

REINSPECTION REPORT

West Oxfordshire District Council Reinspection

07 October 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. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

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Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	2
About the reinspection	4
Overall judgement	4
Grades	4
Key findings	6

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	12
Equality of opportunity	14
Quality assurance	15
Business administration, management & professional	17
Retailing, customer service & transportation	19
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	23
Health, social care & public services	26
Foundation programmes	29

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. West Oxfordshire Training Services (WOTS) is a service of West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and was established in 1984 as a service to the local community, initially to offer 12 youth training places. Since then it has been involved in a range of government programmes and currently offers mainly youth programmes. WOTS receives corporate services from WODC including human resource management, training and health and safety. WOTS is based in Witney.

2. WOTS now focuses on offering apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in business administration, management and professional; sport and leisure; retailing, customer service and transportation; health, social care and public services; and a small number of learners are on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes.

3. WOTS is managed by an acting head of service who reports to the strategic director at WODC. The acting head of service is supported by an external consultant. WOTS has a three-year service plan which is approved by the WODC senior management team and cabinet. Two training managers are responsible for managing the training programmes and report to the head of service. One of the training managers is responsible for the care programmes, the other is the acting head of service and is responsible for programmes in the other vocational areas. WOTS directly employs 10 staff of whom eight are full time and two are part time. Nine of the staff are directly involved in training and assessment.

4. There are 86 learners, of whom 23 are advanced apprentices, 52 are apprentices, one is following national vocational qualifications (NVQ) programmes and 10 learners are on E2E programmes. Eleven learners are business administration, 34 in sport, 21 in care, 10 in customer service and 10 on E2E programmes. Learners receive some off-the-job training at the company's premises and are placed with local companies or WODC for on-the-job training and NVQ assessments. Most learners are employed.

5. WOTS's programmes are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Learners are located throughout central England but most are in west Oxfordshire. The service industries account for almost 85 per cent of the economy in Oxford and more than 75 per cent of the economy throughout Oxfordshire. Unemployment levels are low in West Oxfordshire at less than 1 per cent compared with 1 per cent in Oxford, 1.6 per cent in Oxfordshire as a whole, and 2.2 per cent in England. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in west Oxfordshire is 1.6 per cent compared with 12.9 per cent for Oxford, 4.9 per cent for Oxfordshire and 9.1 per cent nationally.

6. In September 1999, WOTS was accredited with Investors in People, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. This was reaccredited in September 2002. The self-assessment report used for the reinspection

was produced in July 2004.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

7. WOTS has 11 learners on business administration and management programmes, 10 of whom are women. There are three business administration advanced modern apprentices, four management advanced modern apprentices and three business administration foundation modern apprentices. One management learner is following an NVQ at level 4. All learners are employed, although some of them are on temporary contracts. They work in a range of establishments. Learners start their training throughout the year and are referred through previous and current learners and their employers.

8. There is one full-time and one part-time assessor who visit learners every four to six weeks to carry out assessment, coaching and portfolio-building. Formal reviews take place every 12 weeks. In addition to the internal verifier an assessor has now qualified as an internal verifier and is also working on the programmes. All the assessors and verifiers have other posts in the company. Most learning and all assessment is off the job.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

9. There are 10 learners on customer service programmes. There are four advanced modern apprentices and six foundation modern apprentices. All learners are employed and work in a range of establishments while include district council offices, leisure clubs, a national publishing company and an engineering company. Learners start their training throughout the year and are referred through previous and current learners and their employers.

10. There are two training consultants who visit learners every four to six weeks to carry out assessment, coaching, and portfolio-building. Progress reviews take place every 12 weeks. There is one internal verifier who is currently responsible for internal verification across more than one area of learning. In addition to the internal verifier an assessor has now qualified as an internal verifier to support this.

11. A few learners attend the WOTS training centre for key skills development and test preparation and the remaining learners have their key skills training delivered by WOTS's assessors in the workplace. The number of learners starting on customer service programmes has declined in recent years.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

12. There are 34 learners on sport and recreation programmes. Of these, one is working towards a qualification in operational development and is an advanced modern apprentice. Thirty-three are foundation modern apprentices working towards qualifications in operational services, instruction, teaching and coaching. All learners are employed in leisure centres and private health clubs. Learners are recruited from their places of employment and are recommended by their employers for training programmes.

13. There is one full-time and one part-time assessor who visit learners on a three-weekly basis to carry out assessment, coaching and portfolio-building, or more often if the learner requests it. Most training is carried out in the workplace, except for technical certificates which are delivered at the WOTS offices. Formal reviews take place every 12 weeks.

Health, social care & public services

14. WOTS has 21 learners in health, social care and public services. Ten are foundation modern apprentices working towards an NVQ in care at level 2. Eleven are advanced modern apprentices, 10 of whom are on the NVQ at level 3 promoting independence programme, and one learner is on an NVQ at level 3 direct care programme. The expected duration of the programme for foundation modern apprentices is 12-15 months and 24 months for advanced modern apprentices. All learners are employed in a range of care settings, homes for adults with learning difficulties, NHS trusts and residential homes. Learners can start their training throughout the year and are referred through previous and current learners and their employers. Since the previous inspection, the number of learners has declined.

15. There are two assessors and one internal verifier. Assessors visit the workplace at least every two weeks for assessment. Training for key skills and the technical certificate is given in groups or individually at either the providers' training room or in the workplace. Formal progress reviews take place every 12 weeks.

