

INSPECTION REPORT

JTL

26 March 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Estyn

Arolygiaeth Bî Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
For Education and Training in Wales

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

JTL

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. JTL is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and is the largest national training provider for electrical installation in England and Wales. The company was set up in 1990 by the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) and the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (EETPU), following the sector's withdrawal from the statutory levy and training arrangements of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The company is owned by the ECA and the EETPU, now called Amicus. The company's board consists of four nominated employers' representatives, four union representatives and a nominee from the Joint Industry Board, by invitation. The chairman is elected from members of the board. The company's head office is located in Orpington, Kent, where senior management, accounts, corporate services, information technology (IT) and research, and development departments are based. A national administration centre, located in Wrexham, North Wales, provides support services to the field staff and is where all auditable learners', employers' and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) files are kept. A central claims unit at Mexborough, South Yorkshire deals with all financial claims to funding bodies. JTL has recently opened a training centre for modern apprentices in Malton, North Yorkshire and runs a training centre in Woolwich, London for a practical exam in electrical installation testing and post-apprenticeship training. A total of 272 staff includes a senior management team of six, including the chief executive. JTL operates in 12 geographical areas, each area having a team of home-based training officers led by an area manager. The company contracts with 114 colleges to provide off-the-job training. The 173 field staff each have responsibility for a number of learners, employers and colleges. JTL offers training in electrical installation and plumbing and currently contracts directly with the National Contracts Service (NCS) of the LSC for the whole of England. In Wales, JTL contracts directly with two of the four Education and Learning Wales regions, Southeast and Southwest Wales. JTL is running NVQ pilots in areas such as electro-technical panel building and electrical machines rewind. These pilot programmes have very few learners and therefore were not included in the inspection. Provision in Wales was inspected by Estyn.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Construction

2. JTL has 7,287 advanced modern apprentices following electro-technical programmes and 574 advanced modern apprentices following plumbing programmes. In addition to these mainstream programmes, JTL is also piloting a level 3 national vocational qualification (NVQ) programme in electrical installation for staff of any age currently working in the electrical industry.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	31
Number of inspection days	247
Number of learner interviews	624
Number of staff interviews	208
Number of employer interviews	165
Number of subcontractor interviews	69
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	258

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

3. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance are all good. Training is good in electrical installation and plumbing.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	2

Construction		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
- Work-based learning for young people	7287	2
Building services		
- Work-based learning for young people	574	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

4. **Learners achieve a high standard of work and develop good practical skills.** They quickly improve their knowledge and learn new practical skills. Many demonstrate practical skills above the required level. Learners' portfolios contain some good-quality work-based evidence. Learners are conscientious, work independently at a good pace and take pride in their work, which is of a good industrial standard. The achievement rate for modern apprenticeship frameworks is satisfactory and improving.

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
Construction	0	11	45	21	4	3	0	84
Total	0	11	45	21	4	3	0	84

5. **JTL's learners receive good standards of training.** Off-the-job training is generally good; 67 per cent of the off-the-job training sessions observed were good or better and 92 per cent were satisfactory or better. Practical sessions are generally well structured, learning is carefully checked and staff expect high standards of their learners. The study notes provided by JTL form a good basis for effective background knowledge teaching. Key skills are often taught as an integral part of the vocational programmes. They are concentrated in the early part of the programme to give learners more opportunity to complete their frameworks on time. Training in the workplace is also good. Plumbing and electrical installation learners are able to demonstrate a good range and level of skills in the workplace. They work on a range of good-quality installations. **JTL provides additional training opportunities and courses for electrical installation learners**, beyond the requirements of the modern apprenticeship.

