one

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day each month to staff training and organisational development.

32. Staff induction is thorough and this was identified at the previous inspection. Additional support has been provided to new staff through the recruitment of qualified and experienced internal verifiers for the three areas of learning which offer level 2 and 3 qualifications, and a co-ordinator for the E2E provision across all sites. There are also team leaders at each site. The E2E appointments are recent and it is too early to judge their impact.

33. The management of training is poor. There has been considerable improvement in the areas which were unsatisfactory at the previous inspection. Three A's has introduced strategies to improve retention and achievement rates in these areas. These include the use of whiteboards to record and monitor learners' progress and to plan assessment and other visits. Retention rates have improved, and the number of learners who are outside their funding date has mostly been eliminated. However, the change from Life Skills to E2E in foundation has not been well managed. Staff in this area have not been set sufficiently clear targets and there is an over-emphasis on recruitment of new learners, rather than outcomes for those on the programme. Resources in this area, including staff, have not been planned and managed to match the numbers of learners on the programme. However, the provider moves staff and learners between sites, to partly alleviate the problems. It has also just acquired additional premises adjacent to its Attleborough site and is attempting to recruit more staff for the E2E programme. It is too early to judge the impact of these measures.

34. The strategy for the management of literacy, numeracy and language support in all areas is unsatisfactory. There is a development plan for this provision within the E2E programme, but this does not extend to support in the other areas of learning. There is one qualified trainer in this area to cover all three sites. There is no provision for language support and an assumption that learners with language support needs will be referred to other specialist providers.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

35. The policy for equality of opportunity is included in the provider's quality assurance manual. The quality assurance manager has overall responsibility for equality of opportunity. The policy clearly lays out the provider's commitment to the principles of equality of opportunity, but the latest version which is dated April 2004, does not reflect the latest legislation. The quality assurance manager issues circulars to inform staff of the latest legislation and amendments to existing legislation, using information downloaded from the internet. These circulars are also distributed to employers or work placements.

36. All staff attend annual one-day training sessions in equal opportunities. Resources are available to staff on a compact disc. However, the material in the learners' induction packs has not been updated to reflect recent legislation.

37. The provider actively markets its provision to under-represented groups to reflect local needs. Equal opportunities data is used effectively to compare its learners with the

local population and to identify under-represented groups. For example, although the overall proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is close to that in the local population, there were no Chinese learners. The provider marketed its provision to the local Chinese community through restaurants in the area. Promotional material is not routinely produced in languages other than English, although the provider has a number of translation agencies available to produce material in other languages on demand. The provider has successfully marketed its provision to the targeted learner groups for the E2E programme at Connexions and at events including those in special schools in the area.

38. The monitoring of equality of opportunity at employers is now satisfactory. New employers and work placements are required to answer a series of questions on their policies and procedures and their recruitment of workers from minority ethnic groups and by gender. There is an annual review at the same time as the health and safety review and further monitoring takes place through the review process, and informally through visits by training officers. The provider's staff noticed that one company only employed men who had attended work placements. Since this was brought to the company's attention it has had a more balanced approach and has employed several women.

39. Equality of opportunity is included in the learners' induction and their understanding is tested through a questionnaire. There is some reinforcement of equality of opportunity at progress reviews through the use of standard questions. However, the questions invite very short answers. The induction pack is standard for all learners and is not suitable for learners with literacy or language support needs. Positive imagery is not used to promote equality of opportunity.

40. The provider's main site is in a converted factory complex with training rooms and other facilities on the ground and first floor. Access to the first floor is by stairs only and would be difficult for learners with restricted mobility. However, the provider can organise for training to be delivered on the ground floor. One of the other sites has a lift which is suitable for wheelchair users. The other site only has facilities on the first floor but the ground floor has recently been acquired by the provider.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

41. Since the previous inspection, Three A's has initiated a number of positive actions to improve the arrangements for quality assurance. New procedures for internal verification have been written into the quality assurance manual, giving a structured plan for sampling. Improvements in review documents include recording of units completed, clearer timescales and targets, additional supervisor and learner comments, and additional questions for health and safety and equality of opportunity. Review checklists are used to audit the review process and identify future actions. An effective system for monitoring the learners' progress is shared with managers, trainer/assessors and learners. In the past three months, Three A's has introduced a number of quality assurance activities. These include a programme of observations of teaching and learning, with newer and less experienced assessors observed more frequently, and a

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planned programme of assessor and internal verifier meetings to share good practice and discuss assessment decisions. Quality assurance is now part of the staff induction programme.

