

# INSPECTION REPORT

**L.I.T.S. Limited**

**10 September 2004**



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

## L.I.T.S. Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. L.I.T.S. Limited (LITS) was founded in 1981 and incorporated in September 2002. The company provides specific support and assessment services to engineering companies nationally. LITS acts as a management agency primarily for the engineering maintenance sector, facilitating the training of employees. The company has one non-executive managing director who was the founder member of the organisation. There are also two full-time members of staff. All three are based at head office in the Southeast. One full-time member of staff is responsible for leadership and management of training and the other is responsible for administration and learner support. LITS employs 20 training advisers responsible for managing different regions. Each training adviser has a caseload of learners employed across the United Kingdom.

2. LITS holds a Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contract for advanced modern apprenticeships in engineering. All learners are aged between 18 and 25. The money LITS receives is passed directly to employers who then pay LITS for the services it provides. LITS also has a number of commercial clients. Approximately 50 per cent of LITS's income is from the private sector and 50 per cent is government funded. LITS is a recognised assessment centre for a number of awarding bodies. The company also has affiliations to a number of national trade associations.

3. Employers recruit and assess learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. LITS does not recruit but assesses learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs, provides the necessary support and assessment to assist employers in locating a local college to provide the technical certificate at level 2. The learner spends their first year completing the technical certificate and key skills at the college before progressing in successive years to completing their on-the-job training at level 3. During the four-year apprenticeship, learners will have constant support from LITS's training advisers who liaise with employers, the college and learners.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. There are 226 learners following advanced modern apprenticeships with LITS. All learners are working towards a combined mechanical, electrical, instrumentation and installation qualification. Learners are receiving training in all of the above disciplines and when qualified will become multi-skilled engineers. Learners are employed by a number of international, national and regional employers in making and maintaining lifts and escalators, and in papermaking, cement and other process and service industries. Delivery of the national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2, the technical certificate and key skills is provided by a number of further education colleges. The NVQ at level 3 is delivered in the workplace with employers providing suitable workplace skill development. LITS's staff visit learners in the workplace to carry out regular progress

reviews, assessments and coaching and to provide learners with guidance and support.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of inspectors                               | 4  |
| Number of inspection days                          | 20 |
| Number of learner interviews                       | 59 |
| Number of staff interviews                         | 17 |
| Number of employer interviews                      | 12 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 20 |

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically leadership and management is satisfactory. The company's arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory but its arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Training for engineering, technology and manufacturing is good.

## GRADES

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

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

| Engineering, technology & manufacturing |                    | 2                  |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                     | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Other contributory areas</b>         |                    |                    |
| - Work-based learning for young people  | 226                | 2                  |

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

6. **Learners successfully achieve a wide range of additional qualifications.** Some learners continue to higher education and a small number are on part-time degree courses. All of these qualifications are additional to the requirements of the advanced apprenticeship framework.

7. **Learners are acquiring good background knowledge and practical skills** which they are able to use in their work roles.

### Quality of education and training

8. **Employers and learners are particularly well involved in the training.** Employers allocate learners to well-qualified and experienced engineers, all of whom provide expert training and guidance.

9. **There is very good skills development in the workplace.** Learners carry out a wide range of tasks under the direction of skilled and qualified engineers. Learners are regarded as valuable members of the team. Some learners are working at a higher level than might be expected for the time they have been on the programme.

10. **There is very good support for learners.** Training advisers manage a regional group of learners well, keep in touch regularly and meet with learners at least every two months. Training advisers visit many learners every four weeks. The progress review process for most learners also involves regular employer monitoring reports and interviews with company managers. Expert training advisers and employers work well with learners to motivate them and help them focus on the programme.

11. **There is inadequate observed assessment in the workplace.** Assessment of NVQs is largely by review of portfolio evidence such as witness testimony, diagrams, drawings, digital photographs and detailed questioning. There is insufficient direct observation of learners carrying out tasks in the workplace. Assessors do not have the opportunity to evaluate learners' practical skills or their ability to work safely in the workplace.

12. Recruitment and initial assessment are satisfactorily carried out by employers and includes a series of literacy, numeracy and spatial awareness tests. LITS provides literacy, numeracy and language support directly or through partnership agencies where individual needs are identified.