6. **Resources for off-the-job training are generally good.** The accommodation, facilities, tools, equipment and materials at subcontractors' premises vary from satisfactory to very good. JTL sets a minimum standard for subcontractors' resources and for the resources in their own off-the-job training centre in North Yorkshire. Many colleges exceed the standard and are graded by JTL as centres of excellence. The electrical installation training materials have been developed by JTL and are of a very good standard. Most subcontractors have good IT facilities. These include computer suites for key skills, some computer-based learning materials, and in some cases, data projectors and electronic interactive whiteboards in classrooms to improve teaching and learning. There are sufficient numbers of well-qualified and experienced staff.

7. **JTL, its training officers and employers provide very good support for learners.** Good initial guidance is given and potential learners are presented with a frank and honest account of the difficulties of site work, as well as its benefits. Where support for literacy, numeracy or language is identified, the appropriate amount of support is given. Learners receive regular and frequent visits from their training officers, at college and in the workplace. Training officers provide learners with very good pastoral support. They have developed good working relationships with learners and respond quickly to requests for assistance. Most employers are very supportive of their learners and many allocate supervisors who are experienced and sensitive to learners' needs. Learners are given substantial help in finding new jobs if they are made redundant.

8. **Learners' progress reviews are unsatisfactory.** The form used to record the review does not help the process. Most reviews do not set targets to help learners' progress. Those targets which are set are not always realistic, measurable or achievable. Short-term action plans and targets are not sufficiently challenging, or useful to learners in

helping them to progress towards completion of their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Previous reviews are not always referred to during discussions. Issues identified in progress reviews are not often followed up with appropriate action by training officers.

9. Internal verification is unsatisfactory in some areas. Internal verification is carried out on completed portfolios and not formatively as work progresses. Direct observation in the workplace is not internally verified sufficiently. Assessment practice is generally satisfactory.

Leadership and management

10. Training is generally well managed in local areas. Team meetings focus on the learners' experience and performance. Staff performance is monitored effectively and area managers produce monthly performance reports for each training officer. Overall, subcontractors are very well managed in most areas.

11. JTL's external and internal communications are very effective. Productive partnerships with employers, funding bodies and government departments are of benefit to learners. Effective, collaborative partnerships with external organisations are used to improve the products and services offered to learners. The employer training forums give those employers with modern apprentices, regular opportunities to contribute, discuss and influence local issues. JTL has regular and frequent communications at local level with college staff. The annual college conference is used to improve standards of teaching and learning and to discuss practical issues relating to training and the achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks. Internal communications are good. Regular meetings take place at all levels of the company, and are used to communicate operational issues and strategic developments which affect learners.

12. The company's intranet is used effectively to manage training. All staff and managers have good access to the intranet and management information at appropriate levels. Comprehensive and detailed management information is used to manage the activities of the company effectively. The system allows effective monitoring of framework components through to completion. It also allows managers to manage key processes on a wide scale. The system has proved a valuable tool in helping the company to effectively manage a considerable growth in provision and to minimise the negative effects of the changes on the learners. It is also used to communicate effectively with a dispersed workforce, most of whom work from home.

13. Targets set for staff are effective. Targets are clearly linked to the annual business plan. They are individualised to take account of the experience of individuals, and team members understand their roles and responsibilities. JTL's targets for retention and achievement extend beyond NCS profile targets. Targets are set across the company; for example the national administration centre has targets to ensure the timely processing of paperwork. All managers routinely monitor performance against JTL's targets at team and management level.

14. **Staff training and development is good.** Twice-yearly appraisals are used effectively to identify corporate and personal training and development needs. The staff induction is very good. A comprehensive, seven-day induction programme for staff prepares them effectively for working within JTL. New and promoted staff are supported through a mentoring system. A detailed company training plan clearly identifies the training that has been approved and arranged. Feedback about all courses is routinely collected, covering the course content, the appropriateness of the course and the performance of tutors. Evaluations of feedback are used to make recommendations and further develop and improve courses.

15. **Management of the progress review process is unsatisfactory.** Learners' progress reviews have been unsatisfactory for some time; management have not acted quickly enough to improve the reviews. This situation has been recognised by JTL and action measures have been introduced to improve the quality of reviews. It is not possible to judge the effect on learners yet.