Foundation programmes

16. There are 10 learners on the E2E programme. The programme covers a range of areas including skills for life, motivational training, key skills, and a range of vocational training options. All learners take part in an initial assessment to identify literacy and numeracy support needs. Learners initially attend the training centre for five days a week. Work experience is an integral part of the programme and learners have planned placements with local employers.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learner interviews	40
Number of staff interviews	25
Number of employer interviews	18
Number of subcontractor interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

17. At the previous inspection, training in retailing, customer service and transportation was satisfactory. The organisation's arrangements for leadership and management, including equality of opportunity and quality assurance, were unsatisfactory. Training in business administration, management and professional; hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; and health, social care and public services was very weak. At the end of the reinspection process, training in business administration, management and professional; retailing, customer service and transportation; and health, social care and public services was satisfactory. However, the organisation's arrangements for leadership and management remain unsatisfactory although its arrangements for equality of opportunity were satisfactory. Training in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; and foundation programmes was also unsatisfactory. WOTS has been referred to Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire LSC for emergency action.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4
Business administration, management & professional	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL REINSPECTION

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

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	5
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	5

Health, social care & public services	5
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	5

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

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

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

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

Foundation programmes	4
Contributory grades:	
Entry to Employment	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

18. Retention rates have improved for advanced modern apprentices in care. In sport, and business administration, and customer service, retention rates have improved and are now satisfactory. More than half of the customer service foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 and 2003-04 have been retained or are still in learning. Almost half of the advanced modern apprentices in customer services who started in 2002-03 are still in learning, as are the advanced modern apprentices who started in 2003-04.

19. Good progress has been made in improving achievement rates in care programmes.

Achievement rates in business administration are now satisfactory. In business administration, all the foundation modern apprentices completed the framework in 2002-03. There were no achievements the following year but 50 per cent are still in learning. Sixty per cent of advanced modern apprentices completed the framework in 2002-03, 33 per cent completed it the following year and the other 67 per cent are still in learning. For the same two years, none of the learners have completed the framework in management, but 70 per cent are still in learning. Achievement rates in sport and leisure have shown some improvement. Achievement rates in customer service are now satisfactory. Since August 2003, nine customer service learners have completed the advanced modern apprenticeship framework and another nine have completed the foundation modern apprenticeship framework.

20. Many of the foundation level learners have achieved a range of qualifications and awards. Seventeen learners have gained a first aid certificate and eight have gained a lift truck driving qualification. Foundation learners also gain additional skills through practical activities including landscape gardening, hedge and grass cutting for the local authority.

21. The learners' portfolios are good in business administration. They include a wide range of evidence such as well-written learner statements, workplace evidence and witness testimony. Good use has been made of work projects for key skills and NVQ evidence.

22. Most of the learners in customer service and business administration have progressed well in the workplace. All learners observed have had increased duties that

include health and safety, and being fire marshals and first aiders. Three have been promoted. Several have advanced from NVQ at level 2 to level 3 and another learner is training to become an assessor. In all cases this has increased the learners' confidence and their employability skills.

23. Progression rates for foundation modern apprentices are satisfactory and improving. In 2003-04, of the 16 learners who left the programme, 10 gained a job in areas such as gardening, the armed services, maintenance, and retailing and warehousing.

24. **Learners in customer service develop a good range of skills in the workplace.** Many have increased their confidence when dealing with members of the public and are able to deal confidently with problems. Learners are making satisfactory progress towards achievement of their NVQ and key skills. The two advanced modern apprentices who started in 2004 are making satisfactory progress towards their NVQ units. All the foundation modern apprentices who started in July 2004 are making satisfactory progress towards their frameworks.

25. **Three of the 11 learners in business administration are making slow progress** and two of them are out of funding. WOTS has recognised the need to identify learners who are making slow progress and have introduced a traffic light system. In sport and leisure, most learners make slow progress towards completion of their frameworks. Some of the learners are in training for between six and 12 months before they complete any units of the NVQ.

Quality of education and training

26. **Assessment practice for the exercise to music course is good.** Observations take place and evidence covers the NVQ and the key skills. Learners receive detailed feedback on their performance.

27. **Target-setting is good in business administration,** but poor in other vocational areas. In business administration, assessors set achievable targets with the learners. Targets such as NVQ unit achievement dates are written up in the individual learning plans. Reviews include the employers. At the front of each portfolio there is a sheet that shows how many units and elements have been achieved. Assessment plans are not detailed. Learners have individual learning plans but copies that are held by learners are not updated.

28. **There is good coaching and guidance for learners on care programmes.** Frequent visits are planned by assessors for individual guidance, assessment planning and assessments. Assessors are easy to contact and respond promptly to telephone messages. The good support which was identified in the previous inspection has been maintained. Assessors visit learners every three weeks or more frequently if required. Appointments are arranged to suit learners' needs.

29. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for foundation learners. Learning sessions are

planned and concentrate on improving learners' social and life skills. Classroom sessions include activities and learners are fully involved in discussions, debates and problem-solving assignments.

30. There is insufficient co-ordination of training for care learners. Employers in the care sector provide training in the mandatory units of the NVQ and other specific topics. WOTS provides some of the training, but there is no overall plan to ensure the training is coherent. The planning of training in business administration is unstructured. Learning plans take little account of what training is provided by employers or by WOTS. Although employers are very helpful they often do not understand the framework requirements. Planning of training is poor for E2E learners. Roles and responsibilities of staff are still unclear and there are no demanding targets for achievement and progression. On- and off-the-job training is poorly planned in sport and leisure. Employers provide some training such as customer care, health and safety, and child protection, but this training is not taken into consideration or reflected when assessment is planned.

31. Business administration learners have a poor recall of the induction. Rights and responsibilities and equal opportunities are involved, but learners have little understanding of the grievance procedures. The learners understanding of equality and diversity is very basic.

32. Identification and recording of progress is weak for E2E learners. Learners' barriers to progress are not effectively identified on the Passport. Progress reviews do not set realistic targets and are only a commentary on what happened between reviews.

33. Literacy and numeracy support is inadequate. All learners take part in an initial assessment to identify literacy and/or numeracy support needs, but the results are not used to plan the training. Informal support is given during training sessions and at reviews when appropriate. However, this is not recorded.

