

INSPECTION REPORT

Southern Training

27 November 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

INSPECTION REPORT

Southern Training

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	2
What learners like about Southern Training	7
What learners think Southern Training could improve	7
Key challenges for Southern Training	8

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	10
Quality assurance	12
Health, social care & public services	14

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Southern Training (ST) is the training arm of Priority Management Limited, which is a charity and a company limited by guarantee that was established in 1977 to provide the youth opportunities scheme for disadvantaged local young people. It is based in Toxteth, near Liverpool city centre, and many of its learners come from communities around Liverpool that are the most deprived in Merseyside.

2. The senior management team consists of the manager and the training co-ordinator. The manager is responsible to the board of four trustees for the strategic direction of the company. The manager and training co-ordinator are responsible for the implementation of the board's policies and the effective delivery of the curriculum. The company has eight full-time and eight part-time staff. This includes three staff involved in entry to employment, which is subcontracted from a local college and is not within the scope of this inspection. There are three full-time staff and four part-time assessors involved in the health and social care training programmes. In addition, there are two part-time tutors for literacy, numeracy, language and key skills support. The full-time development officer has responsibility for making bids for funding.

3. ST contracts with Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council to provide national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3, and foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in early years childhood education and care. In addition, it is successful in gaining additional funding through European Social Fund initiatives. The Liverpool area, from where ST recruits its learners, has a minority ethnic representation of 5.7 per cent, according to the 2001 census, compared with around 3 per cent in Merseyside and 9 per cent for England. The proportion of school leavers in Liverpool achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above is low. In 2002, it was 39.2 per cent, compared with 51.6 per cent for England.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

4. There are 42 learners on care and childcare training programmes, of whom 12 are on advanced modern apprenticeships, 10 are on foundation modern apprenticeships, and 20 are working towards an NVQ. There are 19 learners working towards an NVQ at level 2 and 11 learners working towards an NVQ at level 3 in early years care and education. There are eight learners working towards an NVQ at level 2 and three working towards an NVQ at level 3 in care. Learners work in residential homes, nursing homes, and private and community nurseries. Off-the-job training is provided at ST's training centre. Learners who cannot attend a training session receive individual support from ST's staff to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. ST's assessors carry out assessments of learners' practice in the workplace.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	22
Number of staff interviews	25
Number of employer interviews	5
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	6
Number of visits	6

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of ST's health and social care provision is satisfactory. More specifically, its arrangements for leadership and management, and equal opportunities are satisfactory. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

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

Health, social care & public services	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Achievement rates are poor for learners on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Twenty-three per cent of the learners at ST have additional learning and/or social needs. ST has identified a strategy for improvement in achievement and retention rates in their strategic plan and this is being implemented. From no achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks in 1999 and previous years, 25 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 67 per cent of foundation modern apprentices achieved their full framework in 2001-02, with the potential in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for a further 25 per cent from learners still in training. This is a significant improvement on previous achievement rates.

7. The rate of achievement is showing improvement, with seven of the current modern apprentices making good progress towards completing their award in the time agreed in their learning plans. Achievement of NVQs is satisfactory overall, with an average of 51 per cent achievement since 1999-2000. Retention rates are satisfactory overall.

8. **Learners gain good practical skills in their work placements.** Employers' staff provide individual coaching in the workplace. Learners are confident and competent in their work, and develop a good level of occupational and personal skills. Some learners have progressed through training programmes at ST, from the Life Skills programme, to NVQs at level 2, the advanced modern apprenticeship programme and into employment.

Quality of education and training

9. **ST provides good support for learners in every aspect of their work.** Staff sensitively identify the needs of learners and establish appropriate support, particularly for those identified as in danger of leaving. Work placements are matched carefully to learners' needs and aspirations. ST has recently introduced thorough literacy, numeracy and language support and additional support is given by the assessor/mentor which focuses on completion of written work for the NVQ. The provision for literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory and includes a literacy and numeracy policy. A mentor scheme has been introduced to support learners in their written work and in the workplace. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative, but learners appreciate the additional support available to them.

10. Teaching observed during inspection was satisfactory. All teaching staff have, or are working towards, learning and development qualifications. However, **some of the assignment briefs and other handouts are outdated and poorly copied.** Overall attendance at the off-the-job training sessions is satisfactory.

11. Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. They take place in the workplace every six to eight weeks and employers participate fully in the process. However, the focus of these reviews is on pastoral issues and the learners' progress towards NVQs or key skills is not included. There is satisfactory monitoring of learners' progress in the training centre but this is not systematically available to learners or employers. Induction is satisfactory and most learners have a good recall of the induction programme. In addition, they understand their rights and responsibilities, their training programme, safety at work, and equality of opportunity.

12. **There is insufficient observation and assessment in the workplace to match the learners' progress.** Many learners experience delay in their achievement when they have completed their written work for a number of units, before assessors plan for observation in the workplace. Assessors are over-reliant on learners completing written work to provide evidence of their knowledge and performance. Some assessors' practice is poor, with a rigid approach to assessment.

Leadership and management

13. **ST has good external communications, which it uses effectively to support learners and to fulfil its stated mission of social inclusion.** The good communications with employers include a detailed employer/assessors' handbook, which provides a clear guide to NVQ provision and delivery, including the role of the assessor, the appeals procedure and ST's progress review policy and documents. Employers' staff attend courses at ST, and ST funds assessors' training for three work-based assessors. Communications with local networks and agencies are used effectively for a range of purposes, including good information flow from referral agencies.

14. ST manages its resources efficiently, including the effective use of external funding to improve resources. There has been a clear and well-managed strategy to refurbish the premises over a five-year period, and these are now improved to a good standard. **Staff have good access to resources for learning** and are asked regularly by managers about their resource needs.

15. ST's strategic business plan is satisfactory and it supports the company's mission and focuses satisfactorily on the learners' experience. Some satisfactory actions are identified in the plan but these have not been converted into an annual operating plan. In addition, targets are not sufficiently challenging and nor are the actions for achieving them detailed sufficiently.

16. Staff development is satisfactory. Staff have appropriate qualifications and have been working towards learning and development awards. ST's staff have carried out a satisfactory range of relevant training and development, including key skills assessors' awards, child protection training, first aid, challenging behaviour and drug awareness.

17. **There is insufficient formal recording of decision-making and action-planning at meetings.** Other than at board level, there is no formal meetings structure with agendas, and minuted outcomes of meetings are not disseminated to staff. Key issues such as literacy, numeracy and language skills support and strategy, reviews of learners' retention and achievement rates, and equality of opportunity, are not discussed systematically.

18. Target-setting is insufficient. **Staff are not set targets for learners' retention and achievement rates.** Targets for achievement in the business plan are not sufficiently detailed as to how they will be achieved, nor are they sufficiently challenging. Some staff are not aware of learners' achievement rates or of the targets set for improvement.

19. **ST provides good support for all learners** through constant reinforcement of equal opportunities values, including respect, inclusion and valuing diversity. There is a positive culture of openness and a willingness to meet learners' diverse needs. ST makes good use of its external links to promote social inclusion for learners. It has established a wide range of external links and partnerships, which it uses effectively to support the

development of learners and to improve understanding of the learners' needs.

20. ST has insufficient formal strategies for the promotion of equality of opportunity. It does not have a written strategy for the development of equal opportunities and it is not incorporated within the company's strategic plan. There is satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunities with employers. Promotion of equality of opportunity in marketing material is limited, although advertisements state that male applicants are particularly welcome as trainee care assistants. Staff have received no training to update their practice and they are not provided with opportunities to discuss and share ideas. However, equal opportunities is promoted through a range of links with local community groups, in particular with the Somali community who feel well supported and welcomed at ST. ST's equal opportunity policy is brief and does not include recent legislation or definitions of equality of opportunity terms, including discrimination.

21. ST makes good use of questionnaire feedback to improve the learners' experience. Improvements include the purchase of a new photocopier, alterations to the building to improve wheelchair access and additional textbooks. ST collects feedback from learners and employers twice each year and analyses it to create brief action plans. These meetings are not recorded in detail but do include analysis of the data and a brief action plan. However, the action plans do not have specific objectives and targets are not set to improve levels of learners' and employers' satisfaction, which is good at 91 per cent and 80 per cent respectively.