16. **JTL has taken positive action to increase participation by under-represented groups.** A number of projects have been developed effectively to increase participation by minority groups. Marketing images are positive and a wide range of media is used. JTL has actively promoted equality and diversity to employers through regional employers' forums and by organising a conference about meeting the skills shortage with diversity. JTL co-operates effectively with other agencies to resolve equality and diversity issues.

17. **The company has very good, comprehensive policies and procedures** for all aspects of its training operations, which are written in clear and concise terms. These instructions are good working documents that are understood and used by all staff on a daily basis. All procedures and working instructions are readily available on the intranet. They are reviewed regularly and updated to meet changing circumstances. Self-assessment is satisfactory. It is conducted annually, producing a report which is reviewed every six months. All key stakeholders are involved in the process. However, insufficient weight is given to weaknesses in reviews.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very effective external and internal communications
- good use of company intranet to manage training
- effective use of target-setting for staff
- good staff training and development
- positive action to increase participation by under-represented groups
- good quality assurance policies and practice

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory management of the progress review process

Construction

Construction crafts

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work and skills
- good standard of training
- good off-the-job training resources
- useful additional training
- effective support for learners
- well-managed local provision

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory progress reviews
- insufficient ongoing internal verification in some areas

Building services

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work and skills
- good standard of training
- good off-the-job training resources
- effective support for learners
- well-managed local provision

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory progress reviews
- insufficient ongoing internal verification in some areas

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT JTL:

- the opportunity to get a job, do it well and be proud of it
- 'the skills that we are learning'
- 'the whole apprenticeship is good'
- 'getting paid while learning a skill'
- 'on-the-job training'
- 'a new challenge every day'
- 'college workshops and facilities'
- 'working on site'
- 'friendly and helpful college tutors'
- 'the training officer helps me and sometimes kicks my backside'
- 'really good training – even the log book is straightforward'
- 'I get a good variety of work'
- 'I learn something new every day'
- 'good teaching at college'
- 'teachers at college are easy to get on with'
- 'getting finished and getting a rise'
- 'JTL notes'
- 'good support from training officers'
- 'the inter-college five-a-side football tournament' (JTL sponsored)
- 'becoming what I always wanted to be'
- 'they trust us to get on with things'
- 'lots of support'
- 'I am never bored always busy'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK JTL COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of off-the-job training - the blocks are too short
- travel times to college - it takes too long
- the assistance available in practical classes
- the relevance of tasks - what has designing a holiday poster to do with key skills?
- availability of materials - college is sometimes short of material
- doing logbooks - make them more interesting
- the length of key skills tests - some take over three hours
- communications about deadlines for log books
- 'I would like to be on fast track; I am older and very motivated'

KEY CHALLENGES FOR JTL:

- improve learners' progress reviews
- improve assessment and internal verification in some regions
- continue to focus on improved achievement rates

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective external and internal communications
- good use of company intranet to manage training
- effective use of target-setting for staff
- good staff training and development
- positive action to increase participation by under-represented groups
- good quality assurance policies and practice

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory management of the progress review process

18. JTL's external and internal communications are very effective. Productive partnerships with employers, funding bodies and government departments are to the benefit of learners. JTL produces a wide variety of publications for employers, learners and the industry. These are particularly beneficial for small employers in keeping them up to date with health and safety requirements. Employer training forums give employers regular opportunities to contribute, discuss and influence local issues. JTL has regular and frequent communications at local level with college staff. Regular meetings at all levels of the company are used to communicate operational issues and strategic developments concerning learners. The deputy general managers for the north and south of the country attend each other's meetings to ensure consistency of communications and actions. Well-managed, regular team meetings take place, which are generally well recorded and identify actions to be taken. When action is taken, it is not always recorded.