42. Policies and procedures are satisfactory. A great deal of work has been carried out since the previous inspection to set up appropriate quality assurance arrangements. The new quality assurance manual is comprehensive and is set out clearly in a well-written manual. Key responsibility lies with the management team and the quality assurance manager. The manual identifies clear procedures for key training processes including recruitment, initial assessment, progress reviews, assessment and verification, and document control. A newly implemented audit plan covers all aspects of the key training processes. However, auditing against the quality assurance manual is in its early stages. Some of the procedures have not been covered, although there is a planned programme for completion.

43. Feedback from learners and employers is satisfactory. Targets are set to improve learner and employer satisfaction. Learner feedback is collected when they start a programme, during the programme and when they leave. Analysis of data is presented at staff meetings and is used to set targets for improvement. Negative responses are followed up, are discussed by staff and, when appropriate, action is taken. There have been improvements overall in learner satisfaction from 30 per cent in 2002-03 to 100 per cent in 2003-04, with a response rate of 42 per cent and 72 per cent, respectively. Learners requested that more scheduled visits were arranged by trainer/assessors and a staff development and training day was organised to look at the roles and responsibilities of work-based learning assessors. Staff feedback is collected through meetings, job chats, appraisals and training evaluations. Staff are encouraged to contribute new ideas and there are many examples of this leading to the development of improved learning materials. Employer feedback is collected twice a year and negative responses are effectively dealt with. There is, however, insufficient focus on the quality of the training process.

44. Internal verification is now satisfactory. Three A's internal verification is well planned and well recorded, with clear guidelines for assessors and internal verifiers. All employers and learners are sent a letter to inform them of their link internal verifier and what their function will be. The verification process focuses on observation of assessment, examination and questioning of learners' work and verification feedback. Standardisation meetings have been infrequent. They are now planned to be quarterly, but they can take place more frequently if required. Feedback to assessors has been supportive in identifying actions to improve. All staff are appropriately qualified to carry out internal verification, and feedback from external verifiers has been acted on accordingly.

45. Inadequate implementation of quality assurance was a weakness at the previous inspection, and there is slow progress in the implementation of the new quality assurance arrangements. This has impacted in particular on the monitoring and quality assurance of the E2E programme, but also on the internal verification in customer service and opportunities for staff across centres to share good practice. Observations of

teaching and learning are not effective in identifying weaknesses in the E2E programme. Implementation of procedure is subject to some internal auditing, but the effectiveness of procedures is not evaluated. Quality assurance procedures make little use of performance indicators and targets for continuous improvement. There is insufficient use of data for quality assurance processes. Three A's only introduced observations of learning in 2004, but these have not been extended to other parts of the training process, such as induction and reviews.

46. There is insufficient formal evaluation of key training processes. This was also identified at the previous inspection. Quality assurance arrangements focus on compliance with procedures rather than on continuous improvement. Criteria for measuring the successful outcomes of inductions or reviews have not yet been established. The quality assurance arrangements do not provide enough information to enable Three A's to adequately assess the effectiveness of the provision. Information on the learners' experience of key training processes and the effectiveness of that training is not gathered or considered by the organisation. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative and is not linked to the quality assurance process.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 28 | 2 |

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

Strengths

- well-engaged employers
- good recent achievement rate
- particularly effective individual training

Weaknesses

- weak monitoring of learners' understanding of health and safety and equality of opportunity

Achievement and standards

47. At the previous inspection the completion rate for modern apprenticeship frameworks was poor. Action taken by Three A's to employ a qualified assessor and internal verifier has made the assessment and internal verification processes more effective. The achievement rate has significantly improved in the year leading up to reinspection, with 19 learners completing their frameworks. Of these, 17 have completed their programmes in the past six months. Sixty-five per cent of the learners who have started since 2002 are still in learning and most are making satisfactory progress towards completion of their frameworks. Over the same period, 14 per cent of NVQ learners have achieved NVQs and 71 per cent are still in learning and are making good progress. Learners now benefit from particularly effective coaching. Learners compile good portfolios of evidence that are well structured and contain diverse sources of evidence. The self-assessment report recognised a related strength in the good progress made by some learners.