22. The self-assessment process and resulting report and action plan are satisfactory. The process adequately involves all staff in informal discussions on the company's strengths and weaknesses. Internal verification is satisfactory, with comprehensive feedback to assessors and actions identified are monitored and completed. **There is no internal verification sampling plan,** but a record of internal verification is kept.

23. Other quality assurance arrangements to monitor and improve ST's training programmes are inadequate. The brief quality assurance procedures do not provide specific details on how the quality of ST's key processes are to be assured. There is no effective, systematic way of measuring the quality of training and no formal system to ensure that learners' progress reviews are carried out consistently and effectively. ST does not have adequate procedures for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good external communications
- efficient management of resources
- good reinforcement of equal opportunities values to meet learners' diverse needs
- good use of external links to promote social inclusion

SOUTHERN TRAINING

- good use of learners' and employers' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal recording of decision-making and action-planning
- insufficient target-setting
- insufficient formal strategy for the development of equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good training in the workplace
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- insufficient observation and assessment in the workplace

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SOUTHERN TRAINING:

- the practical work with children
- the area of work - 'it's always exciting'
- the very friendly atmosphere at the training centre
- the way that learning relates to work
- the fact that the level of support matches individual needs
- the staff are available when needed

WHAT LEARNERS THINK SOUTHERN TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- learners did not identify any significant areas for improvement

KEY CHALLENGES FOR SOUTHERN TRAINING:

- formalise and strengthen the quality assurance arrangements
- review and develop targets and strategies to improve the learners' achievement
- develop a formal strategy for the promotion of equal opportunities
- establish a formal structure for meetings

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good external communications
- efficient management of resources
- good reinforcement of equal opportunities values to meet learners' diverse needs
- good use of external links to promote social inclusion
- good use of learners' and employers' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal recording of decision-making and action-planning
- insufficient target-setting
- insufficient formal strategy for the development of equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

24. ST has good external communications, which it uses effectively to support learners and to fulfil its stated mission of social inclusion. It has established a wide range of communication links with employers, some of whom have collaborated with ST over a number of years. Examples of good communication with employers include a detailed employer/assessors' handbook, which provides a clear guide to NVQ provision and delivery, including the role of the assessor, the appeals procedure, and ST's review policy and documents. In addition, ST's staff, including tutor/assessors, the mentor and work-placement officer make regular visits to employers, who value ST's quick response to issues raised in relation to learners. In the past seven years, approximately 80 of the linked employers' staff have attended courses at ST. In addition, ST is funding assessors' training for three work-based assessors. ST uses its good external communications effectively to benefit the learners. For example, it uses good communications with local networks and agencies effectively for a range of purposes, including good information flow from referral agencies, such as a local pupil referral unit, the Youth Offending Team, and local special schools. ST's senior manager is the chair of a local providers' forum and has identified projects which have been introduced to the benefit of learners. This includes a recent strategy for identifying learners at risk of leaving and for introducing appropriate support.

25. ST manages its resources efficiently. This includes effective use of external funding to improve resources. There has been a clear and well-managed strategy to refurbish the premises over a five-year period. ST employs a development officer to access external funding and has established an information database to support this process. ST has successfully achieved significant funding to refurbish and part-purchase its premises. Improvements include wheelchair access, new decorations and carpeting, books and

SOUTHERN TRAINING

other learning resources, and a photocopier. The premises now provide a good environment for learning and have been well planned to include a small room for individual work, a kitchen, a learners' designated recreation area and a designated smoking area, plus teaching and assessment rooms. Staff have good access to resources for learning and ST's managers ask them regularly about resource needs.

26. ST has a satisfactory strategic business plan, which supports the company's mission and focuses satisfactorily on the learners' experience. Some satisfactory actions are identified in the plan, although these have not been converted into an annual operating plan. While there is a satisfactory focus on achievement, with some targets and strategies identified, the targets are not sufficiently challenging and the actions for achieving them are not sufficiently detailed. Staff have received a copy of the plan, although there has been no formal communication of its contents or how they could support its implementation.

27. Staff development is satisfactory. There is a staff development policy that is linked to relevant procedures, including staff appraisal. Some staff development is identified through the staff appraisal procedure and individual learning plan. Staff have appropriate qualifications and have been working towards learning and development awards. ST's staff have carried out a satisfactory range of relevant training and development, including key skills assessors' awards, child protection training, first aid, and information on challenging behaviour and drug awareness. To maintain their sign language skills, some of the staff work voluntarily with people with hearing impairments. The training co-ordinator is learning Somali to support communication with the local community. ST's staff carry out occupational updating in their vocational area as part of their staff development policy.

