

INSPECTION REPORT

Childcare Training Consultancy Limited

04 June 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

Childcare Training Consultancy Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Child Care Training Consultancy Limited (CTC) is a private limited company set up in November 2000. The company contracts with London East Learning and Skills Council to provide modern apprenticeships for young people in early years care and education and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 for employed adults who do not hold a level 2 qualification. At the end of 2003 CTC moved to its current location in Ilford, Essex. Learners have work placements or are employed in nurseries and pre-schools throughout the East London area.

2. A team of two directors manages CTC with support from the centre co-ordinator. There is a total of 22 staff, of which three work full time and the rest are subcontracted part-time workers. Three of the assessors are based in learners' workplaces.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

3. There are 54 learners in work-based learning for young people and 11 learners on the employer training pilot (ETP) programme. Eighteen learners are working towards advanced modern apprenticeships, 31 are working towards foundation modern apprenticeships and five are working towards an NVQ at either level 2 or level 3. There are seven learners on the old framework and 42 on the new framework, which includes a technical certificate. Foundation modern apprentices start in work placements although five are now employed. All the advanced modern apprentices are also employed. Most off-the-job training takes place one day a week at CTC's training centre. Some training takes place in the learners' workplaces or at a location and time convenient for the learner. Key skills in communication form an integral part of off-the-job training and training for key skills in application of number takes place one day every two weeks. Learners are assessed in the workplace every six to eight weeks.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	32
Number of staff interviews	27
Number of employer interviews	11
Number of visits	11

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training for early years is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. The company's arrangements for equality of opportunity are also satisfactory. Its arrangements for quality assurance are 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 areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Early years			
- Work-based learning for young people	54	3	
- Employer training pilot	11	None	

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

5. **Learners' work in their placements is good.** Over 20 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have secured employment during the programme and some learners have been promoted to take on more responsibility.
6. There are indications that the **retention rates are improving** as all of the advanced modern apprentices and 75 per cent of foundation modern apprentices who started since August 2003 are still in learning.
7. **Completion rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks are poor.** Less than 10 per cent of learners have completed the full framework, although many learners are in training. Forty per cent of learners who have left achieved their NVQ but only 10 per cent have completed the modern apprenticeship framework.

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
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	5
Total	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	5

8. **Off-the-job training is well-structured and includes a good variety of activities** that are effectively adapted to meet individual learning needs. The training materials are carefully designed and used effectively to promote different learning styles and to help learners with dyslexia. The diversity of learners and the children they work with is reflected in the learning resources.
9. Learners are in **good work placements** which provide opportunities for them to develop a good range of professional and occupational skills. Work placements are found to meet the needs of each learner. Employers are very supportive and several are qualified assessors who use their knowledge to provide learners with additional support.
10. The staff at CTC are committed to learners' welfare and provide additional support to meet their personal needs. **Good links are established with external agencies** to ensure the most appropriate support is available when it is needed.
11. There is **good additional learning support** for all off-the-job training. A support tutor provides good literacy and numeracy support for all learners. Appropriate resources are used with learners who have been identified as requiring additional learning support.

12. Learners show commitment to the programme before they start in their work placements by attending a **well designed, six-day induction** over a period of three weeks.

13. There is **slow progress for some learners** who have not been assessed for several months or have had long delays in receiving feedback from their assessors on evidence they have collected. Learners are often unsure of what they need to do to complete their portfolios.

Leadership and management

14. **All staff, including subcontracted part-time staff, are well supported** by the management team. They are encouraged to participate in a wide range of personal and professional development activities.

15. There are **well-managed training sessions** which promote learners' personal and professional development. Learners' attitudes and behaviour are closely managed. Any disruptive or disrespectful incidents are challenged and recorded in the learner's personal file.

16. There is satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity. There are good displays of materials in the training centre. Staff and learners are well aware of the need to treat people fairly and with respect. However, **the equal opportunities policy and procedures are not sufficiently detailed**. There has been no formal training for staff.

17. Most staff have a clear understanding of the company's development and feel able to contribute. The company is growing and many of the informal communication systems which were suitable for a small organisation are no longer effective. **Staff are set insufficient targets**. Staff performance is not sufficiently monitored.