34. Arrangements for key skills training in care are inadequate. None of the staff are qualified to deliver key skills training. Initial assessment does not always identify training needs. A few learners have individual key skills sessions, while others receive group training. There is no monitoring of content or quality of coaching. Learning materials are being developed but is too early to identify their effectiveness. The key skills are not an integral part of the care programme.

Leadership and management

35. Partnership arrangements are effective. There is a good working relationship with the district council who have offered good work-experience placements and opportunities for full-time employment.

36. There are good initiatives and actions to improve retention and achievement rates in care and in customer service. In care, a new training manager and training consultant have been recruited and the initial assessment and assessment practice have improved.

Internal verification procedures were very weak at the time of the previous inspection, but are now satisfactory.

37. Internal communications are good. There are frequent management team meetings, team meetings and standardisation meetings which are effective in ensuring that all staff are aware of priorities. Meetings are accurately minuted but do not sufficiently identify clear actions and responsibilities. Action plans are not sufficiently detailed or monitored. Team meetings focus mainly on retention and achievement rates but also include updates to the action plans. Equality of opportunity is a standard agenda item but it is not covered in sufficient detail. Additional meetings have been introduced as a forum for staff to raise concerns and these have ensured that team meetings remain focused on operational matters. Staff have good opportunities for regular, informal discussion with the head of service and the training managers. The head of service meets frequently with the strategic director, but these meetings are not recorded.

38. Staff development is well focused on improving teaching and learning. Staff development needs are identified through the appraisal system, observations of learning sessions and reviews, team meetings and self-referral. Recently appointed staff are working towards assessor awards and are attending training in key skills or technical certificates. Other staff have trained how to deal with complex learning difficulties and motivational techniques. All staff have received recent training in equality and diversity, target-setting and in the use of the new management information system.

39. The management have not set a clear direction for quality education and training. They have been slow to deal with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and some have shown little improvement. Management restructuring has delayed the introduction of strategies to resolve key weaknesses. Insufficient priority is given to making improvements and action plans have not been sufficiently monitored. Although there have been improvements in business administration, care and customer service since the previous inspection, managers have not introduced actions to deal with organisational weaknesses and weaknesses in sport and recreation or quality assurance.

40. Arrangements for literacy and numeracy support are inadequate. While all learners have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills there is no formal support for learners who have additional needs. Learners are well supported through their programmes, but there is no additional specialist support. In sport and leisure, there is no assessments of additional support needs such as for dyslexia.

41. Promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity is insufficient. WOTS has satisfactory policies and procedures including those for complaints and harassment. Learners receive a satisfactory introduction to equality of opportunity at induction and assessors use a bank of questions to test their understanding at reviews. Most learners are aware of the complaints and appeals procedures but only a few have a basic understanding of equality of opportunity. WOTS does not target under-represented groups. Marketing materials do not contain images to challenge stereotyping or improve the participation rates from under-represented groups.

42. **The arrangements for quality assurance are incomplete.** The organisation has a quality assurance strategy but the operating policies and procedures are too new to have impacted on the training. Some policies are not sufficiently detailed to give enough guidance to new members of staff. Action plans are not sufficiently monitored. Observations of training and reviews do not identify actions to drive improvement. Arrangements to gather feedback from learners and employers are not effective.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good communication
- well-focused staff development

Weaknesses

- late management action to deal with weaknesses
- incomplete quality assurance systems
- insufficient promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good portfolios of evidence
- good progression in the workplace by learners
- very effective target-setting

Weaknesses

- slow progress for a minority of learners
- poor recall of induction by learners
- no structured training programmes

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- good skill development by learners
- good employer involvement in NVQ and key skills
- good strategies to improve retention and achievement rates

Weaknesses

- ineffective target-setting to drive progress
- insufficient resources in customer service

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good support for learners
- good assessment practice for learners in exercise to music learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress towards completion of the framework for most learners
- no planning of on- and off-the-job training
- poor target-setting for learners

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good coaching and guidance to meet individual needs
- good initiatives and actions to improve retention and achievement rates

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of training
- inadequate arrangements for key skills training

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- effective partnership arrangements

Weaknesses

- weak identification and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate support for literacy and numeracy
- poor planning of training

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

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

Strengths

- good communication
- well-focused staff development

Weaknesses

- late management action to deal with weaknesses
- incomplete quality assurance systems
- insufficient promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity

43. Internal communications are good. There are frequent management team meetings, team meetings and standardisation meetings which are effective in ensuring that all staff are aware of priorities. A meetings calendar has been introduced which identifies dates for monthly management meetings, team meetings and the area of learning meetings. Meetings are accurately minuted but do not sufficiently identify clear actions and responsibilities. Action plans are not sufficiently detailed or monitored. For example, management meetings were introduced in January 2004 to discuss quality assurance and weaknesses from the previous inspection, but the minutes do not accurately record actions or follow-up dates. The team meetings focus mainly on retention and achievement rates but also include updates to the action plans. Equality of opportunity is a standard agenda item but it is not covered in sufficient detail. Additional meetings have been introduced as a forum for staff to raise other concerns and this ensures that team meetings remain focused on operational matters. Staff have good opportunities for regular, informal discussion with the head of service and the training managers. The head of service meets frequently with the strategic director but these meetings are not formally recorded.

44. Staff development is well focused on improving teaching, learning, and assessment. Needs are identified through appraisal, observations of learning sessions and reviews, team meetings and self-referral. WOTS is committed to improving learning through targeted staff training and continuing professional development. There is a structured programme of staff development focused on improving the learners' experience. Staff development needs are recorded at appraisal and effective training plans are in place. Every employee maintains a continuing professional development file to record all training activities and this is used in the next appraisal. Appropriate priorities for training are agreed at appraisal with realistic achievement dates. Most of the staff are currently attending relevant training to improve teaching learning and assessment. Recently

appointed staff are working towards assessor awards, or are attending awareness-raising sessions in key skills or technical certificates. Other staff have trained to deal with complex learning difficulties and motivational techniques. All staff have received recent training in equality and diversity, target-setting and in the use of the new management information system. WOTS does not differentiate between part-time and full-time staff when agreeing training. For example, one part-time member of staff has recently been supported through her internal verification award to deal with weaknesses in internal verification from the previous inspection. WOTS is also sponsoring two subcontracting staff to become assessors and verifiers.