28. There is insufficient formal recording of decision-making and action-planning at meetings. Other than at board level, there is no formal meetings structure with agendas. When meetings take place, the minutes and actions are recorded in a manager's notebook, but they are not disseminated to staff to ensure a common understanding of, and approach to, resolving issues. Key issues such as literacy, numeracy and language skills support and strategy, reviews of retention and achievement rates, and equality of opportunities are not discussed systematically.

29. Target-setting is insufficient. While ST sets targets relating to individual training and development of personal skills in staff appraisal, these are not sufficiently challenging, and nor do they relate to learners' retention and achievement rates. Some targets in the business plan are not sufficiently detailed and nor are they sufficiently challenging. For example, one target is to increase the number of modern apprenticeship frameworks achieved from 21 per cent to 37 per cent over a three-year period. Some staff are not aware of achievement rates or the targets set for improvement.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

30. ST provides good support for all of its learners through constant reinforcement of equal opportunities values, including respect, inclusion and valuing diversity. There is a

positive culture of openness and a willingness to meet learners' diverse needs. For example, a prayer room has been provided for Muslim learners. Twenty-three per cent of ST's learners have additional learning and/or social needs. Staff demonstrate sensitive and caring attitudes to all learners and develop productive working relationships. Learners value the individual support available. For example, two members of staff have signing skills to help learners with hearing impairments and another member of staff speaks French and a basic level of Somali.

31. ST makes good use of its external links to promote social inclusion for learners. ST has established a wide range of external links and partnerships, which it uses effectively to support the development of learners. For example, links with local adult education providers have resulted in a computer maintenance course for asylum seekers and an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for care course. ST's involvement in the local community effectively widens the participation of learners from under-represented groups, who hear about their provision by word of mouth. ST uses its external links with a variety of community organisations to improve its understanding of learners' needs.

32. ST has an insufficient formal strategy for the promotion of equality of opportunity. There are six men on care training programmes at ST, which represents 13 per cent of learners. The overall participation by learners from minority ethnic groups has increased to 10 per cent. The number of learners with a disability has reduced to six, which represents 13 per cent of learners. There is no written strategy for the development of equal opportunities and it is not incorporated within the company's strategic plan. However, equal opportunities is promoted through a range of links with local community groups, in particular with the Somali community, who feel well supported and welcomed at ST. There is satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity with employers through the use of a specific employers' handbook, which includes information on ST's equal opportunities policy statement. ST only uses those employers who sign to agree to the policy for work placements.

33. The promotion of equality of opportunity in marketing material is limited, although advertisements state that male applicants are particularly welcome as trainee care assistants. There is no specific strategy for increasing the number of male learners. ST has had insufficient formal training on equality of opportunity for staff. Staff have received no training to update their practice or opportunities to discuss and share ideas. However, informal discussions take place and equality of opportunity information is communicated satisfactorily. This includes information on cultural traditions and support needs for learners with dyslexia. Marketing of courses is satisfactory through participation in recruitment events with local groups and committees.

34. ST's equal opportunity policy is brief and does not include recent legislation or definitions of equality of opportunity terms, including discrimination. The manager at ST is responsible for implementation of the policy. It has been updated in the past to include new legislation but does not include recent legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

35. There is good access to ST's premises for wheelchair users. Although there are plans

SOUTHERN TRAINING

to build toilets that are fully wheelchair accessible, learners who use wheelchairs are given assistance with toileting arrangements.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

36. ST makes good use of questionnaire feedback to improve the learners' experience. Improvements include the purchase of a new photocopier, alterations to the building to improve wheelchair access and additional textbooks. ST collects feedback from learners and employers twice each year and analyses it to create brief action plans. For example, learners are asked about the relevance of their course, whether tutors support their learning and how satisfied they are with the equipment, support and learning environment. Learners' satisfaction rates are high, at over 91 per cent. Employers' satisfaction rates are also high, with over 80 per cent of employers reporting satisfactory understanding of NVQs and satisfaction with the support given by ST. Feedback is shared twice each year with staff who are made aware of the actions required. These meetings are not recorded in detail but do include analysis of the data and a brief action plan. However, the action plans do not have specific objectives and nor are targets set to improve the levels of satisfaction.