18. The management information systems are being developed and are starting to collate a wide range of data. This is not yet used routinely or analysed to establish trends or monitor the performance of different groups of learners.

19. There is **insufficient information available to managers to allow them to monitor the work of staff and the progress of learners**. The current systems are informal and different members of staff use different approaches. Learners' progress is not adequately managed.

20. The quality assurance policy and procedures are satisfactory. However there is ineffective implementation of the arrangements. The self-assessment report correctly identified some of the strengths and weaknesses found during the inspection.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good support for staff development
- good management of learners' personal and professional development
- good networking with other training providers and external agencies

Weaknesses

- not enough systematic and monitored targets for staff
- ineffective implementation of quality assurance arrangements
- poor monitoring of learners' progress
- inadequate use of management information to monitor performance

Health, social care & public services

Early years

Strengths

- well-structured off-the-job training
- good placements to promote and support learners' professional development
- good personal and learning support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor completion rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks
- slow progress for some learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CHILDCARE TRAINING CONSULTANCY LIMITED:

- staff are very friendly and approachable
- the location is good
- the training rooms are comfortable
- the qualification is related to real work
- the support for personal problems
- working in groups, especially the art activities
- the good atmosphere - 'I feel safe'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CHILDCARE TRAINING CONSULTANCY LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- quicker feedback on work handed in and exam results
- more help with collecting evidence and building the portfolio
- better communications - 'it is sometimes difficult for me to get hold of my assessor'
- more money - 'we do the same work as others but get paid less'
- more individual learning support

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CHILDCARE TRAINING CONSULTANCY LIMITED:

- maintain the good practice identified
- improve retention and achievement rates
- develop the systems and use of management information
- develop a standardised approach to the management and monitoring of learners' progress
- improve the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good support for staff development
- good management of learners' personal and professional development
- good networking with other training providers and external agencies

Weaknesses

- not enough systematic and monitored targets for staff
- ineffective implementation of quality assurance arrangements
- poor monitoring of learners' progress
- inadequate use of management information to monitor performance

21. There is good support for staff development. All staff, including subcontracted part-time staff, are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Staff participate in both external and in-house training events and work towards qualifications. For example, some are completing teaching qualifications, some have attended training that focuses on child protection, technical certificates and assessment and all staff have received training covering health and safety, and first aid. Some topics for staff training derive from the experience of teaching observations, for instance, one session focused on preparing lesson plans. There is stability among the staff, a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to support that positively impacts on the learners. All staff receive regular supervision sessions. These focus on learners and their progress, training and continuing professional development and staff targets for learners' retention and achievement rates. In recognition of CTC's planned growth and the changing employment status of staff, a more formalised and structured approach to annual appraisal and performance development is presently being reviewed.

22. There is good management of learners' personal and professional development. Through a detailed and structured induction and useful handbook, learners are well informed about the personal and professional requirements and expectations of all the programmes. Individual contracts are agreed with learners which may include reference to their attitude, timekeeping and behaviour. Learners are monitored against these aspects and their progress is carefully recorded. Classroom contracts are also developed and, once agreed, are displayed in the training room. Tutors work towards enabling learners to meet these requirements and expectations by ensuring there is no inappropriate behaviour during training sessions. Any learner who is disruptive or disrespectful is challenged and a clear and detailed incident or discussion report is completed and placed on the learner's file. If the learner's behaviour is linked to personal and confidential problems unrelated to the training programme, then these are discussed in private and notes placed in a sealed envelope in the learner's file. CTC informs

parents or carers, where appropriate, to reinforce the support already provided. Some learners have been asked to leave the programme following an exit interview due to unprofessional behaviour. For example, one learner is currently working on a voluntary basis in a nursery to show commitment and improved attitude and behaviour.

23. There is good networking by CTC's staff. Staff participate in collaborative networking activities that take place not only with other training providers but also with a wide range of external agencies. Many of the links enhance the learning experience, for example, Connexions refer learners and work with CTC to provide appropriate support and advice, and other specialist agencies provide guidance to help learners deal with homelessness and pregnancy.