19. JTL's intranet is used well to support the management of training. The intranet system provides easy access to a wide range of documents to support training officers, including company documents, guidance notes and training materials. Documents to support managers are also easily accessible through the system; for example, handbooks and policies and procedures. The system is updated twice each day. Comprehensive and detailed management information about the performance of teams, training officers and individual learners is used to manage the activities of the company effectively. The system allows for the effective monitoring of components of the modern apprenticeship framework through to completion. It also allows managers to manage key processes on a much wider scale. The system has proved a valuable tool in helping the company to manage effectively a considerable growth in provision and to minimise any detrimental effect on the learners.

20. The company sets effective targets for staff. Twice-yearly appraisals are used to set

detailed targets across a broad range of indicators and measure staff performance against them. Targets are clearly linked to the annual business plan. Targets are individualised to take account of the experience of individuals. Team members understand their roles and responsibilities. JTL's targets for retention and achievement exceed those of the NCS profile. Targets are set throughout the company; for example, the national administration centre has targets to ensure the timely processing of documents. Managers at all levels routinely monitor performance against organisational targets at team and management level, setting further targets. For example, learners still in training after their expected completion dates are a priority focus for achievement targets and their progress is closely monitored.

21. Staff training and development is good. Twice-yearly appraisals are used effectively to identify corporate and personal training and development needs. Managers receive appraisal training and written guidance in appraising. Staff induction is very good. A comprehensive seven-day induction programme for staff prepares them effectively for working at JTL. New and promoted staff are supported through a mentoring system. Succession planning is well organised, with arrangements for job-shadowing. A detailed company training plan clearly identifies training provision that has been approved and arranged. Feedback about all courses is collected routinely and includes the course content, the appropriateness of the course, and the tutors. Evaluations of feedback are used to make recommendations and further developments such as in key skills and equal opportunities training.

22. The progress review process is not managed satisfactorily. Targets set at review are not effective in ensuring that all learners progress at an appropriate rate. Some learners make slow progress. Many learners are not set clearly measurable, short- or long-term targets and it is not possible to measure their progress. Learners in their final year of training are visited every three months by training officers, but reviews do not identify clear targets for achieving the NVQ and the modern apprenticeship framework. This situation has been recognised by JTL and action has been taken to improve the quality of reviews. The new measures have not affected learners yet.

23. Business planning is satisfactory. There is a three-year strategic plan and an annual business plan. Staff are consulted and are involved with the business planning process through local workshops. Although there is a range of objectives, there are no targets for the retention of learners in the strategic plan. The annual business plan is clearly linked to the strategic business plan. Objectives in the annual business plan do relate to the retention of learners but there are no specific objectives for achievements. Many actions identified in the business plan have been implemented, including those designed to improve retention rates. Performance against the business plan is regularly reviewed at senior managers' meetings.

24. The management of resources is satisfactory. Staff recruitment has generally kept pace with the requirements of the business. Where staff shortages have been identified, action has been taken to resolve the situation. Teaching and learning materials produced by JTL are good.

25. The management of literacy and numeracy training is satisfactory. JTL's literacy and numeracy policy clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of JTL's staff and the colleges in terms of providing support, and in monitoring the progress of learners in developing the required key skills. JTL manages the training of advanced modern apprentices and only a few learners in training require additional support. However, where additional literacy and numeracy needs are identified, support is negotiated with the colleges and provided by training officers. This support is good.

26. Subcontractors are managed satisfactorily. An annual contract clearly sets out the responsibilities of JTL's staff and the colleges. Although there are some issues with a minority of colleges, partnerships are mainly satisfactory. Individual team members act as links for each college and there are frequent informal meetings.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

27. JTL has taken positive action to increase participation by under-represented groups. Projects have been developed effectively to increase the recruitment of minority groups. One of these projects in Sheffield, has been successful in increasing the recruitment of women and other projects are planned for later in the year. Projects in the East Midlands, London, Birmingham and the West Midlands, are establishing links between local employers, schools, community groups and minority ethnic groups. One project has already resulted in an increase in applications from minority groups.