### Leadership and management

13. **LITS's training advisers are particularly effective.** They have considerable experience in the industry, often at very senior levels with leading technology companies. They work successfully as self-employed managers and contract with LITS for four months at a time.

They each expertly manage a caseload of learners and employers in a particular geographical area. They develop very good relationships with learners and employers.

**14. Modern apprenticeship programmes are well managed by training advisers and employers.** All learners are employed and recruited directly by their employers. They receive an appropriate initial assessment and are interviewed by their employers, many of whom then assign a mentor to guide them through their programme.

**15. Learners benefit from the good partnership between LITS and their employers.** Most of the employers working with LITS have been doing so for several years, and all have built close and effective links with the company.

**16. Learners at LITS are highly valued and respected members of the workforces in which they are employed.** Training advisers and employers develop good relationships with learners. Learners are carefully managed in the workplace and are given interesting and progressively more difficult tasks to build confidence in their ability.

17. The strategy for providing additional support in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. LITS carries out an initial assessment of learners' skills when they start the training programme. This assessment is carried out in addition to any assessment carried out by employers. Where the results of the assessment show that a learner has literacy or numeracy support needs, this support is arranged effectively through the colleges where learners receive training for the technical certificate.

**18. LITS makes insufficient use of management information to plan improvements,** particularly in relation to retention and achievement rates, and for monitoring participation rates by particular sectors of the population. The company's computer-based management information system is still being developed and does not yet contain sufficient data to enable LITS to analyse learner performance or to identify trends.

19. Health and safety, risk assessments and accident reporting systems are satisfactory. Training advisers use a comprehensive checklist to ensure new employees meet requirements in these areas. New employees are required to give copies of their company policies to LITS.

20. Employers are effectively involved with learners' training. Learners feel well supported in their training, particularly in the workplace. Learners feel the training opportunities available to them are rewarding and give them the skills to develop their careers effectively.

21. Internal verification is satisfactory. There are adequate arrangements for sampling at regular intervals. Satisfactory records are retained by LITS for all learners. All verifiers hold appropriate qualifications. However, some learners do not understand the role of the internal verifier.

**22. LITS insufficiently reinforces learners' understanding of equality of opportunity during their modern apprenticeship programme.** LITS provides insufficient training and



information during the training programme. Learners cannot relate the importance of the value and respect they receive to the concept of equality of opportunity. They have little understanding of current equal opportunities legislation.

23. LITS evaluates employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures. They advise employers on policy and employers must use LITS's policies and procedures if they do not have their own. Records of employers' policies are retained at LITS. However, LITS does not monitor the practice of employers or identify those employers who have excellent policies and share this information with other employers. The agreements between LITS and employers place insufficient emphasis on equality of opportunity.

24. **Quality assurance is inadequate.** The quality assurance system is based on compliance testing, which concentrates on whether key actions have been taken or key documents completed, rather than the usefulness of the action or the contents of the documents. Reports that have been produced are insufficiently detailed or evaluative to help directors in planning improvements. There is an improvement in retention and achievement rates and a good service is provided to learners, but central management have inadequate information to assure the level of performance, to raise standards or to identify weaknesses.

25. **The self-assessment report prepared in September 2003 did not draw sufficiently on the views of learners, employers or training advisers.** Inspectors identified some of the strengths in the company's self-assessment report. Action plans following self-assessment do not have sufficiently specific targets and the criteria for determining success in overcoming weaknesses are not easily measurable. There is too little updating on the progress made towards targets in the action plan and there is insufficient urgency in meeting these targets.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- skilful management of training by regional training advisers
- good partnership working with employers
- well-managed modern apprenticeship programmes
- highly valued and respected learners

### Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity to learners
- insufficient monitoring of employers' approaches to equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance

## **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of a wide range of additional qualifications
- very good development of skills
- particularly good involvement by employers
- very good support for learners by training advisers

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate workplace assessment by direct observation

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT L.I.T.S. LIMITED:**

- the regular visits by training advisers who know the industry
- the good support they receive
- the good target-setting by training advisers
- 'the tools bought for me by the company'
- the time given to complete my qualification
- the jobs we are given to do
- 'I feel like a member of the team'