24. Organisational change has been well managed and the current operational management is effective. Staff are effectively deployed and staffing resources are well managed. A new centre manager has been appointed recently to further develop the management information system, the quality assurance arrangements and generate more time for the two directors to focus on the strategic challenges and changes that lie ahead to facilitate the planned growth of CTC. The structure of the organisation is clear and effective. Most staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities in the company and how they relate to others, although some sessional staff are less clear. There is much effective informal communication and staff generally feel well informed and consulted. An informative staff newsletter is circulated which recognises both staff and learners' achievement and includes a glossary of terms. There are regular management, team, assessor and internal verification meetings. For most meetings, minutes, actions and timescales are recorded. Staff meetings and training days are used well to brief staff and share good practice. The management has recognised the need to make some of the communications systems more formal as the organisation grows.

25. CTC has recently introduced a number of strategies to improve retention and achievement including more detailed interviews to ensure learners are placed on an appropriate programme, an extended induction period, the integration of key skills with monthly exams and the provision of a support tutor for literacy and numeracy in all training sessions. CTC moved to the current premises in December 2003 to provide a more conducive learning environment. However, these positive initiatives are not sufficiently established to enable an accurate assessment of their impact.

26. There is poor monitoring of learners' progress. Individual members of staff devise their own mechanisms to record assessments and internal verification activity. Meetings of assessors and internal verifiers are used to discuss overall progress and, while learner numbers have been low, CTC has been aware informally of learners' progress overall. However, this current arrangement is inadequate as the number of learners grows. It is unstructured and informality does not enable CTC to effectively monitor learners' progress at management level. This contrasts with the effective system that is in place for monitoring recruitment enquiries, application forms, interviews, and offers made to potential learners.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

27. CTC has an equal opportunities policy containing a basic statement that is issued to all learners and staff. However, there is insufficient information relating to current legislation and, although most staff have been briefed on the new legislation, they have received no formal training. Bullying and harassment are referred to in the policy and procedures but there is insufficient detail as to how the organisation manages these issues. The organisation recognises the need to develop a more detailed equal opportunities policy to meet the needs of learners, employers and staff.

28. There are good displays of posters and other materials in the training centre to promote diversity and inform learners and staff about various aspects of equality of opportunity. There is a high level of awareness among staff of the need to treat learners fairly and with respect. Staff manage inappropriate behaviour well. Many learners have a wide range of additional learning and social needs. Although only 40 per cent of learners are initially identified as requiring additional learning support or additional support for social needs, approximately 68 per cent of learners receive some form of good individual support during their programme.

29. CTC recognises the need to increase the number of male learners on childcare programmes. Currently 4 per cent of learners are men. CTC uses a male member of staff at careers events. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is 63 per cent which is higher than the representation of minority ethnic groups in the local population. There is insufficient analysis of how well different groups and types of learners achieve. Some information has been collated and some initial information and trends are available on the types of learners who start the programmes. However, there is insufficient information to identify trends in retention and achievement rates. An early analysis has shown a significant increase in the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups, to 80 per cent of learners from the last two groups to start the programme.

30. The recruitment interview includes good questions to monitor learners' understanding of equality of opportunity. During the induction period there are some good activities such as videos, wordsearch and definitions to introduce some aspects of equality of opportunity. For example, learners are set an equal opportunities project requiring them to research festivals celebrated by different cultures. CTC uses a good range of training materials to promote inclusiveness in training sessions. However, learners' progress reviews do not reinforce or develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity topics.

