

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Darlington Borough Council Reinspection**

**08 December 2004**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL REINSPECTION

### 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.

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Darlington Borough Council Training Unit (DBCTU) was established in 1982 as part of the council's corporate division of human resource management. Since the previous inspection, strategic responsibility has transferred to the education division under the remit of the lifelong learning section. DBCTU provides work-based learning for young people in business administration, health, social care and public services, engineering, construction, foundation, sports and recreation. There are too few learners for the sports and recreation area to be inspected separately and DBCTU intends to close this programme when existing learners complete their programmes.

2. Almost all of DBCTU's 81 learners are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2, and 3, and most take modern apprenticeships. A small number of entry to employment (E2E) learners are taking literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners are recruited mainly from local schools. DBCTU has a training manager, a training co-ordinator, five tutor/assessors, a transition mentor and an administrative assistant. Off-the-job training takes place at DBCTU's premises in the local arts centre, with the exception of early years care and education, and sports and recreation, where it is subcontracted to a local college of further education. DBCTU receives most of its funding from the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Construction

3. There are 18 learners following programmes in wood occupations. There are 17 foundation modern apprentices and one advanced modern apprentice. Off-the-job training is carried out at DBCTU's training centre and at one of Darlington Borough Council's (the council) workshops. Most learners are directly recruited by DBCTU, with a small number referred by their employers. Learners work at a wide range of employers on domestic and commercial projects in the local area. There is one member of staff, who provides training and assessment. All evidence for assessment of practical competence is generated and collected in the workplace.

#### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. There are 17 learners, of whom six are advanced modern apprentices, seven are foundation modern apprentices, and four are working towards NVQs at level 2. All of the apprentices are working towards NVQs in motor vehicle repair. Learners are employed or have placements at local garages and attend the training centre one day each week for off-the-job training. All successful applicants take a literacy, numeracy and language skills assessment that also contributes to the key skills assessment. Progress reviews are carried out approximately every eight weeks and all vocationally related assessments are carried out in the workplace. Key skills are taught in the training centre and incorporated into vocational theory lessons.

### **Business administration, management & professional**

5. There are 18 learners on business administration programmes, of whom 13 are foundation modern apprentices, one is an advanced modern apprentice, and four are working solely towards NVQs at level 2. The council employs five of the learners and the rest are on work placements, either in council offices or at local employers. Off-the-job training is carried out on an individual basis at DBCTU's offices. Most learners begin programmes immediately after leaving school in July, and all learners take part in a one-week induction programme.

### **Health, social care & public services**

6. There are 11 learners on early years care and education programmes, nine of whom are foundation modern apprentices and two are advanced modern apprentices. Learners are employed or have work placements in local authority nurseries. Practical training and assessment takes place in the workplace. Off-the-job training, verification and review of learners' progress are subcontracted to a local college of further education. Learners have the opportunity to attend DBCTU's offices for weekly individual portfolio-building sessions.

### **Foundation programmes**

7. There are 17 learners on E2E programmes. It was not inspected as a separate area at the previous inspection as at that time it was a very new programme. Four learners are working towards an NVQ at level 1 in business administration, four are working towards an NVQ at level 1 in motor vehicle, and three are working towards an NVQ at level 1 in construction. For these learners, off-the-job training is carried out at DBCTU's offices and on-the-job training takes place at work placements. Six learners have recently left the care of the local authority and are following courses that are designed to develop their personal, social and employability skills. Training for these learners is subcontracted to the social services section of the council, which subcontracts some literacy and numeracy training to a local college of further education.

## **ABOUT THE REINSPECTION**

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	21
Number of staff interviews	20
Number of employer interviews	7
Number of subcontractor interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits	9

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. DBCTU was previously inspected in September 2003. At that time, business administration was judged to be good, engineering, technology and manufacturing was satisfactory, construction was unsatisfactory, and health, social care and public services was very weak. Leadership and management and quality assurance were judged to be unsatisfactory and equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were judged to be satisfactory or better.

## GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Construction</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>5</b>
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*

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

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Construction	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Business administration, management & professional	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

9. **On early years and education programmes, retention and achievement rates are excellent.** All learners who started training in 2002 have been retained. Four of the five learners who started in 2002-03 achieved the framework qualification and the other learner is approaching completion. All of the current learners are making very good progress and have completed many aspects of their qualification.

10. **On business administration programmes, achievement rates of foundation modern apprentices are high.** Of the 11 foundation modern apprentices who started programmes in 2002-03, 10 successfully completed their frameworks. Retention and achievement rates on the smaller advanced modern apprenticeship and NVQ



programmes are satisfactory.

**11. On engineering apprenticeship programmes, retention rates are high.** No learners from the last two years' programme intake have left the programme. It is too early to judge framework achievement rates but all learners are making good progress and are completing many units of their qualification. Historically, retention rates on the smaller NVQ programmes have been poor, and it is too early to judge improvements in retention rates, but learners are making good progress and none have left the programme. More than half of the current learners have made progress beyond their previous qualification. Sixty-five per cent of learners progress into employment.