Quality of education and training

48. Employers provide good work experience and help learners to fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship frameworks and NVQs. This was recognised as a strength at the previous inspection and in the draft self-assessment report which was produced before reinspection. Employers are fully conversant with the requirements of their learners'

programme and their role in meeting them. Work roles are flexible and are adjusted to enable learners to produce the evidence required. Time is set aside during the working week to enable learners to collate and build their portfolios. Many learners have a workplace mentor, and all receive good workplace training and demonstrate good practical skills. Most employers have recognised the benefits of the modern apprenticeship and are placing other employees on these and other NVQ programmes. Employers offer good training opportunities which enable learners to develop new skills and give a wide range of learning and assessment opportunities. Most learners can practise the skills required for their NVQ in the normal course of their work. If they cannot, the training officer and employer arrange alternative opportunities in another area of the company. Employers and workplace supervisors recognise and support learners' needs. Some employers appoint workplace mentors to provide guidance. Learners make a significant contribution to their employers, as well as developing their own confidence and work skills. Some have progressed to supervisory and management roles, while others have assumed high levels of responsibility. They are valued by their companies and have become an example for other employees.

49. The training officer gives good individual training during workplace visits every four weeks. More frequent visits are made if necessary. The training officer has a good understanding of the learners' ability and is assisted by a tutor for literacy or numeracy support when needs are identified. The training officer and the learner keep a record of each workplace visit which includes short-term action plans, suggestions for improvement and the date of the next meeting. Good use is made of a variety of learning texts and carefully tailored handouts to support the training given during workplace visits. The training officer has access to a wide range of training resources, texts, textbooks, handouts and videos which can be loaned to learners. This strength was not recognised in the most recent draft self-assessment report.

50. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is satisfactory. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. A related weakness in recording on- and off-the-job training was identified in the self-assessment report. A detailed identification of the roles and responsibilities of the training provider and the employer is now included in the training agreement and there is a clearer understanding of their roles. More frequent workplace visits by the training officer and regular meetings with workplace supervisors ensure co-ordination of training and experience at work and off-the-job training. Off-the-job training may take place at the workplace or at the provider's facilities to suit the needs of the learner.

51. The range and quality of training facilities and resources provided by employers and Three A's is adequate. Training rooms are well equipped and include computers and software to industry standards. Health and safety is promoted at induction and is reinforced during regular workplace reviews. Employers are subject to an annual health and safety check by Three A's staff. Learners are required to check their employers' facilities after their induction.

52. Arrangements to assess learners' literacy and numeracy skills during the induction are adequate. Most learners' support needs are appropriately identified and learners are

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working at the correct level. Additional support in literacy and numeracy is set in a vocational context. The tutor for literacy and numeracy selects suitable work activities and NVQ elements and develops and implements individual training programmes for learners.

53. Training in key skills is adequate and is introduced early in the learners' programme. A number of projects are used which link directly to NVQ training. Key skills external assessments may also be carried out online.

Leadership and management

54. The monitoring of learners' knowledge and understanding of health and safety and equal opportunities is weak during progress reviews. There is poor use of questioning techniques to explore these topics. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of harassment, complaints and appeals procedures and know how to use them. They also have a basic knowledge of their rights but little awareness of their responsibilities to others. Progress reviews are carried out every three months and include the learner and employer. Progress to date is reviewed and target dates for further achievement are evaluated and amended on the individual learning plan. Learners have an opportunity to raise concerns and to make a personal evaluation of their performance. The employer and/or the workplace supervisor or mentor also add their comments. In most cases the employer is present during the entire review. The conduct and use of progress reviews was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. The draft self-assessment report identified that the review process is satisfactory.