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK L.I.T.S. LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- the explanation provided about the framework requirements
- the relevance of the course in some colleges
- the outdated equipment at one college

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR L.I.T.S. LIMITED:**

- more observed workplace assessment
- continued improvement of management information
- more proactive approach to equality of opportunity
- implement an effective quality assurance system

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

#### Strengths

- skilful management of training by regional training advisers
- good partnership working with employers
- well-managed modern apprenticeship programmes
- highly valued and respected learners

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity to learners
- insufficient monitoring of employers' approaches to equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance

26. LITS's training advisers are particularly effective. They have considerable experience in the industry, often at very senior levels with leading technology companies. They work successfully as self-employed managers and contract with LITS for four months at a time. They each skilfully manage a caseload of learners and employers in a particular geographical area. They develop very good relationships with learners and employers. They visit the learners at least every eight weeks, reviewing their progress and monitoring portfolios of evidence diligently. Training advisers also take part in the monthly progress reviews at colleges where learners work towards technical certificates.

27. Learners benefit from the good partnership between LITS and their employers. Most of the employers working with LITS have been doing so for several years, and all have built close and effective links with the company. LITS provides short training courses and assessment support for employers commercially, in addition to their LSC-funded contracts. In some cases, employers offer these additional courses to learners. When a new employer wishes to take on learners, LITS provides support in the form of detailed explanations of what the modern apprenticeship involves and guidance on choosing appropriate technical certificate providers.

28. Modern apprenticeship programmes are well managed by training advisers and employers. All learners are employed and recruited directly by their employers. They receive an appropriate initial assessment and are interviewed by their employers, many of whom then assign a mentor to guide them through their programme. During the first year, when learners attend local colleges for training for the technical certificate, employers arrange relevant additional short courses or other valuable training opportunities in the holiday periods. Employers and training advisers often attend monthly progress reviews at the college to monitor learners' progress and to ensure the courses are meeting learners' needs. For the remainder of the training programme,

employers and training advisers work closely together to plan opportunities for learners to extend their skills and gather evidence for the NVQ portfolio. Employers regularly review the performance of their learners. Learners take the reports from these reviews to the progress reviews with their training adviser. In some companies, employers purposefully move learners to different sections of the company to broaden their experience. Employers give their learners progressively more complex tasks and greater levels of responsibility during the modern apprenticeship programme. Learners demonstrate increasing competence. This greatly helps to increase their self-confidence and their ability to become self-sufficient engineers.

29. The strategy for providing additional support in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. LITS carries out an initial assessment of learners' skills when they start the training programme. This assessment is carried out in addition to any assessment carried out by employers. Where the results of the initial assessment show that a learner has literacy or numeracy support needs, this support is arranged effectively through the colleges where learners receive training for the technical certificate.

30. Health and safety, risk assessments and accident reporting systems are satisfactory. Training advisers use a comprehensive checklist to ensure new employers meet requirements in these areas. New employers are required to give copies of their company policies to LITS. Health and safety is an integral element in all the job descriptions and method statements which learners produce during on-the-job training. Training advisers carry out too few observations of learners in the workplace. They do not directly observe that learners are adopting safe working practices.

31. Business planning is satisfactory. The directors have a good understanding of the current trends in the industry they are supporting, and clear criteria for determining whether or not to take on new areas of business. The current managing director is increasingly delegating operational management to the new training director. This process is being supported through an intensive shadowing programme. One of the existing training advisers is taking over as the lead internal verifier, and is shadowing the current postholder. New training advisers also shadow experienced colleagues during their initial contract. However, there is no formal business plan and much of the discussion on strategic planning is not recorded.

32. Training advisers are not formally appraised, but at the end of each contract, they discuss the performance of their caseload of learners with the managing director, agree financial targets for the next period and discuss any continued professional development. This meeting provides a good opportunity to discuss any action needed to support learners who might be making slower progress than expected. However, these meetings are inadequately recorded. Training advisers meet twice a year to discuss their learners and matters of common interest. These meetings provide a useful forum for exchanging ideas. However, outcomes of these discussions are not recorded in detail and are not sufficient to update members who cannot attend the meeting. Action plans resulting from these meetings are not specific or timebound and do not make clear the criteria for determining success.