**12. On the E2E programme there are high retention rates.** For those learners taking an NVQ at level 1, achievements of the full or partial qualification are good. About half of these E2E learners progress on to an NVQ at level 2 or a modern apprenticeship. All learners develop good personal and social skills, their confidence and self-esteem grows and their communication skills improve. This aspect is particularly significant for the group of learners who have recently left the care of the local authority and joined the programme.

**13. On construction programmes, learners are making satisfactory progress towards completion of their programmes.** Of the seven learners who started programmes in 2002-03, five are still in learning and one has completed. Of the 10 learners who started programmes in 2003-04, eight are still in training. There is good achievement of additional qualifications that enhance the learners' employment opportunities. The NVQ programme in which retention and achievement rates were judged to be poor is no longer offered.

### **Quality of education and training**

**14. Work placements are good on all programmes.** They provide a wide range of learning and assessment opportunities to meet learners' needs effectively. Placements are particularly well matched to learners' needs on the E2E programme. Employers are well informed about learners' programmes and are closely involved in the design of training. Many learners gain employment at their work placements. The addition of a new nursery placement since the previous inspection has offered learners additional opportunities to enhance their experience.

**15. There is good support for engineering, business administration and E2E learners.** A transition mentor enables learners to make a smooth transition between school and work-based learning. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinator assesses the learners thoroughly and supports them effectively. All tutors and assessors offer sensitive and effective personal and social support and, where necessary, refer learners to specialist support agencies.

**16. Early years and education learners receive a particularly good induction.** As well as having a thorough initial assessment and general induction, their understanding of the

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job role is assessed and learners are observed in a real work environment as part of the interview process. A three-week taster period in a work placement is used to test the learners' vocational aptitudes and understanding of safe working practices.

**17. There are poor resources for practical off-the-job training in construction.** Although training delivery has moved to new premises, these are still inadequate. There are insufficient tools and these are of poor quality and stored inadequately.

**18. There are inadequate resources for motor vehicle background knowledge classes.** The classroom used is dull, uninspiring and untidy. There are few displays of learners' work and an inadequate range of learning resources.

**19. There is insufficient sharing of resources between DBCTU and the social services section that is subcontracted to organise part of the E2E programme.** DBCTU does not exploit the opportunity to share staff expertise, accommodation, learning resources and work placements.

### Leadership and management

**20. There has been strong operational management to bring about improvements to training.** DBCTU uses a revised and more effective quality assurance system to encourage staff to focus on learners' progress. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training has improved. Staff now share good practice across areas of learning. Managers and staff are committed to and enthusiastic about the changes and improvements they have made. There continues to be a strong commitment to staff development.

**21. There is good management of literacy, numeracy and key skills.** A comprehensive strategy is in place, which includes thorough assessment and effective support procedures. A designated tutor is responsible for supervising the implementation of strategy. Tutors have achieved or are working towards literacy, numeracy or key skills qualifications. Achievement rates for adult literacy and numeracy qualifications are good. Key skills training is integrated effectively with vocational training and learners make good progress.

**22. The recent transfer of strategic responsibility into the lifelong learning department of the council strengthens DBCTU's mission to widen participation and align it with a wider range of council education and training initiatives.** Most learners are young people who have negative views of school. A transition mentor promotes DBCTU's training effectively as an attractive option to these young people. The new E2E contract DBCTU has gained aims to enable young people who have left the care of the local authority, a particularly vulnerable group, to access effective training.

**23. Use of data is satisfactory in most areas, but in the business administration area there is inadequate analysis of data to measure performance.** For example, a simple analysis of how many learners who started learning go on to succeed is not used as a simple indication of annual programme success. Much detailed data is collected and used to monitor individual learners' progress or used to monitor contractual performance.

**24. There is slow implementation of the strategy to improve resources.** Staff in the health and social care area lack vocational knowledge. DBCTU is based in old accommodation, which is largely inaccessible to learners with mobility difficulties. There are weaknesses in training resources and in the management of resources across most areas of learning. Although many of these weaknesses have already been identified and various plans are in place to put them right, there has been little progress since the previous inspection.

**25. DBCTU has inadequate arrangements to quality assure the work of subcontractors.** It relies heavily on subcontractors in the early years care and education programme and in the new part of the E2E programme. Current arrangements do not enable managers to make sufficiently accurate judgements about the quality of the training, assessment and support offered by these subcontractors.

**26. There is inadequate planning of training in the new E2E programme.** A coherent plan that benefits all learners in the area is not available. The two parts of the programme are planned separately and there are insufficient measures to ensure coherent planning of training.