55. Assessment practices are satisfactory. At the previous inspection, this was considered to be a weakness. A revised assessment monitoring procedure has been introduced for all elements of the framework. Completion dates for NVQ units, technical certificates, additional qualifications and key skills are established, and changes and completions are recorded. Training officers make frequent visits to the workplace to provide training, guidance and support, to carry out observations and to plan and carry out assessments. The visits are normally every month by appointment, but some take place more frequently when the need arises. Learners have access to additional support from their training officer/assessor at any time. The assessor gives detailed written feedback on the quality of the learners' work with guidance on how they can improve. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory and are fully understood by the staff.

56. Significant improvements have been made to systems and procedures, particularly in the areas of assessment, internal verification and communication. These actions, together with the appointment of new, well-qualified and experienced training staff, have increased the learners' progress and achievement.

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

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 17 | 3 |

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

Strengths

- very good support to secure employment

Weaknesses

- late introduction of technical certificate in customer service
- insufficient internal verification

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and retention rates have been historically low on all programmes, but Three A's has not taken any more learners onto the retailing programme, and is concentrating on customer service and distribution operations. Since the previous inspection there has been 29 leavers from all programmes, six of whom have completed the full framework and two have achieved the NVQ. Seven learners left early and the remainder moved onto other localities/programmes or other employment. Current learners are on target to complete their programmes within the specified timescales. Since the previous inspection new assessors have been told to finish learners who are outside their funding date.

Quality of education and training

58. Learners get good support from employers and Three A's staff. They make good progress in their workplace some learners have been promoted or given more responsibility. Employers support learners when they have difficulties with confidence or more specific problems such as with reading. Employers persevere with learners who take a long time to settle into working life and are patient when mistakes are made. Learners on distribution operations programmes very quickly gain a qualification in lift truck operations. Very recently, learners on customer service programmes are completing the employers' rules and regulation checklist as this enables them to research their own rights and responsibilities in the workplace and gives them more knowledge for their qualification. Some learners also get the opportunity to move onto level 2 and 3 programmes. Two learners are following level 4 qualifications in customer service and they are helping other learners in the same workplace. Some supervisors have completed NVQs with Three A's and are able to mentor current learners. One supervisor is a qualified assessor and is helping a learner to gather evidence. Training

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officers offer support and guidance to learners who are having difficulties in the workplace and give extra support to redeploy them. Training officers also pass on potential business to employers.

59. Initial assessment records the occupational knowledge, key skills and learning styles of learners before they start a programme. In some instances, this process has highlighted when a level 3 is not appropriate. However, the learning material for induction is the same for all learners and the mode of delivery is not appropriate for every learner's style of learning. Learners are booked on key skills tests at the start of their programme. Learners are producing evidence on computers, earlier than when the previous inspection took place. When literacy and numeracy needs are identified, additional help is offered through a specific tutor at the learners' workplace. Currently only one learner is receiving this support with number skills.

60. The customer service technical certificate is introduced late in the programme. Three A's does not have approval to offer the taught guided learning hours section of the certificates. Although there has been little information from the awarding bodies there has been no training organised in anticipation of the topics to be covered. Internal verifiers and assessors do not fully understand the requirements as yet. Two assessors have training qualifications and will be able to design suitable training to satisfy approval criteria. Presently, this affects four advanced modern apprentices and some foundation modern apprentices.

61. There is very little training material for customer service learners, although a resource catalogue has been produced since the previous inspection. Some materials have been developed for the distribution programme.

Leadership and management

62. There is insufficient internal verification and there are still some weaknesses in assessment practices. Assessors make insufficient judgements on evidence produced by learners, it is not sufficiently assessed by the assessor and answers to questions are not always recorded. Some learners write a brief explanation of their work, but it is not always fully explained or assessed. Improved assessment paperwork has been developed to capture assessor judgements, but it is not used by all assessors. Assessment planning is not sufficiently recorded to ensure that the learner is fully aware of what unit or component of the framework they are working towards for the next assessor visit. These records are not systematically used for key skills evidence. There is no observational assessment at level 2 for customer service. Although this has been picked up by the internal verifier, there is still too much emphasis on workplace evidence. Portfolios are full of evidence that could be assessed through effective professional discussion. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity and customer service regulations are not sufficiently reinforced by assessors.