33. LITS makes insufficient use of management information to plan improvements, particularly in relation to retention and achievement rates, and for monitoring participation rates by particular sectors of the population. To date, the company has not formally analysed learners' performance or identified trends. A new computer-based management information system is still being developed and does not yet contain sufficient data. In particular, it does not currently record the progress learners are making through their programme, or whether they are on target to complete on time. The system is capable of generating useful reports, some of which have been prepared for the six-monthly training advisers' meetings. However, it is too early to judge whether these reports have made an impact on business planning.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

34. Learners at LITS are highly valued and respected members of the workforces in which they are employed. Training advisers and employers develop good relationships with learners. Learners are carefully managed in the workplace and are given interesting and progressively more difficult tasks to build confidence in their ability. Employers trust learners with complex tasks which require problem-solving skills. For example, one learner was given the responsibility of freeing a trapped person from a lift. He received praise from both the customer and the employer.

35. Employers are effectively involved with learners' training. Learners feel well supported in their training, particularly in the workplace. The training opportunities available to learners are rewarding and give them the skills to develop their careers effectively. Employers provide good equipment to enable learners to do the job and give them the space and time necessary to complete tasks for the modern apprenticeship framework. Training advisers and employers provide all learners with useful training opportunities.

36. Training advisers and full-time staff have adequate access to training opportunities including training in equality of opportunity. For example, they are provided with paid training sessions from outside providers, financial support and time off their work to complete training courses. LITS's management sufficiently keeps abreast of new developments in equality of opportunity such as those related to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. The management team communicates these developments adequately to training advisers. LITS has financed training for staff to provide specialist additional support to learners. However there is inadequate testing of staff understanding of equality of opportunity.

37. LITS takes effective action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of learners in their care. For example, one learner who was treated badly by an employer was supported fully. The incident was investigated, the employer was withdrawn and alternative employment was found for the learner. Learners trust LITS's staff and know who to go to if there is a problem. Although there are appeals procedures relating to assessment and grievance policies there is no formal complaints procedure. Learners have to rely on the trust they have in training advisers, individual initiative, or other supportive parties to report matters to LITS's management.

38. LITS are aware that certain groups are under-represented in engineering. For example, historically participation by women in engineering training has been poor and is currently at 3 per cent. LITS is not responsible for recruitment, but employers promote engineering in an inclusive manner at conferences, and in schools and trade magazines. Women learners are encouraged and supported and a female training adviser has been employed. LITS works closely with partners in colleges. The management team is aware of the under-representation of minority ethnic groups in engineering training nationally and promotes LITS's programmes.

39. LITS insufficiently reinforces learners' understanding of equality of opportunity during the training programme. The company has satisfactory policies such as disability statements and equal opportunities. LITS provides basic information about equality of opportunity at learners' induction. The company has introduced employment rights and responsibilities policies and related tasks for learners to complete at the start of the training programme. Learners know who to approach if they feel they are being bullied or harassed in the workplace. However, learners have a very narrow understanding of equality of opportunity. LITS provides insufficient training and information on wider equality issues during the training programme. Learners cannot relate the importance of the value and respect they receive to the concept of equality of opportunity. They have little understanding of current legislation. The larger employers do occasionally provide equal of opportunities training but this is not available to all learners and these training programmes are uninspiring. LITS is currently planning to develop an interactive package to engage all learners. However, plans do not record the progress being made in sufficient detail and the criteria that will be used to measure success.

40. LITS evaluates employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures. They advise employers on policy and employers must use LITS's policies and procedures if they do not have their own. Records of employers' policies are retained by LITS. However, LITS does not monitor the practice of employers or identify those employers who may have excellent policies and share this information with other employers. The agreements between LITS and employers place insufficient emphasis on equality of opportunity. There is insufficient management information to use as a basis for the review of equality of opportunity.

## **Quality assurance**

## **Contributory grade 4**

41. Internal verification is satisfactory. There are adequate arrangements for sampling at regular intervals. Satisfactory records are retained by LITS for all learners. All verifiers hold appropriate qualifications. However, some learners do not understand the role of the internal verifier.