28. The company has also established strong links with schools and circulates a CD-ROM to over 4,000 secondary schools in England and Wales. Eighty-five of these are working in partnership with JTL at various levels. For example, JTL is working with one school in Bradford, where 80 per cent of students are from minority ethnic groups to develop a dedicated vocational study centre for post-16 modern apprenticeship training. Another project, which was launched in June 2003, offers free training to level 3 NVQ for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the electro-technical industry. This is a national project and is currently training 48 workers. Marketing images are positive and a wide range of media are used. The company actively promotes equality and diversity to employers through regional employers' forums and by organising a conference about meeting skills shortages with diversity. JTL works effectively with other agencies to resolve equality and diversity issues.

29. JTL's recruitment of minority ethnic groups and women has been limited. This has been recognised by the company. Of approximately 2,500 learners on modern apprenticeships recruited in 2003-04, 1.7 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 0.8 per cent are women. However, this does represent an improving trend over the past four years, the 1999 figures being 0.9 and 0.1 per cent, respectively. New three-year targets of 5 per cent and 2 per cent, for minority ethnic groups and women, respectively, will show some improvement if achieved.

30. The company's structure has clear lines of responsibility, with staff reporting to the general manager of corporate services. The senior management team has made a strong commitment to integrating equality and diversity with the company. Equality and

diversity is a regular agenda item at senior management meetings and discussions are based on an analysis of current applications. Specific appointments have been made to increase participation by minority groups in the form of an equal opportunities officer and a European business officer.

31. The equal opportunities policy is satisfactory and contains information about current legislation, definitions, detailed explanations of rights and responsibilities, and actions and procedures to combat discrimination, harassment and bullying. This policy is updated annually. There have been few complaints, but these have been investigated thoroughly and all have had a positive outcome.

32. Staff training in equality and diversity is satisfactory, with annual updates. As part of an application for an award in the management of equality of opportunity and diversity, in-house assessors have already been trained.

33. The promotion of equality and diversity in the workplace is satisfactory. All learners have equality and diversity training at induction, and JTL has made its own video tape to raise learners' awareness of issues surrounding equality. Equality and diversity are monitored satisfactorily during progress reviews, through a series of questions. However, this process is not systematically implemented in all areas and not all modern apprentices have the same experience.

34. The nature of the industry tends to prevent learners with mobility difficulties from taking part, but where possible JTL acts to remove barriers to training. For example, one profoundly deaf learner is supported in college and the company has provided him with a flashing and vibrating bleeper to alert him to potential hazards when on site.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

35. JTL has very good, comprehensive policies and procedures covering all aspects of its training operations which are written in clear and concise terms. These instructions are good working documents that are clearly understood and used by all staff on a daily basis throughout the company. All procedures and working instructions are readily available on the company's intranet. They are reviewed regularly and updated to meet changing circumstances.

36. The company has significantly improved its service to learners and their employers throughout a demanding period of rapid business growth, during which it has increased its range of vocational training programmes and the number of learners. JTL has responded well to radical changes in the modern apprenticeship framework.

37. The company responds quickly and decisively when dealing with any issue affecting the quality of its service and products, particularly if they have an adverse effect on learners. Action plans for improvement are quickly implemented. The company is aware of many of the issues raised by inspectors and is taking appropriate action to resolve them. Inspectors identified several instances of a very prompt and effective response by JTL to potentially damaging issues. For example, JTL could not agree suitable contracts in

North Yorkshire for off-the-job training. It took decisive action by opening its own training centre at Malton in November 2003. In another instance, the company, having identified problems in its learner review process, has introduced a full quality monitoring survey of all review forms to ensure that target-setting and objectives are covered satisfactorily by training officers. There has been a noticeable improvement in the more recent learner reviews. However, the company recognises that more attention and development is needed to consolidate the effectiveness of progress reviews.