63. There is one unqualified assessor who is not being sufficiently monitored, either through the countersigning process or internal verification. Only one standardisation

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meeting has taken place in August 2003. Additional training for assessors and verifiers has been recognised for staff development in the near future.

64. Although a new strategy for verification has been developed, there has been insufficient time for it to be fully implemented in this area of learning.

65. The self-assessment report identified some of the improvements found in the reinspection especially regarding support, initial assessment, development of some training material and the early introduction of key skills. Target-setting for training officers has yet to have an impact on outcomes for this sector, and the late introduction of technical certificates and insufficient internal verification were not recognised as weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 3**

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 28 | 3 |

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

Strengths

- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor completion rate for the modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficiently focused short-term targets for learners

Achievement and standards

66. At the previous inspection, none of the learners were completing the full frameworks and achievement was a key weakness. Although the achievement rate is still low, there has been significant progress. Key skills are now an integral part of the vocational training, achievement of key skills is improving, and technical certificates are being achieved during the programmes. Seventy-three per cent of the learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship in 2003-04 are still in learning and many of these are now making rapid progress. Many of the portfolios show that learners have achieved competence in several elements of the NVQ and in the related background knowledge. Learners are completing key skills projects and little additional work is needed for these learners to complete the full framework.

Quality of education and training

67. All the learners continue to receive good learning support which was identified in the previous inspection. There are regular visits to the workplace by training officers, in many cases every two weeks, and in some cases weekly. The frequency depends on the needs and the wishes of the individual learner. The visits are arranged at suitable times and take account of work patterns. When appropriate, visits are arranged outside normal working hours in learners' own homes. Visits are planned well and frequently include employer involvement. Training officers give each learner as much time as they need. Some learners with additional needs are referred to a support tutor who may see the learner on a regular basis either at work or at the Three A's centre. Specialist support for some learners is insufficient, but the support in literacy, numeracy, and language is satisfactory. The training officers provide pastoral support and, when appropriate, learners are referred for specialist support. Learners also have direct access to professional support from the Three A's counsellor. Learners with travel difficulties are

sometimes transported by training officers. Learners who have particular learning difficulties have been accompanied by their training officer to ensure that key skills tests are not intimidating.

68. Training is now better planned. Planning frequently includes discussions with employers to link the training provided by supervisors at work with the qualifications being targeted. The training officers identify elements which are not being covered at work and provide specific training and materials in these areas. Employers use the targets and short-term plans agreed by learners and training officers when arranging the learners' work for the following period. Teaching and training are satisfactory.

69. The inadequacy of learning materials is now being dealt with. A list of centrally held resources has been circulated, but this is not used by many learners. Individually written support materials for specific topics in the qualifications are now more widely distributed and used. However, they are still being developed. The reproduction of some of these materials is poor, but they are nevertheless a useful tool to support learners. Learning resources are now satisfactory. The equipment and accommodation in learners' workplaces are satisfactory and in some cases very good. The training officers are appropriately experienced for the qualifications they are supporting. They are either qualified as assessors or are working towards these qualifications with suitable support from an experienced assessor.

70. The poor facilities for assessment in the training kitchen which were identified at the previous inspection are no longer a problem. The facilities have been improved and are providing good development and taster sessions for E2E learners. They are not being used for vocational assessments in hospitality.

71. The problems with internal verification have now been resolved. The most recent external verifiers' report shows that all concerns which were identified at previous external verifications have been resolved. The internal verifier holds standardisation meetings and has a programme of observations of assessment. Assessment and verification of learners' work is satisfactory.

72. Some aspects of the hospitality programmes have now transferred to the E2E programme. The variety of hospitality programmes was seen as a strength at the previous inspection, but this is no longer appropriate. Three A's provides the usual range of mainstream hospitality programmes and this provision satisfactorily meets the needs of the learners.