42. Quality assurance is inadequate. LITS has a quality assurance policy which contains a number of detailed procedures. The system is based on compliance testing, which concentrates on whether key actions have been taken or key documents completed, rather than the usefulness of the action or the contents of the documents. Monitoring of training advisers is inadequate. The training advisers play a key role in managing learners



and employers in their region. Training advisers have a considerable degree of autonomy. LITS has commissioned external audit reports to monitor the work of their training advisers. The reports produced are insufficiently detailed and evaluative to help directors in planning improvements. They do not reflect any discussion with training advisers about possible problems or areas of concern, such as the late completion of programmes or different standards in assessment. There is insufficient qualitative analysis of the learners' experiences on their programmes. LITS has recently introduced surveys to gather feedback from learners and employers, but so far these have been discussed at only one of the training advisers' meeting. Detailed discussions in progress reviews are not recorded well and the forms used to record progress reviews are inadequate. There is an improvement in retention and achievement rates and a good service is provided to learners, but central management have inadequate information to assure the level of performance, to raise standards or to identify weaknesses.

43. The self-assessment report prepared in September 2003 did not draw sufficiently on the views of learners, employers or training advisers. Inspectors identified some of the strengths in the company's self-assessment report. The self-assessment report also identified weaknesses in management information, quality assurance and progress reviews which inspectors also identified. The self-assessment report was updated in November 2003 but still failed to provide a clear insight into the company's performance when some strengths and weaknesses were re-worded or removed. Action plans following self-assessment do not have sufficiently specific targets and the criteria for determining success in overcoming weaknesses are not easily measurable. There is too little updating on the progress towards targets in the action plan and there is insufficient urgency in meeting these targets.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

| Engineering, technology & manufacturing                                   |                    | 2                  |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:   | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Other contributory areas</b><br>- Work-based learning for young people | 226                | 2                  |

#### **Other contributory areas**

##### *Strengths*

- good achievement of a wide range of additional qualifications
- very good development of skills
- particularly good involvement by employers
- very good support for learners by training advisers

##### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate workplace assessment by direct observation

### Achievement and standards

44. Learners successfully achieve a wide range of additional qualifications. These include higher national certificates in mechanical and electrical engineering, welding and abrasive wheels, construction site safety certificates, instrumentation and a large number of manufacturers' courses. Some learners continue to higher education and a small number are on part-time degree courses. All of these qualifications are additional to the requirements of the advanced modern apprenticeship framework.

45. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory and improving. Learners are increasingly making good progress and staying on the programme longer. Learners are acquiring a good standard of background knowledge and practical skills, which they are able to use in their work roles. Most learners are making good progress towards their qualification. A small number are behind schedule but are receiving more frequent visits from training advisers to bring them back on target.

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

| LSC funded work-based learning |         |   |         |   |         |   |         |    |         |    |           |    |         |    |     |   |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|---------|---|---------|---|---------|----|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|-----|---|
| Advanced apprenticeships       |         |   |         |   |         |   |         |    |         |    |           |    |         |    |     |   |
|                                | 2004-05 |   | 2003-04 |   | 2002-03 |   | 2001-02 |    | 2000-01 |    | 1999-2000 |    | 1998-99 |    |     |   |
|                                | No.     | % | No.     | % | No.     | % | No.     | %  | No.     | %  | No.       | %  | No.     | %  | No. | % |
| Number of starts               | 37      |   | 63      |   | 66      |   | 45      |    | 96      |    | 73        |    | 97      |    |     |   |
| Retained*                      | 0       |   | 0       |   | 6       |   | 6       | 13 | 41      | 43 | 40        | 55 | 50      | 52 |     |   |
| Successfully completed         | 0       |   | 0       |   | 1       |   | 5       | 11 | 28      | 29 | 27        | 37 | 44      | 45 |     |   |
| Still in learning              | 37      |   | 55      |   | 52      |   | 34      | 76 | 33      | 34 | 13        | 18 | 2       | 2  |     |   |

\*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

46. There is very good skills development in the workplace. Learners carry out a wide range of tasks under the direction of skilled and qualified engineers. Learners are regarded as valuable members of the team. Some learners are working at a higher level than might be expected for the time they have been on the programme. For example, one learner managed the installation of new equipment and monitored the work of a number of subcontracted engineers. In another workplace, learners are encouraged to investigate and put forward improvements to the existing instrumentation and to research the cost benefits to the company. All tasks are carried out under the close supervision of a qualified engineer to ensure safety criteria are met. Training activities provided by employers are well planned and well structured. They develop good personal skills that give them confidence to carry out presentations and to communicate better with management. Learners on the programme are very motivated.