38. Effective action is taken to ensure the quality of training provided by subcontractors. JTL has an established and well-developed system for monitoring the large number of subcontractors in its 12 areas of operation. Training officers and area managers make regular visits to subcontractors which effectively monitor their performance. The systems used previously were informal, JTL has now introduced formal methods to ensure the quality of training and learning. A detailed annual monitoring form is used to ensure that each subcontractor has all the resources required to deliver NVQ training. The company also employs a national college liaison officer supported by a co-ordinator to improve the quality assurance monitoring of subcontractors by regular visits and observations. The quality assurance team has recently begun to carry out quality audits of subcontractors in each area. Training officers conduct classroom observations which cover all aspects of the programme.

39. Learners' feedback is used effectively to ensure the quality of teaching. Information from learners' questionnaires is currently being analysed. JTL also uses its annual conference for subcontracting colleges to promote continuous improvement, and to share good practice with them. JTL participates fully in, and provides support for, the independent quality assurance monitoring of its subcontractors, conducted every two years by the sector employer association and the joint board for the industry.

40. The continuous improvement procedures are effective and measured by clearly presented and well-documented auditing procedures. JTL's quality assurance team methodically reviews and audits all operations annually, inspecting each department at least twice a year. Departments are inspected by the internal audit team which critically reviews all aspects of their operations. Particular emphasis is placed on training operations, including learner recruitment; assessment; operating procedures and instructions; documents; training material; resources and internal verification, as well as JTL's corporate support departments. The agenda for the regular quality assurance team meetings includes reviews of JTL's action plan, the complaints register, the document monitoring system and the learners' questionnaires.

41. The arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. Recognising that there were problems with its internal verification and assessment arrangements, JTL has significantly increased the number of internal verifiers available and improved the monitoring of internal verification activities. These improvements have yet to be fully consolidated in all areas, and there are still some instances of insufficient interim internal verification.

42. JTL's self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory. JTL carries out self-assessment

JTL

annually and the report is reviewed every six months. The latest self-assessment report was published in December 2003. JTL used feedback from employers, subcontracting colleges, learners and other key stakeholders in the sector in compiling the report. Further information was obtained from a consultation exercise involving more than 80 staff, analysing the 'Common Inspection Framework' and comparing it with JTL's systems. The current self-assessment report is very descriptive. It provides a good introduction to the company, but does not contain much critical evaluation of the programmes. Weaknesses are identified, but there is insufficient supporting narrative. Many of the strengths covered in the self-assessment report have been identified by inspectors, but others; for example those concerned with assessment, internal verification and learners' review were not confirmed by inspectors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Construction		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Construction crafts</i> - Work-based learning for young people	7287	2
<i>Building services</i> - Work-based learning for young people	574	2

Construction crafts

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work and skills
- good standard of training
- good off-the-job training resources
- useful additional training
- effective support for learners
- well-managed local provision

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory progress reviews
- insufficient ongoing internal verification in some areas

Building services

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work and skills
- good standard of training
- good off-the-job training resources
- effective support for learners
- well-managed local provision

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory progress reviews
- insufficient ongoing internal verification in some areas

Achievement and standards

43. Learners achieve a very good standard of work and develop good practical skills. Most learners carry out a variety of work for their employers, including the installation of cables, trunking and conduit systems and the wiring of fire protection and environmental control systems. Learners are quick to improve their knowledge and learn new practical skills. Many demonstrate practical skills above the required level. More advanced learners have developed expertise in testing and inspecting completed work. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for managing work tasks, which are completed to high industry standards with the minimum amount of supervision. Learners' portfolios contain some good-quality work-based evidence and include photographs, site plans, job sheets and well-written log books. They demonstrate that learners have a clear understanding and knowledge of the practical tasks involved. Most learners are conscientious, work independently at a good pace and take pride in their work.

44. The achievement rate of modern apprenticeship frameworks is satisfactory and improving; it increased by 6 per cent, from 55 per cent to 61 per cent, in the period from 1995 to 1997. These are the only completed intakes on record.