31. The employers' handbook clearly outlines what is expected of a work placement in terms of equality of opportunity. CTC does check that employers have a current equal opportunities policy and that it complies with the organisation's requirements, as outlined in the employers' handbook. However, these checks have not taken place in the past few months.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

32. CTC has a set of satisfactory quality assurance policies and procedures. There are comprehensive and clear handbooks for learners, employers, tutors and assessors. Most of the procedures have a clear focus on the training process. Some full-time and part-time members of staff have contributed to the writing of these. Staff understand and ensure the procedures focus on the learner. The policies are electronically available and all staff are informed when policies have been updated. However, there is ineffective implementation of some quality assurance arrangements. For example, staff induction, particularly for sessional staff, does not adequately cover quality assurance issues. There are variations in the frequency of assessors' visits and the types of activities carried out at each visit. There are sometimes long delays in learners receiving feedback on work they give to assessors. Some planned observations of teaching have been carried out using objective criteria but have not been graded. Staff are given feedback against these criteria but it is not used as a basis for discussion in the current system of supervision. Minutes relating to the weekly team meetings are handwritten, do not contain action points, are not copied to members of staff and do not make use of standing agenda items. Complaints and incidents are recorded in the meeting's minutes. There is no formal and central mechanism for recording and monitoring complaints, although they are monitored and followed through effectively.

33. CTC's staff are very responsive to learners' immediate concerns. Feedback is regularly collected from learners, staff and employers. This information is used to review and improve the learning experience, although it is not always analysed and used for continuous improvement. One example of good practice is the inclusion of learner representatives at some meetings. The self-assessment process and resulting report and development plan are satisfactory. All staff are aware of the importance of self-assessment as a means of improving the provision. However, staff, learners and employers were insufficiently involved in the production of the recent self-assessment report. The self-assessment process was accurate in identifying some of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory.

34. There is inadequate use of management information. The management information system is operational but its full potential has not been explored with regard to planning developments, analysing and monitoring trends, contributing to decision-making and setting targets. For example, the performance of different groups of learners is not adequately analysed. The reasons for learners leaving the programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan is known by staff but not formally monitored or linked to the existing strategies aiming to improve retention and achievement rates.

35. There are not enough systematic and monitored targets for staff. Staff are set targets in relation to learners' retention and achievement rates but devise their own means of monitoring these targets. Staff make judgements about whether learners are achieving or not achieving but such decisions are not based on any objective and shared criteria. Decisions are also made about those learners in need of additional support but the nature of that support and who will provide the support when and how is not recorded

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using a standard approach to enable accurate planning.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Early years</i>		
- Work-based learning for young people	54	3
- Employer training pilot	11	None

Early years

Strengths

- well-structured off-the-job training
- good placements to promote and support learners' professional development
- good personal and learning support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor completion rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks
- slow progress for some learners

Achievement and standards

36. Learners' work in their placements is good. Over 20 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have secured employment during the programme. Learners devise good practical activities, such as story sacks, for use with children in their workplaces. Learners' written work in their portfolios is satisfactory.

37. There are indications that the retention rates are improving. None of the advanced modern apprentices who started since August 2003 have left the programme and 75 per cent of foundation modern apprentices remain in training. The ETP programme started in January 2004 and two learners have left without achieving all the targets of their individual learning plan as they were made redundant. It is too early to make judgements on the rates of progress. There have been some delays in learners starting the programme as CTC are awaiting letters to confirm the funding is available.

38. Completion rates for the modern apprenticeship frameworks are poor. Completion rates are below 10 per cent for both the advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in 2002-03, although many learners are still in training. Over a third of those learners who have left the programme without completing the framework have achieved an NVQ at level 2. Over half of advanced modern apprentices who have left the programme without completing the framework have achieved an NVQ at level 3. Key skills training has previously been provided at the end of the programme but has

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now been planned to form an integral part of off-the-job training sessions.

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)																
	2003-04		2002-03													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	10		17													
Retained*	0		2	12												
Successfully completed	0		1	6												
Still in learning	10		8	47												

*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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	30		49													
Retained*	0		13	27												
Successfully completed	0		4	8												
Still in learning	22		9	18												

*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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		7													
Retained*	2		4	57												
Successfully completed	2		4	57												
Still in learning	3		2	29												

*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																
Employer training pilot																
	2003-04															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13															
Retained*	0															
Successfully completed	0															
Still in learning	11															

*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

39. Off-the-job training is well structured. Learners are on a structured programme that includes a good variety of activities, including the opportunity to work in groups. There is effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Learners are able to plan activities that can be carried out with children in the workplace. Good use is made of well-designed training materials including a range of learning materials specifically designed for learners with dyslexia. Some training materials are designed so that learners who find a topic more difficult are given easier exercises than the more able learners. CTC's trainers encourage learners to identify their preferred learning style. Training is then effectively planned to take into account these different styles of learning. The communication key skill effectively forms an integral part of the vocational training programme. There have been recent effective changes to the delivery of the application of number key skill which is now linked to an activity in the workplace.