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

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- strong operational management to improve standards
- good management of literacy, numeracy and key skills
- very effective strategies to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and disaffected groups

### **Weaknesses**

- slow implementation of the strategy to improve resources
- inadequate arrangements to quality assure the work of subcontractors

## **Construction**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement of additional qualifications enhances the learners' opportunities for employment
- particularly good work placements

### **Weaknesses**

- poor resources for practical training

### **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

#### **Strengths**

- good progression of learners between programmes and into employment
- high retention rates on modern apprenticeships
- particularly good work placements
- good support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate resources for motor vehicle theory classes

### **Business administration, management & professional**

#### **Strengths**

- high achievement rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship
- very effective support
- particularly good work placements

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate analysis of data to measure programme performance

### **Health, social care & public services**

#### **Strengths**

- excellent retention and achievement rates
- very good work placements
- very good induction

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate occupational knowledge of training staff

### **Foundation programmes**

#### **Strengths**

- high retention and achievement rates of learners working towards NVQs at level 1
- good development of personal and social skills

- good support for learners making the transition between school and training

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective use of resources
- inadequate planning of the new training programme

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

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

#### **Strengths**

- strong operational management to improve standards
- good management of literacy, numeracy and key skills
- very effective strategies to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and disaffected groups

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow implementation of the strategy to improve resources
- inadequate arrangements to quality assure the work of subcontractors

27. DBCTU has strong operational management that has brought about improvements in standards. Retention and achievement rates have improved across most aspects of training. A revised and more effective quality assurance system is used to encourage staff to focus on learners' progress. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training has improved. Staff now share good practice across areas of learning. Managers and staff are committed to and enthusiastic about the changes and improvements that they have made. Since the previous inspection, strategic responsibility has transferred to the education division under the remit of the lifelong learning section. This has strengthened the ability of the training manager to promote DBCTU at strategic level. The strategies and business plans have clearly stated aims and objectives, and the new achievement and retention and pre-apprenticeship strategies show precise targets, timescales and costings.

28. There is good management of literacy, numeracy and key skills. An effective strategy is in place, which includes thorough assessment and support procedures. A designated tutor is responsible for the effective implementation of the strategy. Tutors have achieved or are working towards literacy, numeracy or key skills qualifications. Achievement rates of E2E learners in adult literacy and numeracy qualifications are good. Key skills training is integrated effectively with vocational training and learners make good progress. Key skills training resources are comprehensive and used effectively.

29. All staff have a useful annual personal development review, with an interim update every six months. There continues to be a strong commitment to staff development. Internal communications continue to be satisfactory. There is a very close-knit and supportive team and much communication is informal. Full staff meetings take place

every six months. More frequent meetings have been introduced to focus on the pre-apprenticeship part of the E2E programme. Employers are now much more informed about the content of training programmes and NVQs. There are effective three-way reviews involving employers, tutors and learners.

30. The collection of management information is extensive. The management information system was new at the time of the previous inspection and has enabled managers to produce a very wide range of reports. Staff continue to use their own paper-based systems. The use of the new system is insufficiently focused in some areas. For example, in the business administration area, a simple analysis of how many learners who start learning and succeed in their aims is not used as an indication of programme success. Much detailed data is collected and used to monitor individual learners' progress and contractual performance. An effective, new learners' risk-assessment process has been introduced to indicate learners who are in need of additional support.

31. There is slow implementation of the strategy to improve resources. DBCTU's office and classrooms are based in old accommodation on the second floor of the local arts centre. Although access to the ground floor is available for people with mobility difficulties, access to the offices and training facilities are not. There are weaknesses in training resources and in the management of resources in several areas. Although many of these weaknesses have already been identified and various plans are in place to put them right, there has been little progress since the previous inspection.

32. There is inadequate planning of training of the new E2E programme. The programme is run in two sections, one integrated with vocational areas of learning and one subcontracted to the social services department. There is no coherent plan that benefits all learners. The two parts of the programme are planned separately and there are missed opportunities to improve the quality of training. The introduction of the leavers of care subcontracted provision was made in August 2004. There are inadequate quality assurance procedures and management of resources in this area, although plans are in place to further develop systems.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

33. There are particularly effective strategies to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and disaffected groups. DBCTU's mission is well understood by staff and they are effective in developing the personal and social skills of all learners. The recent transfer of strategic responsibility into the council's lifelong learning department has strengthened DBCTU's ability to fulfil its mission to widen participation. There is a closer alignment with a wider range of council education and training initiatives.

34. Many of the young people recruited by DBCTU have negative perceptions of education and training based on their school experiences. A transition mentor effectively promotes DBCTU as an attractive option to these young people. Introduction of a contract to enable young people who have left the care of the local authority has enabled particularly vulnerable young people to access training. Four of the five occupational areas of learning offered by DBCTU have been identified as areas of

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occupational skills shortage in Darlington.

35. A range of appropriate equal opportunities policies and procedures are in place. Corporate documents produced by the council emphasise its commitment to equality of opportunity and widening participation. DBCTU promotes equality of opportunity through the appropriate use of recruitment material and an effective induction. Publicity material on current practice and legislation, such as the Race Equality Scheme, are accessible on the council's website and are available in large print, on tape and in several languages. Advertisements are designed to attract a wide range of applicants and break down stereotypes.