The following table shows 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		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2379		2047		2248		1774		1669		1912		1832		1468	
Retained*	7		4		62		62		536		940		1027		933	
Successfully completed	0		5		55		59		486		884		1117		851	
Still in learning	2293		1745		1633		1238		708		204		35		5	

*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

45. JTL's learners receive good training. Off-the-job training carried out by subcontractors and at JTL's own centre in North Yorkshire is generally good. Sixty-seven per cent of the off-the-job training sessions observed were good or better and 92 per cent were satisfactory or better. Practical sessions are generally well structured, learning is carefully checked and trainers expect high standards of their learners. In the better classes, teachers are aware of the individual needs and abilities of the learners and set targets which will challenge and develop their skills and knowledge. Learners carry out realistic and challenging practical exercises. In one class learners wired lighting circuits using fire-resistant cable. Completed circuits provided an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their understanding of testing methods and equipment. Good attention is

paid to health and safety issues. Learners often complete a risk assessment before each practical task. In some workshops learners are responsible for signing in visitors and for monitoring safe working practice in the workshop. The better background knowledge sessions engage and maintain learners' interest. Some colleges rely too much on study notes and other written materials, merely reading them or asking learners to copy sections of text. Key skills are often taught as an integral part of the vocational programmes and are concentrated in the early part of the programme to give the learners more opportunity to complete on time.

46. Training in the workplace is also good. Plumbing, and electrical installation learners are able to demonstrate a good range and level of skills in the workplace. Many employers arrange for learners to work with different people on site and care is taken to ensure that learners do not repeat a task for too long. JTL funds all their subcontractors to carry out additional off-the-job practical training to ensure that the full range of skills is taught. There are several examples of learners being seconded to different employers to broaden their practical training.

47. Off-the-job training resources are generally good. The accommodation, facilities, tools, equipment and materials at subcontractors' premises vary from satisfactory to very good. JTL sets a minimum standard for subcontractors' resources and for the resources in their own off-the-job training centre in North Yorkshire. Many colleges exceed the standard and are graded by JTL as their centres of excellence. All subcontractors have good workshops, most of which have modern facilities. The tools and materials are also of a high standard. Most colleges keep sets of tools which are only used by JTL's learners. JTL monitors the availability and quality of tools regularly. The electrical installation training materials have been developed by JTL and are of a very high standard. The materials are easy for tutors to use and for learners to follow. Training materials for plumbing are currently being prepared. Most subcontractors have good IT facilities, such as computer suites for key skills training. There are generally sufficient numbers of well-qualified and experienced subcontractors' staff. JTL's staff, who are all vocationally competent and accredited assessors, ably support the learning of key skills and the use of logbooks.

48. JTL provides useful additional learning opportunities and courses for electrical installation learners, beyond the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. JTL provides resources for 350 hours of additional off-the-job training for every learner. This helps the learners to acquire practical skills early in their modern apprenticeships. The additional time spent in the workshops enhances the practical training and ensures that all learners cover the full range of skills. The additional practical training supplements the background knowledge training and is valued by learners and employers. In their third year, most learners will complete the last two units of the required background knowledge, while also completing a national certificate. Some learners progress to a higher national certificate and some are being encouraged to consider a foundation degree. JTL is now funding courses for learners who are sufficiently advanced in their modern apprenticeships to take an additional inspection and test qualification. This meets the needs of learners and employers. Events to celebrate achievement are successful at college, area and national level.

49. JTL, its training officers and employers provide very good support for learners. Learners receive good formal learning support. They are initially assessed with an appropriate series of tests that establish their academic and practical abilities. Good initial guidance is given and potential learners are presented with a frank and honest account of the difficulties of site work, as well as its benefits. Where support for literacy, numeracy or language is identified the appropriate amount of support is given; JTL's staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals when providing additional support. In many areas where learners have made particularly slow progress, an experienced assessor has been assigned to working with them to improve their progress. Positive results have been achieved and a significant number of learners have recently completed their portfolios as a result of the additional support. Additional visits to employers are arranged if learners require more support to complete their log books. Learners receive regular and frequent visits from their training officers, at college and in the workplace.