45. The arrangements for appraisal are satisfactory. Staff are appraised annually by the head of service and progress is reviewed after six months. The format of the appraisal documents encourages an open discussion about performance against agreed objectives from the previous appraisal. Appraisals comprise a self-evaluation by the appraisee, and a good discussion about progress, problems and targets for the future. The appraisal documents contain useful prompts for discussion but these are too generic. Individual's targets do not always relate to activities improving the teaching, learning and assessment. Action plans are agreed for the following year but these do not always contain sufficient detail or end dates. Training and development actions are explicit and lead to improved performance, but many other actions are too vague or are not time bound. Many staff appraisals do not include discussions on retention and achievement, which are the main challenges of the organisation. To date, lesson observation grades have not been discussed at appraisals.

46. Business planning and strategic management is satisfactory. WOTS has a three-year development plan which directly links to the strategic plan and identifies suitable priorities to improve retention and achievement rates. The development plan focuses on operational targets and contractual matters. All staff receive a copy of the development plan attached to the self-assessment report. The development plan contains clearly focused objectives and identifies responsibilities for action and monitoring, but it does not identify costings or resources.

47. WOTS has recently introduced a commercially designed management information system to monitor its performance. Staff have received training in the use of the system, but it is too early to judge how effectively it can be used to identify trends in performance, to recognise improvement and good practice or take corrective action when necessary. A range of reports can be produced but the data is not yet robust enough to allow confidence in the reports.

48. WOTS's management have been slow in dealing with weaknesses from the previous inspection. A management restructure has taken place and insufficient priority was given to taking actions to secure improvements. Action plans have not been sufficiently monitored to identify where improvement was slow to take place. Although there have been improvements in business administration, care and customer service since the previous inspection, managers have been late in introducing actions in sport and recreation. New assessors for sport and recreation have not received enough support to work on action plans. Managers have not used development plans effectively to monitor

the organisation's performance. Improvements have not been reported back to all staff to secure further improvement and share good practice. WOTS does not have an effective strategy or sufficient staff to provide additional support for literacy and numeracy needs. The promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity is still insufficient and most learners have only a basic awareness. However, staff have implemented good actions to deal with poor retention and achievement rates in customer service.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

49. WOTS has a satisfactory equal opportunities policy supported by policies and procedures for settling grievances and for bullying and harassment. Staff and learners have appropriate access to information on equality. Policies are explained to learners at induction and during reviews but are not sufficiently reinforced throughout the programme. Learners are given an information pack which details the harassment and bullying policies and the equality of opportunity policy. WOTS adequately monitors its subcontractor's arrangements for equality of opportunity and arrangements in employers' premises. Assessors check the existence of policies in each workplace and if they do not exist, employers sign an undertaking to comply with the WOTS policy. However, in one case this was not effectively enforced and one employer still does not have a policy on equality of opportunity. One management learner has written an equality policy for her employer as part of the NVQ as well as becoming involved in training staff in her organisation.

50. WOTS has an equality of opportunity implementation plan which includes the redrafting of the equality of opportunity policy and the bullying and anti-harassment policy. The plan identifies target dates but does not record progress against these dates. However, milestones are recorded and updated and the resources are identified. Ineffective implementation of the equality of opportunity policy was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection but this has now improved. Equality of opportunity is now an agenda item at management and team meetings and is frequently discussed. All staff have received recent training in equality and diversity from WODC and all assessors have attended a three-day local authority equality and diversity for trainers course. WOTS's assessors use a bank of questions on equality of opportunity during reviews to test learners' understanding but do not effectively reinforce or promote further understanding or raise awareness. Most learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity. Although the policy has been recently updated, it still does not include some of the current legislation. WOTS's premises have satisfactory access for learners with restricted mobility.

51. WOTS has a suitable procedure for handling complaints and grievances. Complaints are investigated promptly and thoroughly by the head of service and are satisfactorily resolved when possible. A few learners do not fully understand the complaints and grievance procedures and are unaware of how to formally raise a complaint. However, all learners understand they can talk to their assessors or to the head of service.

52. Promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity and diversity is insufficient.

Learners are introduced to equality of opportunity at induction and assessors use questions to test their understanding at reviews. However, a few learners only have a basic understanding of equality of opportunity. WOTS does not target under-represented groups. Marketing materials do not contain images to challenge stereotyping or improve the participation rates from under-represented groups. Data on the local population is collected but it is not sufficiently analysed or used to identify and target under-represented groups. However, a disadvantaged group has been targeted for the new E2E programme. WOTS has very recently purchased a commercial diversity activity pack, but this is not yet being used effectively.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

53. Quality monitoring of all aspects of the learners' experience are planned and implemented through regular audits by the management team and training managers. They encompass focus groups, paperwork audits and observations. When problems are identified, prompt action is taken to rectify them. However, it did not identify variations in practice in target-setting and in the use of individual learning plans. Individual feedback after observations of reviews and training are not sufficiently detailed and do not include an action plan. Lesson observations have been introduced but are too formulaic. Inadequate monitoring of the quality of training was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection and it still focuses on quality control rather than quality improvement.

54. Internal verification takes place regularly, and is adequately planned and recorded. Frequent standardisation meetings take place to promote good practice between assessors. Weaknesses in internal verification identified in two vocational areas at the previous inspection have been resolved and arrangements are now adequate.