36. DBCTU monitors equality of opportunity data and there is an appropriate level of participation from learners of minority ethnic groups compared with the local population. The gender balance in different areas of learning is appropriate with learners of different genders being recruited into stereotypically single gender areas. Progression and achievement rates of different groups can be identified using the new computerised management information system, but there is insufficiently specific analysis of this data to help develop planning and set targets. DBCTU adequately checks to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are implemented by subcontractors and employers.

37. Learners are effectively made aware of their rights and responsibilities during the induction process and through the use of the learners' handbook, which contains a simplified version of the equality policy. Additional top-up training has been carried out recently for staff and learners. Equality of opportunity issues are frequently discussed at team meetings and, where necessary, effective actions are taken.

38. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity are checked during progress reviews. Although reviews are generally satisfactory, there are a few instances of reviewers using inappropriate questioning and a cursory approach to check learners' understanding. Most learners do have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities, but some learners in the new E2E programme were unaware of the role of reviewers from DBCTU.

39. The DBCTU's main offices and classrooms are on the second floor of an arts centre, which is inaccessible. The ground floor of this building is accessible to people with mobility difficulties. DBCTU has alternative training arrangements to enable training to take place on this floor, but this has never been necessary.

### Quality assurance

### Contributory grade 3

40. A revised and effective quality assurance system is used to encourage staff to focus on learners' progress and learning. Effective observation of training at DBCTU's centre has been introduced, although there is still insufficient monitoring of training at subcontractors.

41. An effective system has been introduced to collect more extensive feedback from learners. This includes a well-organised learners' forum and a survey of learners who



leave learning without completing their programme.

42. DBCTU has different internal verification arrangements to meet the needs of each programme. All systems are satisfactory and meet awarding body requirements. The appraisal and monitoring of work placements is carried out by the training co-ordinator, who is appropriately qualified. After the previous inspection, DBCTU reviewed its quality policy and procedures and has made many changes to its administration and paperwork. Some of the new procedures have introduced high levels of bureaucracy into the system. Some staff are unsure of the reasons for the accompanying paperwork. For example, they simply fill in some aspects of review forms as a matter of routine, rather than as a method of gaining useful information about learners' progress.

43. There are inadequate arrangements to quality assure the work of subcontractors. DBCTU relies heavily on subcontractors in the early years care and education and new E2E areas. Current arrangements do not enable managers to make sufficiently accurate judgements about the quality of the training, assessment and support offered by subcontractors. For example, DBCTU's staff have insufficient occupational knowledge of the early years care and education area to effectively quality assure the programme. In the new E2E programme, staff do not have expertise in the specialist and complex support requirements of some young people. However, there is more collaboration between DBCTU and the subcontractors to ensure that learners' initial assessments results are shared effectively.

44. The self-assessment process identified many of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the reinspection. It leads to a well-structured development plan. Some aspects of the self-assessment of the new E2E programme are insufficiently detailed and the development plan targets for some parts of this programme are insufficiently focused.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Construction

**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	18	3

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

#### Strengths

- good achievement of additional qualifications enhances the learners' opportunities for employment
- particularly good work placements

#### Weaknesses

- poor resources for practical training

### Achievement and standards

45. Learners achieve good additional qualifications that enhance their employment opportunities. Many learners choose to work towards an additional qualification in fitted interiors. This enables the learners to experience a specialist sector of the industry. There are many small companies in the area specialising in kitchen fitting. The delivery of this qualification helps meet the needs of this sector on the construction industry. Three learners who completed this NVQ are now employed by companies specialising in fitted interiors.

46. Learners develop satisfactory practical skills in the workplace and many produce good-quality work that meets industry standards. They are set demanding targets by their employers, which closely reflect those within the NVQ. Learners work closely with qualified tradespeople and quickly develop skills that allow active participation in the workplace. This motivates the learners and promotes their confidence and self-esteem.

47. NVQ programmes had poor retention and achievement rates at the time of the previous inspection. These programmes are no longer on offer. Of the seven apprenticeship learners who started in 2002-03, five are still in learning and one has completed. For the years 2003-04, eight of the 10 apprentices who started are still in training. Learners are making satisfactory progress towards completion of their frameworks.

## **Quality of education and training**

48. There are particularly good work placements. Employers are selected to meet the learners' NVQ requirements. Employers offer a wide range of learning and assessment opportunities and encourage learners to work independently once they have acquired the necessary practical skills. Many employers accommodate learners who are not covering particular work activities with their existing employer. This enables learners to gain experience in all appropriate work activities. Learners value the experience and training they receive in the workplace and quickly develop the confidence to carry out tasks. For example, one learner working towards the NVQ at level 3 works with a contract manager, gaining experience in site management and planning. This greatly enhanced the learner's understanding and provided valuable evidence for assessment.

49. The standard of training and learning in construction is satisfactory. Instructors have up-to-date technical knowledge and use a variety of training methods and styles to stimulate learners. Learners confirm their understanding through discussions and written and practical demonstrations. Additional sessions designed to assist with portfolio-building improve the quality of learners' portfolios of evidence.