73. Although training officers discuss the work learners should be doing between visits, the written records sometimes do not clearly identify specific, measurable targets for the learners. When different documents are used, such as for the E2E learners, clearer targets are often set, but this good practice is not always adopted for work-based learning even though the same training officers are involved. Some visit records and reviews do not drive the learning forward to ensure learners reach their full potential.

Leadership and management

74. The management is focused on improving the areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection. Progress made by individual learners is monitored using individual assessor's records, charts displayed in the training officers' work rooms, and detailed computer records. Communication between the team members is good. Staff share good practice and support each other in the development of materials and planning training. Trainers are enthusiastic and are committed to developing their skills and the support and training they provide. However, the team does not have wide experience of work-based learning and is not aware of some examples of best practice. The team was included in the self-assessment at staff meetings. The draft self-assessment report was circulated for comment to members of staff. The many descriptions and judgments in the self-assessment report for hospitality were accurate, but some identified strengths are not applicable and others are no more than normal practice.

Foundation programmes**Grade 5**

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Entry to Employment | 182 | 5 |

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

Strengths

- good programme of activities
- good personal support

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- unsatisfactory teaching
- weak action-planning and target-setting
- inadequate development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills
- ineffective management of E2E programme

Achievement and standards

75. Achievement rates are poor. Since the start of the E2E programme, 9 per cent of learners have completed the programme and the maximum possible achievement in the current year is 17 per cent. At present, 29 per cent of learners have progressed into further training or employment. Of the 286 learners who have been on the programme since August 2003, 54 have achieved 63 accredited qualifications in basic food hygiene, health and safety, food preparation and cooking at level 1, Using IT at level 1, basic football skills, sports coaching, distribution operations at level 1 or housekeeping at level 1. Of these, seven learners have completed national tests in adult literacy at levels 1 and 2. Most learners make slow progress and there is no clear process to measure learners' achievements in the non-accredited sessions. Learners receive internal certificates for their participation in a range of courses. There is poor attendance and punctuality at two centres. Retention rates are satisfactory and 52 per cent of learners have remained on the programme.

Quality of education and training

76. Many of the teaching sessions are unsatisfactory. Tutors have developed learning plans but these are not always used and many have insufficient detail to provide an effective structure for the session. In the weaker sessions, tutors do not stimulate learners' interest, and progress and participation are poor. Learning is rarely assessed or marked and the standard and quantity of learners' work is unsatisfactory. Learners' participation is not effectively managed by tutors. Use of abusive language is not sufficiently

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challenged and there are no clear parameters for acceptable behaviour in many sessions. Some of the accommodation is too noisy and there are many distractions which prevent learners from progressing. Some learning resources are incomplete and there is an insufficient range of teaching techniques to stimulate and challenge learners. Induction does not meet the needs of individual learners. The programme is poorly structured and learners spend a long period of time passively listening to staff going through each section of the programme. There are no clear aims and objectives to the session and no use of icebreakers to introduce learners to each other and the programme. The resources do not contain visual or graphic images to engage the learners' interest and, frequently, difficult words are used throughout the day. Learners do not have a good understanding of the purpose or content of the induction and are not sufficiently involved in the learning process. Many learners are bored and are unsure of the value of the learning sessions. However, in the better sessions teaching relates well to the career aims of individual learners and has effectively developed their self-confidence and motivation. Learners are well engaged and participate in these sessions.

77. The monitoring of individual progress continues to be weak. Although there has been recent staff development to improve the reviews and target-setting, targets are vague and do not allow learners to progress effectively on their programme. For some learners, reviews are not carried out on time. Many contain comments that relate to the general improvement of skills with no specific details or timescales for achievement. Frequently targets are not linked to individual objectives that are set out in the E2E Passport. Many learners do not have a good understanding of these targets and they are not used to ensure that learners progress. However, for four learners who are working towards an NVQ in catering, target-setting is satisfactory.