55. The arrangements for quality assurance are incomplete. The organisation has a quality assurance strategy but the operating policies and procedures are too new to have impacted on the training and education. Some policies are not sufficiently detailed for new members of staff and their effectiveness cannot be monitored. There is an over reliance on informal recording of progress against actions and staff are not fully informed. Actions from minutes of meetings are not sufficiently monitored and are not always revisited at successive meetings. Observations of training and reviews do not include individual actions to drive improvement. There are few arrangements for monitoring the on-the-job training at employers.

56. Some aspects of quality assurance have been implemented but are not having sufficient impact. For example, feedback and quality monitoring are ineffective in promoting improvement. Arrangements to gather feedback from learners and employers are not effective. Learners' views are collected through questionnaires but the response rate is low and it does not provide sufficient information. The employers' views are collected annually by questionnaire and these are collated by the head of service. However, the information is not analysed and does not lead to improvement. Response rates to employer questionnaires have been low and there has been insufficient action to obtain more information.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL REINSPECTION

57. The self-assessment process included all staff, but there was no consultation with learners or with employers. The report is detailed, and provides useful information about the organisation and its actions since the previous inspection. Many of the strengths and weaknesses in the report were also identified by inspectors, but some of the strengths are no more than normal practice and some of the weaknesses are understated. The self-assessment report did not identify slow progress towards completion of frameworks in business administration. The development plan contains challenging targets, many of which are unrealistic or too ambitious, particularly relating to retention and achievement rates and timescales.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	3

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

Strengths

- good portfolios of evidence
- good progression in the workplace by learners
- very effective target-setting

Weaknesses

- slow progress for a minority of learners
- poor recall of induction by learners
- no structured training programmes

Achievement and standards

58. The learners' portfolios are good. They include a range of individual evidence including well-written learner statements, workplace evidence and witness testimony. Good use has been made of work projects for key skills and NVQ evidence. In addition there are descriptive assessor observations that are well matched to the NVQ standards.

59. Most learners have progressed well in the workplace. All learners observed have increased their duties to include health and safety and being fire marshals and first aiders. Three learners have been promoted. Several have advanced from NVQ at level 2 to level 3 and another learner is training to become an NVQ assessor.

60. The previous inspection identified some poor achievement and declining retention rates. Achievement rates are now satisfactory. In business administration, all the foundation modern apprentices completed the framework in 2002-03, but there were no achievements the following year, however 50 per cent are still in learning. Sixty-seven per cent of advanced modern apprentices completed the framework in 2002-03 and 33 per cent completed the following year. A further 67 per cent are still in learning. For the same two years none of the learners have completed the framework in management, but 70 per cent are still in learning. The retention rates are very similar.

61. Three of the 11 learners are making slow progress and two of them are out of funding. One learner has not started key skills and is nine months into the programme.

WOTS has recognised the need to identify learners who are making slow progress and are doing so by using a traffic light system. There has been considerable progress since this system was introduced.

Quality of education and training

62. The previous inspection identified inadequate progress reviews and insufficient planning of individual training programmes, but this has now been rectified. Assessors now set achievable, time-bound targets in discussion with the learners. Learners understand what they have been asked to do and are able to achieve these targets in time for the next visit. Medium-term targets, such as NVQ unit achievement dates are written in the individual learning plans. Reviews are carried out with the employers and targets are set and amended on the individual learning plan. At the front of each portfolio there is a sheet that shows how many units and elements have been achieved.

63. Workplaces are well resourced and work to sound commercial practices. The NVQ evidence requirements are easily met from the workplace. In all cases, learners' job roles relate well to the NVQ. Learners are able to loan a laptop computer from the training company. There is now a set of textbooks in the resources room that learners can use to research projects.

64. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners are tested to identify for the level of key skills and if necessary for literacy, numeracy or language. One learner has had additional help with study skills and confidence-building and another has had additional help with understanding English texts. Support for learners is satisfactory. There is consistent use of accreditation of prior learning. NVQ assessment is satisfactory. Assessors visit every three or four weeks and use a wide range of assessment methods.

65. Learners have a poor recall of their induction. Rights and responsibilities and equal opportunities are included in the induction, but learners have little understanding of the grievance procedures. The learners' understanding of equality and diversity is very basic.

Leadership and management

66. Internal verification is satisfactory. Additional staff have been trained to become internal verifiers and the system has expanded. Employers carry out very little formal training and assessors concentrate on assessing and do not have a training role. The self-assessment process did not identify any of the strengths identified in the inspection and did not recognise most of the weaknesses.

67. The previous inspection identified ineffective management of programmes. Some improvements have been made, but learning plans take little account of the employers' training and training offered by WOTS is not recorded. There is no co-ordination between training offered by employers and WOTS. Although employers are very helpful, they do not understand the framework requirements.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	10	3

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

Strengths

- good skill development by learners
- good employer involvement in NVQ and key skills
- good strategies to improve retention and achievement rates

Weaknesses

- ineffective target-setting to drive progress
- insufficient resources in customer service

Achievement and standards

68. Learners develop good skills in the workplace and many have increased responsibility and are able to work independently. Many learners have increased their confidence when dealing with members of the public and are able to deal confidently with customer service problems. One learner is dealing with complex and sensitive work issues and is resolving internal customer service problems. Another learner has been able to seek feedback from customers and use this information to improve the company's service.

69. Learners are making satisfactory progress towards achievement of their NVQ and key skills. Since August 2003, nine learners have completed the advanced modern apprenticeship framework and another nine learners have completed the foundation modern apprenticeship framework. One of the advanced modern apprentices who started in 2003 has achieved the NVQ and key skills tests and has nearly finished the key skills. The two advanced modern apprentices who started in 2004 are making satisfactory progress towards their NVQ units: one has taken the key skills tests and is awaiting the results and the other learner is due to take the tests in November 2004. All the foundation modern apprentices who started in July 2004 are making satisfactory progress.