50. Training officers provide learners with very good support for personal issues. They have developed good working relationships with learners and respond quickly to requests for assistance. Learners benefit from this support, often receiving additional assistance with their studies, or presentation of workplace evidence. Most employers are very supportive of learners and many allocate experienced supervisors who are sensitive to learners' needs. Employers often give learners additional time off work when requested. Some employers provide additional in-house tuition for their learners and others appoint an experienced member of staff to mentor new learners. Learners are given substantial help to find new jobs if they are made redundant.

51. Learners' progress reviews are not satisfactory. The form used in the review does not help the process. Reviews do not take account of progress made by learners since their previous review. Checks on the learner's progress in key skills or logbook completion often rely on the learner's opinion, rather than documentary evidence. Learners are asked the same questions about equality of opportunity and health and safety at every review. Their understanding of the wider issues is not checked sufficiently. Target-setting is poor. Most reviews do not set targets to help learners' progress. Targets are not always realistic, measurable or achievable. Short-term action plans and targets are not sufficiently challenging or useful to learners in assisting them to complete their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Training officers do not always take appropriate action with issues identified in reviews. Most progress reviews do not involve supervisors in discussions of learners' progress. No significant criteria are given for awarding grades. Some learners do not keep a copy of the review form. Employers receive copies of all review forms but find them of little use as they are often posted late. The copies are often illegible and do not identify the standard of a learners' performance, either at work or at college. Learner's individual learning plans are not used effectively during reviews. Many learners cannot remember receiving a copy of their individual learning plan and do not clearly understand the purpose or importance of the plan. JTL has recognised the weakness of its progress reviews and is currently carrying out a large-scale audit of completed reviews. Measures for improvement have not yet had a full impact on current learners.

52. Internal verification is unsatisfactory in some areas. It is carried out on completed portfolios, not during the programme. In one area, learners had to re-submit portfolios to provide additional evidence after verification. Direct observation in the workplace is not verified sufficiently. Assessment practice is generally satisfactory; it is fair, accurate and reliable. Logbooks are carefully checked by training officers and detailed feedback is given when problems are found. However, in a number of areas not enough use is made of assessment by direct observation in the workplace. Assessments are not planned sufficiently. Some learners are assessed for tasks that are inappropriate at their stage of the modern apprenticeship. Some assessments are not conducted sufficiently with formality and guidance for the learner. Training officers often do not make it clear whether the learner has passed or failed the assessment. Some provide constructive feedback about the learner's performance, but the grading of assessments is subjective, with no significant criteria or shared understanding of its purpose.

Leadership and management

53. Training is generally well managed in local areas. JTL's team meetings focus on the learners. Good attention is given to retention, achievement and attendance. The managers have sufficient information to appropriately monitor training officers and to help them improve their performance. Team managers produce monthly performance reports for each training officer in their area. These are useful to staff and managers alike in setting standards and assessing against performance indicators. Staff are set clear targets and given good training. New staff have well-prepared training plans and are mentored by an experienced member of staff.

54. Subcontractors are generally very well managed. JTL has a clear, standard service agreement with all subcontractors, which is regularly monitored. Employers are well supported. JTL provides employers with information to keep them up-to-date with new legislation and other developments. However, this support is not always effective in ensuring employers' participation and knowledge. Learners' progress reviews include generally satisfactory reinforcement of equal opportunities matters. In some areas, equality of opportunity is not sufficiently promoted to employers beyond the issuing of useful literature. Learners' satisfaction surveys are carried out, analysed and positive action is taken; however, the outcomes are not always communicated to the learners. Staff recruitment is well-planned. Staff are recruited to fill anticipated needs, to meet the requirements of business plans and to enhance the support for learners.