78. There is a good programme of activities that has been extended and developed since the previous inspection to meet the needs of E2E learners. Learners participate in activities to develop their practical and social skills, self-confidence and motivation, and to help them find work. Multi-media workshops, driving, and a residential course successfully attract learners, many of whom have been out of education or training for many months or have had negative experiences at school. The football skills course and the sports sessions are particularly effective in involving learners. Some courses, such as drug awareness, family planning, personal hygiene and independent living skills, help learners take responsibility for their own actions. There are frequent activities to develop learners' employability skills. Learners develop practical skills in the construction and IT workshops. Staff help learners to find suitable work placements and work tasters in many occupational areas. Learners comment positively on the value of the activities and how they improve their self-confidence. Three A's responds positively and quickly to requests and ideas for new activities. It also collaborate effectively with partner organisations to increase the range of courses to meet the diverse needs and interests of learners.

79. Three A's employs a dedicated support officer to work with individual learners and to support staff in dealing with pastoral problems. All learners are informed about the support officer and each learner has an individual meeting with the officer to identify additional support needs. The learning support officer often accompanies learners to job

interviews or appointments with external agencies. There are strong links with external agencies to provide practical support for learners who are less likely to remain on the programme because of drug or alcohol misuse, homelessness, debt, offending behaviour or other difficulties. Learners can also go directly to a member of staff if they need help and support with personal and social problems. Staff are committed and dedicated and build positive relationships with learners. The support helps learners to remain on the programme.

80. Since the previous inspection, Three A's has produced an action plan to guide the development of literacy and numeracy support. A co-ordinator is now in place, but has only recently started the literacy and numeracy training. Other teaching staff provide informal support for literacy and numeracy, but they do not have relevant qualifications. Most of the learners' literacy and numeracy skills are below level 1 and there is insufficient provision to meet their needs. At Coventry only six learners are receiving literacy or numeracy support. Two learners at Rugby receive support and 25 in Nuneaton. All learners have an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy, but there is no subsequent diagnostic assessment to identify specific needs. Language skills are not assessed and there is no provision for development of language. At two sites, external accreditation is limited to entry level certificates for literacy and numeracy and there are no opportunities to progress to higher levels. There is low take-up of literacy and numeracy training and accreditation opportunities. At Coventry and Rugby none of the learners are working towards a literacy or numeracy qualification. There has been insufficient identification of the opportunities for learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other programme activities. With the exception of entry level 3 jobsearch skills materials, none of the training sessions or materials have been matched to the core curriculum for literacy or numeracy. For the learners who are receiving formal support, short-term aims have been identified and linked to the core curriculum, but they are not specific and the system for monitoring progress is unclear.

Leadership and management

81. Since the previous inspection, the management of E2E has deteriorated. Staff have monthly meetings and receive regular appraisals. However, there are no action points from meetings and there is no focus on improving the quality of the training programme. During the inspection, classes were cancelled on one site as there were staff shortages arising from long-term sick leave and cover for other sites. At one site some staff are required to supervise learners in recreation rooms and cannot be released to provide training sessions to more motivated and engaged learners. There is poor co-ordination and planning of staff cover for residential or other trips.

82. Although there is an adequate number of work placements, there is insufficient focus on work preparation and the value of work experience in gaining employment. Few learners take up a work placement.

83. The E2E programme is poorly structured and many learners do not have a good understanding of it. They are unable to manage their own learning and do not

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understand the progress they have made across the whole learning programme. There is an over-reliance on learners' self-motivation to attend training. Most do not have individual weekly programmes. Many learners are not engaged in learning and spend too much time playing games. There are insufficient links between different aspects of the E2E programme and inadequate identification of the learning objectives of most of the activities.

84. Staff do not fully understand quality assurance. There is little senior management co-ordination to share practice between sites, but vocational tutors maintain good communication links with colleagues at other sites. Few staff understand how the E2E programme is evaluated, reviewed and developed. Some staff have been observed teaching but the observation system has not yet been effective in improving standards of teaching. Staff have contributed informally to the self-assessment process, but the draft self-assessment report was insufficiently critical and did not identify key weaknesses.

85. Equality of opportunity is unsatisfactory. In some of the better courses and training sessions, activities are used well to challenge gender stereotypes. Information which is given to learners at induction does not contain details of the latest legislation. Equality of opportunity is not reinforced during the remainder of programme and there is a poor understanding and recall by learners. Many written resources include language that is too complex for learners at entry level. Equality of opportunity is not positively promoted in the resources used in the three centres.