47. Employers and learners are particularly well involved in the training. Employers allocate learners to well-qualified and experienced engineers, all of whom provide expert training and guidance. Employers provide a full range of tools and personal protective equipment to ensure that learners can work in a safe and effective manner. Employers ensure that learners are allocated a suitable range of tasks to enable them to gain evidence to meet their NVQ requirements, and learners are transferred to different departments to gain a variety of skills such as installation, service and maintenance. In many cases, senior managers work closely with learners to ensure that they progress effectively. Some employers have a full-time training co-ordinator for learners. Where the technical certificate and NVQ at level 2 is delivered at a subcontractor college most employers maintain close links with the college and meet with college staff regularly.

48. Training advisers skilfully support a regional group of learners who they keep in touch with and meet regularly. Learners are given the e-mail address and mobile telephone number of their training adviser and are encouraged to contact them if they have any vocational or pastoral concerns. Advance planning of progress reviews is good

and all learners are informed in good time of the date of their next progress review. Where targets have been set they are reviewed at the next visit. The review process for most learners also involves regular employer monitoring reports and detailed interviews with company managers. During training many meetings and discussions take place between employers, skilled engineers, learners and LITS's staff covering pastoral and vocational issues. LITS takes effective action if any learners encounter difficulties during their programme. Expert training advisers and employers work well with learners to motivate them and help them focus on the programme.

49. Resources for learning are satisfactory. A number of companies have technical centres equipped with computers, internet access, technical publications and trade publications which learners are encouraged to use. Where an employer does not have such facilities learners visit LITS's premises for portfolio and key skills work. Most learners have access to and are encouraged to use digital cameras to record evidence for their qualifications. Resources in most colleges are satisfactory but a few colleges do not have appropriate technical equipment. The information given to all learners at induction is provided through an electronic presentation. It includes a clear explanation of all aspects of their training programme.

50. Individual learning plans contain satisfactory information. Central copies of the individual learning plans are adequately updated with the dates of progress reviews and other personal information. Most learners also have a detailed learning plan devised with, and monitored by, their employer. However, learners' copies of individual learning plans are not routinely updated and do not contain details regarding literacy, numeracy and language test results. There is insufficient information to reflect the diverse experience, qualifications or job responsibilities of learners.

51. There is inadequate observed assessment in the workplace. Recruitment and initial assessment is satisfactorily carried out by employers and includes a series of literacy, numeracy and spatial awareness tests. LITS provides literacy, numeracy and language support directly or through partnership agencies where individual needs are identified. Learners' skills are demonstrated in well-structured portfolios, which contain a wide range of good evidence. Learners are assessed regularly during their programmes. Key skills successfully form an integral part of the training programme and are assessed early in the programme. Most learners are on target to complete the framework as planned. Specific targets are set for the completion of tasks at each progress review and these are assessed at the next visit. However, assessment of NVQs is largely by review of portfolio evidence. There is insufficient direct observation of learners carrying out tasks in the workplace. There is inadequate observation of learners' practical skills and their ability to work safely in the workplace.

## **Leadership and management**

52. Leadership and management of the programme at regional level are good. Training advisers have very significant experience in the industry at a senior level and some have contributed to the development of the NVQ or to national quality standards. Some training advisers who work part time have a direct involvement in the industry which

keeps them updated with the latest trends and industry standards. There are regular team meetings with formal minutes and action plans. Most learners have a basic understanding of equality of opportunity. Learners receive adequate information at induction about harassment, complaints and appeals processes. Many learners work in companies who have detailed policies and processes for equality and diversity. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the awarding body. However there is insufficient reinforcement or recorded discussion of equality of opportunity or health and safety at progress reviews. There is insufficient information recorded and passed onto LITS's management team about the good-quality progress reviews that take place. The forms for recording reviews are inadequate.