

INSPECTION REPORT

GR and MM Blackledge

28 January 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

INSPECTION REPORT

GR and MM Blackledge

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	3
What learners like about GR and MM Blackledge	6
What learners think GR and MM Blackledge could improve	6
Key challenges for GR and MM Blackledge	7

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	8
Equality of opportunity	9
Quality assurance	10
Retailing, customer service & transportation	11

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. GR and MM Blackledge is a retailer of toiletry, health and beauty products. The company was founded in 1970 with two employees and now has a workforce of 1,700. There are 127 stores throughout the United Kingdom (UK) trading as 'Grahams' or 'Bodycare'. The stores are predominantly in the Midlands and the Northwest. Forty-three shops currently have learners working towards training programmes in retailing, customer service and transportation. The head office is located in Bamber Bridge, Lancashire but is due to relocate to new premises in the Preston area that will incorporate a training room equipped with computer technology.

2. The board consists of five directors, who are the two founder members, the buying director, the financial director and the director of operations, who is also the health and safety officer. The training programme was originally run by area managers, and one full-time trainer/assessor who works solely with the apprentices. In November 2003 it became the responsibility of the financial director to manage the government-funded training programmes. Since then there has been a change of roles and responsibilities. Two of the nine area managers are now full-time assessors. Three of the existing area managers carry out assessment. The company subcontracts its internal verification and training of assessors.

3. The apprenticeship programme has been offered since 1997. It is available to learners in stores in the Lancashire area and its aim is to engage young people in training and help them to progress into management. The adult national vocational qualification (NVQ) programme has been in place since 2002 and is available to adults throughout all the stores. Most of the learners who have been through this programme are store managers or assistant managers. This is a company policy to ensure that, once qualified, the managers can support their staff through their own qualifications.

4. The company aims to use this programme to offer all employees the opportunity to achieve a recognised qualification. Funding is provided through the National Employers' Service. The company has accredited status for retailing through an awarding body.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Retailing, customer service & transportation

5. Fifty-nine learners are currently following programmes in retailing, customer service and transportation. Ten are young people following an apprenticeship in retailing, and one is a young person on an advanced apprenticeship in retailing. These learners all live and work in the Northwest. The remaining 48 learners are adults working towards a level 2 NVQ in retailing. They are based in stores throughout the UK. Off-the-job training in background knowledge on the apprenticeship is provided at the company's head office. Learners attend one day a week. All training and assessment of the adult

GR AND MM BLACKLEDGE

learners is carried out in the learners' own stores. Seven area managers and two regional managers have been trained as assessors. After restructuring, the company has redeployed two of the area managers as full-time assessors.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learner interviews	38
Number of staff interviews	9
Number of subcontractor interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	20
Number of visits	19

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the company's leadership and management, approach to equality of opportunity and arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Training in retailing, customer service and transportation is satisfactory.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		3
Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Retailing		
- Other government-funded provision	48	3
- Work-based learning for young people	11	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Achievement rates are good for all learners.** Sixty-three per cent of learners starting the NVQ in 2002-03 achieved their qualification, and 71 per cent of learners starting the apprenticeship in the same period completed the framework.

8. **Learners develop good retailing skills.** They are given high levels of responsibility in areas such as merchandising, security of cash, and ordering of stock. Learners make good progress to supervisory and management positions. They soon become competent in retailing and develop the skills to progress and gain permanent employment. Learners are punctual, loyal and highly motivated and often work beyond their scheduled hours.

9. **Some of the NVQ learners have made slow progress.** Assessors have not visited these learners frequently enough in some regions. The area managers who had responsibility for assessing learners did not have enough time to fulfil this role when visiting the stores. The company now has two dedicated full-time assessors and another area manager has taken a full-time assessor role. **Retention rates are good on the programmes and in employment. Many staff have considerable lengths of service.** Learners are supported to achieve the NVQ after the date that their funding ends.

10. **Learners on apprenticeships have made slow progress with their key skills qualifications and technical certificate.** The company has had problems with the awarding body and progress with the technical certificate has been delayed. Key skills training and assessment are not an integral part of the programme and staff and learners have insufficient understanding of them. The company has produced a workbook and learners are starting to make progress with the technical certificate. This has raised the learners' awareness of their rights and responsibilities.

Quality of education and training

11. On- and off-the-job training are satisfactory. Facilities at the head office for off-the-job training promote a good learning environment. Staff use a range of teaching methods and learners have the opportunity to discuss real work activities in group situations. Some learning materials are dull, however, and too much reliance is placed on paper-based activities. Staff involved in the apprenticeships and NVQs are highly experienced in the retail trade and are able to pass this knowledge on to the benefit of the learners. The working environment in the stores is conducive to learning and assessment.