70. Retention rates are satisfactory. More than half of the foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 and 2003-04 have been retained or are still in learning. Almost half of the advanced modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 are still in learning, as are the NVQ advanced modern apprentices who started in 2003-04.

Quality of education and training

71. Employers' involvement in NVQs and key skills is good. Some employers give learners time during the working day to work on their portfolios. They readily provide witness testimonies and help learners to identify suitable evidence for their portfolios. Most employers offer training, which broadens knowledge and encourages skill development. This training is recorded on the learners' individual learning plan and is cross-referenced to the NVQ units. However, there is little forward planning of individual learners' training requirements. Some learners have completed meaningful and useful projects for their employers, which have covered key skills and NVQ units. Learners who are with one major employer make good use of the company intranet to broaden their background knowledge. Employers are given a document which summarises the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

72. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessments are planned in advance but there is insufficient recording of planned observations. New assessment planning documents are currently being piloted and are providing a record of planned observations. Detailed records of observation are cross-referenced to NVQ units and show performance criteria and background knowledge, but key skills are not always included. Feedback to learners is clearly written on the assessment record sheet, but not on the observation record. Portfolios are well organised and contain an appropriate range of evidence including witness testimony, work-based evidence and learner statements. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements.

73. Induction is satisfactory and learners remember it well. During induction, the framework requirements are carefully explained, and all learners fully understand the components.

74. The range of programmes is satisfactory and meets the needs of learners and local employers. A range of optional NVQ units is offered and in customer service a choice of framework routes is offered to meet individual needs. Learners are able to progress from level 2 to level 3 and to team leading, accounts, administration and management. One learner who works in a leisure centre has been given the opportunity to gain a qualification in circuit training.

75. Support for learners is satisfactory. All learners have a named training consultant and are visited on a regular basis. Learners who are identified as being at risk of leaving early are visited or contacted more frequently. Records are kept of all contact made with learners.

76. Resources to support customer service learners are insufficient. There are no supplementary materials to support learners' development of background knowledge. This weakness has been identified by WOTS and there are plans to purchase additional resources. Learners do not currently attend WOTS for background knowledge training and there is an over-reliance on employers to provide this. There are sufficient assessors who are appropriately qualified and experienced.

77. Target-setting at reviews is ineffective, with limited or no involvement of the employer or supervisor. Short-term targets are set at each visit and are recorded on an assessment plan. The targets are often specific, measurable and time-bound, but focus mainly on the completion of background knowledge questions and the collection of evidence. There is little medium-term planning. Learners and employers are unaware of any milestones during their programme and are unaware of the amount of time it should take them to complete each component of their framework. The assessor decides the targets with little input from learners and employers. Targets are recorded on the assessment plan but the employer does not always receive a copy of this document. Targets recorded on the review document are often unspecific and do not show how the learner is to achieve the target. There is little recording of how the achievement of the targets will contribute to completion of the framework. Target dates for the completion of NVQ units are recorded on the individual learning plan and these are usually amended. Learners have recently been given a sheet, which records progress towards unit achievement.

78. All learners have an interview at WOTS or in their workplace before starting on the programme. Most learners have a test for key skills and literacy, numeracy and language needs but additional diagnostic tests and activities do not take place to identify specific support needs. All learners have an individual learning plan, but their programme is not planned individually and the same length of time is allowed for unit completion regardless of the learners' prior experience or current job role.

Leadership and management

79. Good strategies have been introduced, since the previous inspection, to improve the retention and achievement rates. A new initial assessment process was introduced in January 2004 and learners now have an in-depth interview with the training consultant where the responsibilities of the learner, employer and WOTS are clearly explained. The training consultant completes a skills scan with the learner and line manager to check that the NVQ requirements can be met. A revised induction has also been introduced to reinforce the initial assessment process.

80. A traffic light system has been introduced to identify learners who are at risk of leaving early or failing to complete their framework. Revised assessment planning and recording documents have been devised and are currently being piloted. Regular team meetings and standardisation meetings are held and minutes are taken.

81. There has been a delay in introducing the technical certificates. Customer service assessors were deployed to support other vocational areas when the revised frameworks were introduced. Plans are in place to start offering technical certificate training from February 2005. There are currently no schemes of work or lessons plans but development days have been identified during late October. All learners on the new framework will receive technical certificate training and will be able to take the external exams before their planned end dates. From January 2005, all new learners will receive

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL REINSPECTION

technical certificate training at the start of their programme.

82. All training consultants were involved in the self-assessment process. Individual meetings were held with the management consultant where the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes were discussed. However, the learners and employers were not involved.

83. Learners' understand equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is discussed at reviews. At each 12-week review, learners are asked specific questions, which prompts discussion between the assessor and learner.

84. There are regular standardisation meetings and adequate support for assessors.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	34	4

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

Strengths

- good support for learners
- good assessment practice for learners in exercise to music learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress towards completion of the framework for most learners
- no planning of on- and off-the-job training
- poor target-setting for learners

Achievement and standards

85. The previous inspection identified very poor achievement and retention rates. Retention rates have improved and are now satisfactory and achievement rates have shown some improvement. However, most learners make slow progress towards completion of their framework. In 2002-03, nine of the foundation modern apprentices completed the framework in sport and leisure. In 2003-04 a further six have completed the framework. However, some learners are in training for between six and 12 months before they complete any of the NVQ units. Learners are often working on a number of units at one time.

86. Since the previous inspection there has been a change in the assessment arrangements for the NVQ. WOTS does not now subcontract the assessment, it has employed one full-time and one part-time assessor. Key skills are introduced at an early stage and assessment is carried out regularly. Learners are producing work and are observed in the workplaces, but no assessment decisions are made on this evidence and it is not referenced on to evidence summary sheets. Learners cannot easily see how much of their qualification has been completed. Assessors use sheets to show which NVQ units and elements have been completed, but they do not correspond with elements that have been signed off. Some of the learners who were on programme at the time of the previous inspection have had to start the NVQ again as assessment decisions and completed units have not been accepted for competency. A number of learners have completed all aspects of their framework except the technical certificate and have several months wait before they are able to attend a course.