37. The self-assessment process and resulting report and action plan are satisfactory. The process adequately involves all staff in informal discussions on the company's strengths and weaknesses. The self-assessment report matched some of the strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors identified but failed to identify some significant weaknesses.

38. Internal verification is satisfactory, with comprehensive feedback to assessors and any actions identified are monitored and completed. Internal verification takes place throughout the qualification and is triggered by the completion of three units of work. However, there is some weak assessment practice. There is no sampling plan but a record of internal verification is kept. Assessors and internal verifiers meet after each external verifiers' visit to discuss feedback and actions required. Identified actions are completed promptly.

39. Other quality assurance arrangements to monitor and improve ST's training programmes are inadequate. There are brief quality assurance procedures that were reviewed in April 2003, but these do not provide specific details on how the quality of ST's key processes are to be assured. Some quality assurance procedures are informal. For example, some observation of practice occurs informally but it is not always recorded. Some feedback is given on performance, but this is not recorded. There is no effective, systematic way of measuring the quality of training and no formal system to ensure that learners' progress reviews are carried out consistently and effectively. Although the day-to-day running of training is managed satisfactorily, ST does not have adequate procedures for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning.

40. ST is not making good use of the management information it collects. It has a satisfactory management information system to collect information on its training programmes, which it uses for monitoring contract requirements. However, managers

are not using this information to evaluate the effectiveness of training programmes and establish targets for improvement. They do not analyse achievement and retention rate data in sufficient detail to identify successful or underachieving aspects of their training programmes. Quality assurance data are not discussed regularly in meetings, although quarterly reports are produced to monitor contract requirements, and staff are not fully aware of current achievement rates.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	42	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good training in the workplace
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- insufficient observation and assessment in the workplace

Achievement and standards

41. Learners acquire good practical skills in work placements. They benefit from the individual coaching provided in the workplace by employers' staff, are competent and confident in their work, and they make good progress in developing occupational and personal skills. ST has good professional working relationships with a range of care settings, which it uses to ensure that employers understand training requirements for individual learners. These good external communications ensure that employers understand the learners' needs. Some learners have progressed through training programmes at ST, from the Life Skills programme to NVQs at level 2, through advanced modern apprenticeships and into employment.

42. There have been significant improvements in the retention rates for advanced and foundation modern apprentices. These rates are now satisfactory and reflect the success of ST's strategies for supporting learners at risk of leaving. Fifty-seven per cent of advanced modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 remain in training, compared with 25 per cent of those who started in the previous year. Seventy per cent of foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 remain in training and all learners have been retained in the current year. Retention of the learners on NVQ programmes remains satisfactory.

43. Achievement rates of full modern apprenticeship frameworks are poor. No learners who started in 1999 or 2000 achieved their full advanced modern apprenticeship framework. There has been an improvement in 2001-02, with 25 per cent of learners achieving their advanced modern apprenticeship framework and four learners still in learning. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprenticeship learners has improved from 6 per cent in 2000-01, to 67 per cent in 2001-02. As outlined in its three-

year strategic plan, ST has introduced clear initiatives to improve the learners' achievement rates. It has recruited and trained new peripatetic assessors, one of whom is waiting for certification and two of whom are working towards their assessors' qualifications. In addition, ST has appointed a key skills and literacy, numeracy and language skills tutor, and reviewed and revised its initial assessment process to ensure that learners are placed on the appropriate level of training programme. The rate of achievement is improving slowly. Seven modern apprentices are making good progress towards completing their award in the time agreed in their individual learning plans. Achievement rates for NVQs were satisfactory in 1999-2000 and 2000-01, at 50 per cent and 69 per cent respectively. This has decreased to 33 per cent for 2001-02, although with four learners still in training it has the potential to reach 42 per cent.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	14		16		17		5									
Retained*	0		0	0	6	35	1	20								
Successfully completed	0		4	25	0	0	0	0								
Still in learning	8		4	25	0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3		10		3		16		9							
Retained*	0		0	0	2	67	6	38	0	0						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	67	1	6	0	0						
Still in learning	3		7	70	0	0	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		23		30		16		24							
Retained*	0		2	9	17	57	11	69	13	54						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	10	33	11	69	12	50						
Still in learning	4		13	57	3	10	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Quality of education and training