50. Assessment is now adequate. The assessment process has been enhanced recently by the introduction of work diaries, which the learners use to record daily work activities and are validated by the workplace supervisor. They are then used by the assessor to generate assessment decisions. Supervisors also act as work-based recorders and this has greatly improved the effective use of evidence. A training pack has been developed to assist workplace supervisors with this role. Assessment packs have also been developed and introduced. These packs prompt the assessor to gather a wide range of evidence, including photographs, witness statements and questions that assess the learners' understanding. The weakness of insufficiently detailed targets at progress reviews has been rectified. A new review form has been developed and introduced. Reviews are now a discussion involving the learner, the instructor and the employer. Targets are agreed and set at each review and subsequently monitored. These targets are now more specific to the learners' role in the workplace. This helps the learners and employers to plan progress towards achievement of elements and units of the target NVQ. However, some learners are still unable to recall in detail the content of reviews and do not consider the reviews helpful to their progress.

51. Procedures to monitor health and safety practices in the workplace have been improved and are now satisfactory. The monitoring of learners' health and safety takes place every 10 weeks. A monitoring form is used to effectively audit conditions in the workplace. The assessor completes the form when visiting the workplace and is asked to comment on areas such as cleanliness, machine-guarding and compliance with current legislation. If this audit raises any concerns, the co-ordinator carries out a further visit. The review process also routinely documents details of the learners' health, safety and welfare. Learners were observed wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and were able to confirm, through discussion, sufficient understanding of health and

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safety issues. However, workplace appraisal forms had been completed incorrectly. For example, in construction the occupational risk banding should be high risk, but in some cases this had been incorrectly indicated as medium risk.

52. The arrangements to assess the learners' literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory. Learners' support needs are identified and they are placed on programmes to reflect their ability. Those learners assessed as in need of additional support receive effective help. Learner support is well planned and effective. The tutor in construction is carrying out support sessions with the assistance and guidance from a basic skills tutor. The tutor is currently working towards recognised qualifications in the delivery of basic and key skills training.

53. Resources for off-the-job practical training remain poor. Although practical training has been moved to new premises, these are still inadequate for effective practical training sessions. Training rigs fail to simulate the size and range of industry. There are insufficient tools of suitable quality to meet the learners' requirements. Those tools available are stored poorly and this hinders the development of good practice in the maintenance of hand tools. Very few visual aids are available for learners and the range of teaching material is poor.

### **Leadership and management**

54. Internal verification is satisfactory. Sampling plans and sampling records now meet all the guidelines for internal verification. Internal verification is carried out by a subcontractor. A suitable service level agreement is in place to ensure the effectiveness of this provision. External verification reports indicate an improvement in quality assurance since the previous inspection.

55. The member of staff in construction was involved in the production of the accurate self-assessment report and subsequent action-planning.

**Engineering, technology & manufacturing****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	2

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

**Strengths**

- good progression of learners between programmes and into employment
- high retention rates on modern apprenticeships
- particularly good work placements
- good support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate resources for motor vehicle theory classes

**Achievement and standards**

56. There is good progression of learners between programme levels and into employment. Three learners progressed from an NVQ at level 1 to an advanced modern apprenticeship and a further five progressed to foundation modern apprenticeship. Three learners progressed from an NVQ at level 2 to an advanced modern apprenticeship. Sixty-six per cent of learners have progressed into employment so far.

57. Retention rates are high on modern apprenticeships. Of the 19 foundation modern apprentices who have started their training since 2001, only four have left their programmes early. Of the seven advanced modern apprentices who started training since 2002, only two have left. The retention rate for NVQ learners remains poor historically but it is improving, with no learners dropping out in the last two years.

58. Seventy-one per cent of foundation modern apprenticeship learners who started training in 2001-02 achieved their frameworks. It is too early to judge framework achievement on the advanced modern apprenticeship but all learners are making good progress. The achievement rate of NVQ learners is 54 per cent, with the potential to rise to 69 per cent.

**Quality of education and training**

59. There are particularly good work placements. They are spread throughout the area and include a main dealership. DBCTU uses a network of over 20 local garages to train its learners. Garages offer service and repair facilities and some are MOT testing stations. Many of the garages carry out diagnostic work and learners are treated as part

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of the garage team. While on-the-job training is not formalised, learners nevertheless receive a structured, personalised training programme by the owner or a well-experienced technician. One garage visited during the inspection had a particularly good standard of housekeeping in its workshops.