Quality of education and training

87. Learners receive good support. This was identified at the previous inspection and has been maintained. Assessors visit learners on a three-weekly basis but this is more frequent if required. Appointments are arranged to suit learners' needs. For example, assessors visit at weekends to observe class preparation, delivery and evaluation, or early mornings to observe opening up procedures. All learners are supplied with their assessors' mobile telephone number and they are easily contactable. Assessors have been very supportive of learners who have had to restart their NVQ and have managed to remotivate them to make progress. Assessors have a high level of occupational knowledge which they freely share with learners. For example, one learner was investigating the implementation of a crèche into their centre and the assessor shared their experience and knowledge. Learners have access to equipment such as laptop computers and portable dictation machines. However, there are few textbooks for learners. There is no specialist support for learners with additional needs. There is no testing for literacy, numeracy or language needs, or additional support for dyslexia. Staff are not qualified to support these needs.

88. There is good assessment practice for learners on the exercise to music programme. Learners focus on all units and observations take place so that evidence is substantial and covers much of the evidence requirements for the NVQ and key skills. Learners are given detailed feedback on their performance. Progress is good after the exercise to music course.

89. On- and off-the-job training is poorly planned. Employers do provide training such as customer care, health and safety, and child protection in the workplace and it is not taken into consideration when assessment is planned. Seasonal variations in activity in the workplace are not considered, and assessment is not necessarily carried out at the most beneficial times for learners and employers. Employers are supportive of learners but most are not involved in the process. For example, one employer attended a review but was not encouraged to be involved in the process, except to add a comment on the review form at the end.

90. Target-setting is poor. Learners have targets to achieve by the next assessor visit but these are no medium- or long-term targets. Assessment plans are not detailed and do not include targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. For example, one learner was asked at a review what they would achieve by the next visit. They thought that between 50 and 75 per cent of their NVQ would be completed, which was unrealistic. This was still recorded on the review paperwork. Learners have individual learning plans but copies that are held by learners are not revisited or updated. Copies of the plans are kept at WOTS's offices and these are amended.

91. The previous inspection identified the inconsistent use of accreditation of prior learning but it is now introduced at the induction and during the initial assessment. The initial assessment and induction are satisfactory, although literacy, numeracy and language skills are not tested.

Leadership and management

92. The previous inspection identified poor internal verification, but significant improvements have now been made. A service level agreement has been signed between WOTS and the subcontractor and there are regular standardisation meetings. Company paperwork is now used and minutes of the meetings are taken, but target dates for actions are not set. There is an internal verification strategy and sampling plan, but they do not include specific targets. An occupationally competent member of staff is now qualified as an internal verifier, but they have not yet started verifying the sport and leisure programme.

93. Unsatisfactory management of the programme was identified at the previous inspection, but this is now satisfactory. The assessor is now employed by WOTS and staff have received a range of training. The company has been very supportive, and in one instance has provided childcare to enable an assessor to attend some of the training. Assessors work well as a team and are supportive of each other.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	21	3

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

Strengths

- good coaching and guidance to meet individual needs
- good initiatives and actions to improve retention and achievement rates

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of training
- inadequate arrangements for key skills training

Achievement and standards

94. Since the previous inspection, five advanced modern apprentices and seven foundation modern apprentices have completed the framework. The learners who are still in learning have all achieved some NVQ units and have significant evidence towards other units. Recruitment on to the care programmes has recently re-started. The standard of work in the portfolios is satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

95. The coaching and guidance are good and meet individual learners' needs. Assessors visit the learners at least twice a month, and learners who have additional training and assessment needs are visited more frequently. Visits are pre-planned to allow individual guidance, assessment planning and assessment. Employers, learners and the assessor meet every 12 weeks to review the learners' progress and all partners have a copy of the completed review document. Learners are confident enough to discuss personal issues at the review. Assessors are easy to contact by telephone and they respond promptly. Assessors provide transport for the learners who want to attend training and portfolio-building sessions also help the learners to complete applications to further training, such as nurse training, and give advice on options for further qualifications.

96. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are qualified care workers and have good experience in their main speciality. There are sufficient staff and the accommodation is adequate. Most workplaces provide accommodation for the learner to work with the assessor without interruption. WOTS is now developing learning materials to cover aspects of the qualification and more recent learners are given textbooks. Recently WOTS has given all learners a comprehensive list of resources.

97. At the previous inspection, assessment practice was weak, but this is now satisfactory. A range of assessment methods is used and all assessment records have dates and signatures. Assessment planning involves the learner, but the records do not always detail the full discussion that has taken place or clearly identify how all the elements and range are to be covered. The new assessment planning documents are available and will be used with new learners. Oral and written feedback is given promptly after assessment. The evidence for background knowledge in level 3 portfolios only just meets the criteria.

98. Discussion between the learner, employer and WOTS's staff, and the initial assessment, are used to identify the level of programme for the learner. All learners interviewed are on the correct level of programme to match their aims and job roles.

99. Training is not sufficiently co-ordinated. All employers provide training in challenging behaviour, the administration of medicines and epilepsy awareness. WOTS provides sessions in portfolio-building and, more recently, first aid. However, these courses are not well co-ordinated. There is no plan to ensure that learners are trained in all aspects of care required for each level of qualification. All portfolios contain a form to record training, but these are often incomplete. Little attempt is made to ensure that specific training is timed for when the learner needs it to complete units. Plans have recently been made to cover the training required for each level 2 unit, but employers and learners are unaware of how this fits into the NVQ.