40. Good work placements promote and support professional development for learners. The work placements provide good opportunities for learners to acquire additional occupational skills. Employers change learners' duties and environments to match the requirements of the NVQ and to broaden their knowledge. The work placements are carefully selected so learners do not have to travel too far and are provided with an environment that will meet their individual needs. Some work placements provide additional specialist training and courses to enhance learners' skills and knowledge. Workplace supervisors provide effective mentoring to help learners with their professional development. Some very supportive supervisors and managers are qualified assessors and very knowledgeable about the NVQ and can provide good additional support. Many learners make good progress in their work placements, becoming employed and being promoted to take on more responsibility.

41. The additional personal and learning support for learners is good. CTC's staff are very committed to learners' welfare. Some staff exceed established support arrangements to meet learners' personal needs. There are very good links with external agencies to refer learners for additional support with personal problems such as homelessness. There are flexible arrangements in place for learners to take breaks if they

have any personal problems. CTC provides effective mentoring to those learners who have not attended the programme for some time. Tutors and assessors keep in touch with learners through e-mails and phone calls, encouraging them to return to training when their problems are resolved. A support tutor works effectively with CTC's trainers to support learners using appropriate resources in almost every session. The support tutor provides good individual literacy and numeracy support to those that need it during group sessions. Two-fifths of learners have been identified as requiring additional support with learning or social needs at the start of the programme. A recent review identified 68 per cent of learners have been given additional support.

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. The trainers use a variety of structured activities to promote learning. There is a structured approach to classroom and behaviour management, where learners work collaboratively and show respect for each other. Training takes place in a well-ordered environment reinforced by classroom contracts devised by learners. The diversity of learners and the children they work with is reflected in the learning resources and games are used to encourage learners to reflect on other cultures. CTC moved into the current accommodation in December 2003 so it could provide learners with a suitable environment for learning. CTC provided kitchen facilities and interview rooms for learners. However, there is limited access for people with restricted mobility.

43. There is adequate provision for initial assessments and induction. All learners on work-based training programmes have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed as part of an initial assessment. The information is shared with the learners and they receive good support during the training sessions. Learners on the ETP programme receive good general support from their assessors but there is no initial assessment to identify individual additional learning needs. Learners have access to an appropriate range of additional courses including a 12-hour paediatric health and safety course, and first aid training. Learners on work-based training programmes are able to progress to an advanced modern apprenticeship once they have achieved an NVQ at level 2.

44. There is slow progress for some learners. There have been significant delays in returning work-based assessments and providing feedback for some learners. There are a few learners who have been on the programme for over five months and have not yet been assessed in the workplace. When learners submit their portfolios for assessment there are often long delays before they receive any feedback on their work. Many learners have completed questionnaires to test their knowledge, yet have not received any feedback on this work. Learners have a poor understanding of what they have to do to complete their portfolio and often rely on the assessor to tell them what to do. While some learners lack confidence in completing work independently, other learners do not feel that they are sufficiently challenged and progress slowly. Some learners are not clear about deadlines and work is not completed on time or is handed in late. One fifth of learners have exceeded their target completion dates.

Leadership and management

45. Most staff understand the direction in which the company is developing. They feel that they are able to contribute ideas. The company has grown rapidly and the informal methods of communication used previously are no longer as effective, particularly with the large proportion of sessional or subcontracted staff. While targets are set, they are not sufficiently precise and are less easily monitored. CTC's self-assessment report recognises that there has been insufficient involvement of staff in the self-assessment process and the company is taking steps to remedy this. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. There are positive images on display, and the company has made some attempts to increase the proportion of male learners. Internal verification is frequent, however this is mainly recorded on learners' files and the central records are not clear. Learners, employers and staff are asked to provide feedback and there is a group of learners' representatives which raises issues with management who deal with concerns promptly.