60. There is good support for learners. All learners are accurately assessed on entry to the course to determine their literacy and numeracy levels. Eight learners have been identified as having additional learning needs. Since the previous inspection a mentor has been appointed to provide the learners with additional support. At present, two learners have been referred to the mentor. Both receive an effective individual support session every week. There is a member of staff who is responsible for preparing learners for key skills examinations. The motor vehicle instructor extends his lessons to include literacy, numeracy and language support within motor vehicle theory lessons. There are effective portfolio-building sessions during the day-release periods. Key skills support is provided in addition to literacy, numeracy and language support. All learners are subjected to a thorough process that measures their risk of not completing their training programme. Learners who are judged to be in a high-risk category have more frequent progress reviews. There are three categories each of which relates to the colours of a traffic light. Most learners are visited by the assessor every two weeks in the workplace and all are supported every week in the training centre.

61. The tutor/assessor and internal verifier on the motor vehicle training course have good practical experience and vocational competence. Lessons are well planned. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the training facilities in the centre are limited. These are supplemented by a commercial arrangement to use a local garage for practical teaching purposes. All learners are either employed or have a work placement in a local garage.

62. Assessment is thorough. It is well planned and uses a wide range of evidence. It is carried out in the workplace or in the training workshop that is a commercial workshop. Learners' portfolios are satisfactory and evidence includes witness testimony statements, assessor observation and job card evidence. Assessors also include digital photograph evidence. The system to monitor learners' progress is effective. There is a wall display to indicate their progress throughout their vocational programme, which can be viewed by all learners. Key skills progress is monitored by the key skills tutor on a computer spreadsheet.

63. The classroom used for background knowledge lessons is poor and does not project a good image for the industry or provide an example of good housekeeping. Wall displays are limited. There is an array of small vehicle items and vehicle subassemblies that are piled on and under a bench.

### **Leadership and management**

64. There is a clear structure showing where motor vehicle training fits into the organisation. Team meetings associated with motor vehicle training are held frequently,

are well minuted and actions are allocated to named individuals. There are good communications with local employers and lateness or non-attendance at the centre is quickly reported. Employers value the training and assessment service and support that they receive from DBCTU. Recently, a comprehensive employer pack has been distributed. It contains details of their learners' programme, copies of individual learning plans and schemes of work for background knowledge lessons. One employer interviewed was able to link practical training in batteries with the background knowledge work done at the centre. Some reinforcement of equal opportunities during progress reviews is superficial, although no learners were judged to be at risk.

**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	18	2

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

**Strengths**

- high achievement rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship
- very effective support
- particularly good work placements

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate analysis of data to measure programme performance

**Achievement and standards**

65. Achievement rates of foundation modern apprentices are high. Of the 11 foundation modern apprentices who started programmes in 2002-03, 10 successfully completed their frameworks. Retention and achievement rates on the smaller advanced modern apprenticeship and NVQ programmes are satisfactory. Of the 12 learners starting foundation modern apprenticeships in 2003-04, all are still in learning and making satisfactory progress. Most learners gain valuable additional qualifications in skills such as word processing.

66. Learners develop a suitable range of vocational skills. Learners are quickly able to carry out basic supervised administrative tasks which allow them to build confidence and motivation. They then move on to work on more complex tasks and work under their own initiative. Learners produce good-quality portfolios of evidence that are well organised.

67. About 60 per cent of the current learners have progressed from lower to higher-level courses and go on to gain full-time jobs at their work placements.

**Quality of education and training**

68. DBCTU provides the learners with a variety of very effective support. Staff provide weekly individual support sessions for learners. Learners are confident to approach staff about personal issues such as pregnancy, child support, finance and family problems. Staff adopt a non-judgemental approach and give sensitive support to enable the learners to continue with their training programmes. All learners are thoroughly assessed for literacy, numeracy and language needs and, if necessary, they receive effective support.



For example, specialist dyslexia support is made available through the dyslexia institute. During their induction every learner has a private interview where they negotiate a personalised learning plan. A transition mentor enables learners to make a smooth transition between school and work-based learning.

69. There are particularly good-quality work placements. They provide a wide range of learning and assessment opportunities to meet learners' needs effectively. Placements are particularly well matched to learners' needs. Most work placements are found within council offices. Learners say that employers make them feel welcomed and valued in their jobs. Learners carry out a wide range of challenging tasks at placements. Employers are very aware of the NVQ requirements of individual learners and ensure that appropriate tasks are made available for them for assessment purposes. Employers offer learners the opportunity to take part in a range of in-house training, including manual handling and equal opportunities training. Workplace supervisors contact DBCTU if they feel that learners are having problems or are not progressing at a sufficient rate. One placement has allocated a full-time workplace supervisor to support learners.

70. Off-the-job training is satisfactory. Tutors mainly use personalised training within group sessions. Sessions are well planned. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and the computers and software used are now of industry standard. Key skills training is effective and wherever possible it is integrated in a business administration context. Staff are vocationally experienced and suitably qualified. Accommodation is satisfactory although there are few stimulating displays. The main training rooms are inaccessible for learners with mobility difficulties, although alternative arrangements are available on the ground floor of DBCTU's premises. There is sufficient coverage of health and safety during induction and learners' understanding is frequently checked.

71. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Tutors visit work placements frequently to carry out assessment by observation. They carefully check learners' understanding by detailed questioning. All tutors have appropriate assessors' awards. Effective internal verification procedures are in place. External verification is carried out and, where actions are identified as necessary, they are carried out quickly and effectively. Progress reviews are thorough and a new, comprehensive set of paperwork has been introduced since the previous inspection. Tutors review learners' progress during the weekly off-the-job training sessions and more formal reviews are held every 10 to 12 weeks. These are three-way reviews, involving learners, employers and tutors. Previous targets are discussed and learners and employers are asked to describe progress. In a few cases, reviews are insufficiently detailed and issues such as equality of opportunity are covered only cursorily.

## **Leadership and management**

72. DBCTU pays insufficient attention to the analysis of data to monitor programme performance. For example, although the organisation collects extensive individual learners' data through a variety of means, tutors were unable to provide an accurate

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simple picture of achievement of apprenticeships, or identify trends. Data presented in the self-assessment report did not highlight sufficiently the high achieving foundation modern apprenticeship.

73. Two assessor/tutors are jointly responsible for the operational management of the programme and report to the training manager. They work effectively as a team and are well aware of the learners' individual needs. DBCTU collects useful feedback from employers and learners and uses it to make improvements to individual programmes. DBCTU provides training opportunities for many learners who have poor academic achievement or particular social needs. There is thorough coverage of equality of opportunity issues during induction and learners have recently received additional off-the-job training.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	2

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

**Strengths**

- excellent retention and achievement rates
- very good work placements
- very good induction

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate occupational knowledge of training staff

**Achievement and standards**

74. Retention and achievement rates are excellent. All learners who started training in 2002 have been retained. Four of the five learners who started in 2002-03 achieved the framework qualification and the other learner is approaching completion. No learners have left the programme in the last three years without achieving the NVQ. In 2003-04, one learner started the advanced modern apprenticeship and is making very good progress. Five learners recruited to the foundation modern apprenticeship in 2003 are making satisfactory progress and have completed many aspects of their qualification. All learners develop a good range of vocational skills and are confident and well motivated to succeed. Learners' portfolios of evidence are well presented and contain a good range of evidence.

**Quality of education and training**

75. There are very good work placements. Learners spend time in each of the three council-run nurseries, which offer them very different caring experiences. The addition of one new nursery since the previous inspection offers the learners additional learning opportunities. This purpose-built nursery in a particularly deprived area of the borough has many healthcare professionals working there who contribute to childcare. Learners have the opportunity to observe their work closely. For example, the social services child protection unit and health visitors' clinics are held in the nursery, with learners also attending evening presentations about healthy eating. One of the nurseries offers holiday clubs for older children in addition to pre-school care. Learners have the opportunity to work with children up to eight years of age. Another day nursery offers childcare in 13 local schools, enabling learners to access additional training. Other training courses offered to nursery staff are available to learners, including 'learning at

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foundation stage' and 'birth to three matters'. All the learners who joined the programme in July 2004 have completed training for paediatric first aid.

76. There is a very good extended induction for learners. All learners have a thorough initial assessment, which effectively identifies their literacy, numeracy and key skills. Their understanding of the job role is also assessed. During the interview stage, learners are observed in a real work environment, interacting with children and potential colleagues. This is followed by an interview using effective questions, carried out by three staff. Learners spend a further three weeks in the workplace before a second assessment, in the form of questioning, to confirm their understanding of safe working practices.

77. DBCTU subcontracts the teaching of background knowledge, support for portfolio-building and additional learning needs to a further education college. The co-ordination of theory and practical learning, and the quality of support for learners with additional learning needs, have improved and are now satisfactory. The college also provides a range of effective support facilities for learners.

78. Learners' progress reviews have been improved and are now satisfactory. All parties involved in training participate in a review at four, eight or 12-weekly intervals to suit learners' needs. At the beginning of the review, DBCTU's training unit staff meet the learners individually, which provides an opportunity for discussion about personal, assessment or training problems. The learner's manager and the tutor from the subcontracted provision then review all aspects of the learner's performance. This is recorded in detail. These reviews include reviews of key skills and assignment work for the technical certificate.

79. DBCTU issues each learner with a textbook at the start of their training programme. Learners find that the textbook provides some useful information and supports their understanding of background knowledge. There are satisfactory support arrangements for learners and records of support are recorded on individual learning plans. Employers are aware of the contents of learners' individual learning plans and learners' progress.

80. Assessment practice carried out by the subcontractor is now satisfactory. There is a sufficient variety of evidence collected and sufficient assessment takes place in the workplace. There is no longer repetition of unnecessary initial assessments, and assessments are recorded and shared by all interested parties and used to design the individual learning plan.

### **Leadership and management**

81. DBCTU's training staff have insufficient vocational knowledge to make secure judgements about the quality of some aspects of the subcontractor's work. For example, a learners' review was observed being carried out by a subcontractor by a member of staff with no vocational experience or qualifications. DBCTU relies on the subcontractor's judgements of its own performance to measure quality and, although this

indicates a high quality of teaching, learning and support, there are insufficient methods used to audit these judgements.