100. Arrangements for key skills training are inadequate. The care staff do not have key skills qualifications. A few learners have received some individual coaching and staff recently organised a workshop to cover one aspect of application of number. However, there is no monitoring of the quality and extent of the coaching. A few learners have not been given clear feedback on the results of their mock and real key skills tests. The individual learning plan does not clearly identify how learners are to receive training in key skills. The targets which are set at reviews are not always detailed and training needs are not identified. The key skills are not an integral part of the teaching in care. Learners and employers do not understand the importance of key skills. Learning materials have been developed recently but it is too early to confirm their effectiveness. Literacy, numeracy and language support needs are not identified and no specialist help is available.

Leadership and management

101. There have been good initiatives and actions to improve retention and achievement rates. Since the previous inspection a new training manager and training consultant have been recruited. They have created new policies and procedures for most aspects of the programme, with the emphasis on re-motivating learners and providing a high level of individual coaching. Initial assessment practice has been developed, but the learners are new and there is insufficient evidence to confirm its effectiveness. Most of the assessments are carried out by the training consultant,

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL REINSPECTION

although three learners are assessed by a subcontracted assessor.

102. At the previous inspection the internal verification practice was very weak. All internal verification is now carried out by the training manager. A comprehensive sampling plan ensures that a range of units are verified and that formative and summative verification takes place. Clear written feedback is given to the assessors. Assessors have been observed carrying out their role. Regular standardisation meetings take place, which are minuted and actioned. There are no NVQ handbooks for learners, assessors or internal verifiers, but this has been recognised and plans are underway to write them. Internal verification practice is now satisfactory.

103. The team is aware of the need to provide more learning opportunities and has started the planning, but they have not clarified what is already available and the range of individual learners' requirements. The management of the care programme is now satisfactory with improved communication between members of the team. The self-assessment report is thorough but it did not identify the main strengths and weaknesses of the care programme.

Foundation programmes**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Entry to Employment	10	4

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

Strengths

- effective partnership arrangements

Weaknesses

- weak identification and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate support for literacy and numeracy
- poor planning of training

Achievement and standards

104. Progression rates are satisfactory and improving. In 2003-04, 10 of the 16 learners are still in learning. Job outcomes include gardening, the armed services, maintenance, retailing and warehousing.

105. Many learners have achieved a range of qualifications and awards. Seventeen learners have gained a first aid certificate and eight have a lift truck driving qualification. The provider also awards in-house certificates for practical activities such as hedge and grass cutting.

Quality of education and training

106. Identification and recording of learners' achievements is weak. All learners take part in an initial assessment to identify additional literacy and/or numeracy support needs. This is used with information gained at interview and that supplied by Connexions. An individual programme is planned. However, the information is not being used effectively to identify barriers to learning. Key objectives in the individual learning plan are mainly concerned with achieving qualifications and work experience. Attendance, for example, was not identified as a key objective, although references to the need to improve attendance appears in some progress reviews. Many reviews are only a commentary on what has happened between reviews, and do not include target-setting.

107. Literacy and numeracy support is inadequate. All learners take part in an initial assessment but the results are not used to plan the training. Informal support is given during training sessions and at reviews when appropriate. There is no systematic

recording of support needs of progress on the E2E Passport.

108. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learning sessions are planned and concentrate on improving learners' social and life skills. Classroom sessions include activities and learners are fully involved in discussions, debates and problem-solving assignments. Learners are encouraged to work as a team. Learners also take part in practical outdoor activities and learn how to use small tools safely and effectively.

109. Resources are satisfactory. Staff have experience of working with young people who have many barriers to learning in a range of settings. They also have experience of organising and supervising special project work that learners take part in as part of their activities. However, staff do not have teaching or a specific training qualification. Only one member of staff is qualified to support literacy and numeracy needs, but this member of staff's current duties do not include this support. The provider has recently moved into new premises which contain well-decorated training rooms. The provider has purchased several laptop computers to ensure access to ICT for learners. Training rooms contain suitable furniture and a range of teaching aids.

110. WOTS is still developing the E2E programme to ensure that it meets the needs of learners and provides a suitable structure to enable learners to progress. Training sessions concentrate on improving learners' self-confidence and their social and life skills. The provider makes use of a local quarry where learners are able to gain a range of practical skills. The projects has included fabricating a set of wooden steps and landscaping a bicycle track. All learners take part in planned work experience as an integral part of their training programme. Learners are able to gain accredited qualifications and awards. However there is little co-ordination between theory sessions and practical activities. Evidence from practical activities are not recorded effectively during progress reviews, nor are they used towards the achievement of qualifications.

Leadership and management

111. The partnership arrangements are effective. While WOTS is part of the local authority, it has previously found it difficult to arrange good work placements which include training. WOTS has now negotiated work placements for four learners and are already in the process of organising more. Placements include the stores at the local authority depot, grass and hedge cutting within the authority boundary, and with a team which clears the results of illegal fly tipping, and general maintenance of local authority buildings. Authority managers and supervisors are positive about this initiative and demonstrate a commitment to training.

112. Planning of training is poor. The E2E programme is not well developed and does not have a comprehensive structure on which to improve the provision. Some staff changes are still being implemented and roles and responsibilities are unclear. The E2E co-ordinator has little formal input into many aspects of the programme. Theory sessions take place in isolation from other parts of the programme and are not linked with any of the learners' practical activities. Session times still rely on the reliability of taxis and the

minibus. There are no qualifications available to make use of the range of evidence produced from practical skills. There are few demanding targets made for attendance, achievement and progression and little use of data to assess the quality of the E2E provision. There is no formal, systematic support for learners with literacy and/or numeracy needs. The results of initial assessment are not used to identify the main support needs, or to plan the level of resources needed. Most data on progress and achievement are compiled to comply with contracts rather than to identify and improve the quality of provision.

113. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and weaknesses that were identified during the inspection. However, some of the staff and learners' views were not considered in the report. Target dates for the implementation of the development plan are over-optimistic and have not been achieved.