44. ST provides good support for learners in every aspect of their work, as identified in the company's most recent self-assessment report. This relates to its culture of inclusion, which is handled sensitively. Staff are careful to identify learners' needs and establish appropriate support. A recently introduced project identifies learners at risk of leaving and staff establish a support package to meet these individual needs. Work placements are matched carefully to learners' needs and aspirations. Initial assessment is satisfactory to identify the appropriate level of training programme for each learner. In addition, it leads to recent but thorough literacy, numeracy and language support. Additional support is given by the assessor/mentor, which has a clear focus on completion of written work for the NVQ. A mentor scheme has been introduced to support learners in their written work and in the workplace. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative, but learners appreciate the additional support available to them.

45. Teaching observed during inspection was satisfactory. All teaching staff have, or are working towards, learning and development qualifications. Some of the assignment briefs and other handouts are outdated and poorly copied. Overall, the attendance at off-the-job training is satisfactory. However, some employed learners experience greater difficulty attending. Attendance varies between 50 per cent and 80 per cent. However, ST ensures that learners who miss off-the-job training receive additional support and the learning resources so that they are not disadvantaged.

46. Satisfactory reviews of learners' progress take place in the workplace every six to eight weeks. All employers participate fully in these reviews. However, the focus of these reviews is on pastoral issues and do not include the learners' progress towards NVQs or key skills. Some targets are not sufficiently challenging. ST monitors learners' progress satisfactorily in the training centre but this is not systematically available to learners or employers.

47. Induction is satisfactory and most learners have a good recall of the induction programme. In addition, they understand their rights and responsibilities, their training programme, safety at work, and equality of opportunities. Senior members of staff induct

learners into their workplace and supervise their practice until competence is confirmed. Some employers provide additional learning opportunities, some of which are certificated. Recent additional funding has been used to provide textbooks for learners use in the training centre.

48. The provision for literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. ST has appointed a key skills and literacy, numeracy and language skills tutor and has developed a basic skills policy. ST uses a computerised programme satisfactorily to assess the level of learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs and key skills level. Three foundation modern apprentices recently achieved their key skills award and have progressed to the advanced modern apprenticeship programme. Many modern apprentices are awaiting the results of recent key skills tests. Many learners, approximately 23 per cent, have additional learning and/or social needs. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Additional individual support is given by health and social care tutors and focuses on understanding and completing work. In addition, thorough individual support is provided for learners by the recently appointed basic skills tutor, who focuses on improving their level of literacy and numeracy. Language support is provided through close links with a local adult education provider. Individual learning plans are not always used as working documents, with learners' achievements and additional literacy and numeracy recorded.

49. Observation and assessment in the workplace is insufficient to match the learners' progress. Many learners experience delays in their achievement when they have completed their written work for a number of units, before assessors plan for observation in the workplace. There is some poor assessor practice, with a rigid approach to assessment. Assessors are over-reliant on learners completing written work to provide evidence of their knowledge and performance. Some learners with additional learning needs have difficulty writing their knowledge evidence. ST provides support for these learners by increasing the amount of assessors' time allocated to the learner.

Leadership and management

50. The management of the health and social care training programmes is satisfactory, with daily informal communications within the team. However, there is no defined meetings structure. Although meetings do take place, minutes and required actions are not disseminated. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is satisfactory, although it varies across the training programmes, depending on the assessor/mentor and the work-placement officers' professional working relationship with the employer. ST provides clear and detailed information to employers through the employers' handbook.

51. Internal verification of the care sector is satisfactory, although there is no long-term sampling plan. Internal verification of early years care and education has improved, in response to the external verifier's requests. This is now satisfactory. Internal verifiers and assessors meet and the actions are minuted by the training co-ordinator, who monitors these for completion.

52. Induction ensures that learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of

SOUTHERN TRAINING

opportunity. They have the opportunity to relate equal opportunities to their own experiences, in addition to their care client group, and clearly understand their rights and responsibilities. None of the learners interviewed during inspection had experienced any incidences of unfair treatment.