82. New procedures, meetings and a separate sampling plan for internal verification have been introduced. A new service level agreement with a new subcontractor has been put in place. Internal verification is effective and the weaknesses highlighted at the previous inspection were remedied by the change of subcontractor. External verifiers' reports indicate that satisfactory arrangements are in place.

83. DBCTU applies its policies and procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity consistently and effectively, with learners receiving high levels of individual support. Learners are well aware of current legislation affecting themselves, the children, and their employers.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	2

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

**Strengths**

- high retention and achievement rates of learners working towards NVQs at level 1
- good development of personal and social skills
- good support for learners making the transition between school and training

**Weaknesses**

- ineffective use of resources
- inadequate planning of the new training programme

**Achievement and standards**

84. There are high retention rates. In the past two years, only three learners have left the programme early. For those learners taking an NVQ at level 1, achievements of the full or partial qualification are good. Twelve of the 15 learners who started NVQs at level 1 in 2003-04 completed their programmes. About half of these E2E learners progressed to NVQs at level 2 or modern apprenticeships.

85. All learners develop good personal and social skills. Their confidence and self-esteem grows and their communication skills improve. This aspect is particularly significant for the new group of learners who have recently left the care of the local authority and joined the programme. Learners do not have the necessary personal and vocational skills to enter employment. Of the six new learners on the 'care leavers' programme, one has left the programme, one has progressed into further education, and the other four are still in learning.

86. E2E learners on pre-apprenticeship programmes are integrated effectively with DBCTU's other areas of learning. They appreciate this approach and describe the differences the programme is making to their lives. For example, one spoke of having developed the confidence to attend an interview and meet and greet visitors to the workplace. On the part of the programme subcontracted to social services, learners develop highly effective relationships with adults and learn teamwork and a sense of shared responsibility.

## Quality of education and training

87. There is good support for learners making the transition from school to training. Key workers keep close contact with learners, as does the newly appointed transition mentor. Learners are supported on a weekly basis and short-term targets are discussed and reviewed. The literacy and numeracy support for learners is good. The basic skills tutor ensures that learners receive an accurate and thorough assessment. Appropriate individual learning plans are then prepared. Learners make good progress with literacy and numeracy and many of them pass national tests. Learners speak enthusiastically about the positive outcomes of this aspect of their programme. Learners receive good support from Connexions' personal advisers.

88. DBCTU offers effective vocational opportunities in motor vehicle, wood occupations and business administration. Work placements are organised for the pre-apprentice learners when they are ready. If learners go out on work placement they receive good support from sensitive and patient employers who are able to devote additional time and care to them. Staff from DBCTU discuss learners' support needs with work placements before they are set up and agree a programme of activities and support requirements.

89. Learners' progress reviews are carried out satisfactorily. DBCTU uses them effectively to set realistic targets. The learning passport is used to record the development of new skills and set new targets. Initial assessment of the vocational aptitude of the pre-apprentices is carried out by the appropriate tutor/assessors. The results are used to develop a personalised learning plan. Preferred learning styles are also identified and recorded.

90. DBCTU uses a variety of small group, individual and whole-class vocational training. Emphasis in these sessions is on the acquisition of practical and transferable employment skills. Tutors integrate the vocational work effectively with the development of the learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

91. There is ineffective use of resources. Resources are divided between the two areas of the programme and are not always used to improve the quality of the learners' experience. DBCTU's staff are experienced and have appropriate experience to support pre-apprenticeship learners. However, some accommodation used by E2E learners for practical training in construction are poor, and some classroom facilities are dull and uninspiring. There is a limited variety of learning activities available to pre-apprentices. DBCTU's staff do not have the expertise to support learners with complex difficulties and refer such learners for specialist support. Resources for the new group of E2E care leavers are provided by social services. Staff have great experience and expertise in specialist support of learners. They organise useful residential training as well as a range of stimulating activities, such as a music workshop and trips to a local television studio. These are not available to pre-apprenticeship learners. Literacy and numeracy training is subcontracted to another provider by the social services section, and work placements for this group are organised independently. The transition mentor is not sufficiently involved in support of the care group and social services staff do not have vocational

experience.

### **Leadership and management**

92. The planning of training in the E2E programme is inadequate. There is no coherent plan that benefits all learners. The two parts of the programme are planned separately and, although most aspects of the programmes are at least satisfactory and some are good, there are insufficient improvements to the quality of training.

93. The monitoring of some of the subcontracted work is inadequate. There is inadequate co-ordination of some elements of the programme. Unlike other programmes a named tutor has not been allocated responsibility to co-ordinate the E2E programme. Although communication between teams of staff are good, and they have a good understanding of the needs of their learner group, there is little sharing of good practice. Meetings have taken place and plans are being devised to improve this aspect of the programme.

94. There are particularly effective strategies to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and disaffected groups. The E2E contract DBCTU has gained aims to enable young people who have left the care of the local authority, a particularly vulnerable group, to access effective training.