12. Comprehensive progress reviews encourage learners to evaluate their own progress. The review reinforces aspects of the learners' programmes through effective questioning and recording on comprehensive documents. However, some reviews do not set specific targets to help learners to progress.

13. **Some assessment practice is weak.** Learners are offered a limited range of assessment methods. Assessors rely too much on collecting evidence through written questioning and witness testimony. Too little use is made of holistic assessment, with assessors more often assessing one unit at a time. Other aspects of the learners' performance are not always recognised.

14. Learners receive an adequate assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and additional support needs. Assessors and managers provide support for learners with their qualifications. No current learner has additional support needs, but the company seeks additional advice and support from external agencies if it identifies that a learner needs additional support.

Leadership and management

15. **The company gives strong strategic direction to the training programmes.** It shows clear commitment to the ongoing provision of training for its employees. The funded provision forms an integral part of the company's plans for its future success. The training programme has been given a high priority and is now under the management of the financial director. The company has a thorough and very effective development plan that is well managed and is guiding improvement.

16. **The company has an open and supportive management style.** It operates a flat management structure with good working relationships across the company and throughout the levels of management. Staff stay with the company for many years, which is rare in the retail industry. Staff feel valued and are offered flexible working arrangements which fit in with their personal circumstances.

17. The company's arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Policies are reviewed annually and distributed to shops through the area manager visits. Staff have a basic awareness of equality of opportunity and are protected through clear procedures that are usually well communicated. Equality of opportunity is effectively reinforced at progress reviews through questioning and discussion. Staff have received some training on equality and diversity, but not all staff have taken part in this yet. Some shop managers do not ensure that the most up-to-date policy is displayed or that information is passed to all members of the team.

18. The company's self-assessment process is satisfactory. Most management staff are involved through consultation or questionnaire. However, staff in the stores have insufficient input. The company's self-assessment report is an honest and quite accurate picture of the provision at the time of the inspection. It identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

19. **Not enough internal verification takes place** to quality assure the assessment process and support the assessors. The company has no overall plan to ensure all aspects of the assessment process are covered. Internal verification takes place once units are complete. Slow progress has been recognised but is not currently rectified by the internal verification process.

20. The company's quality assurance arrangements are inadequate to ensure improvement in the quality and consistency of training. There are few documented quality procedures and some have only recently been introduced. Not enough routine, regular monitoring of all aspects of the programme takes place. The company does not evaluate the internal verification procedure enough, and has not identified the weaknesses in internal verification found by inspectors. Some assessment practices are poor and novice assessors do not receive enough support.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong strategic direction
- open and supportive management

Weaknesses

- inadequate quality assurance to secure improvement

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Retailing

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good attainment of occupational skills
- good rates of retention on the programme and in employment

Weaknesses

- slow progress towards completion of qualifications
- some weak assessment practice
- insufficient internal verification

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT GR AND MM BLACKLEDGE:

- gaining formal recognition for the job role - 'it gives us the chance to get a qualification'
- the personal support - 'the area managers are always there for us'
- that it is a nice company to work for - 'we are well looked after'; 'I like the verbal interaction with Mr Blackledge at Christmas'
- the assessors' visits
- the off-the-job sessions for the apprentices - 'I look forward to the discussions'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK GR AND MM BLACKLEDGE COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of paperwork - there is too much
- the written questioning - 'hard to understand and repetitive'
- the number of opportunities to learn new things and progress
- the management of the off-the-job sessions - 'there is too much disruption from others in the class'
- the support on the NVQ
- the choice of assessors - 'they should not be our area managers, then I don't feel that I am telling my boss that I can't do something'

KEY CHALLENGES FOR GR AND MM BLACKLEDGE:

- take rapid action to rectify learners' slow progress
- establish more systematic quality assurance arrangements
- develop a thorough internal verification system
- offer a broader range of assessment methods to meet individuals' needs
- continue to develop the skills of staff involved in work-based learning
- make effective use of specific, measurable and realistic targets to help learners to progress

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- strong strategic direction
- open and supportive management

Weaknesses

- inadequate quality assurance to secure improvement

21. The company gives strong strategic direction to training programmes provided for its employees. It recognises the importance of training in its three-year development plan, which shows a clear commitment to the ongoing provision of training. A director of the company has taken on personal responsibility for establishing a thorough and well-considered development action plan, and for personally monitoring progress to ensure effective implementation of changes in the programmes. The company networks effectively with external agencies including the National Employers' Service to ensure that the programme takes account of wider external developments and requirements. It has progressively restructured staffing arrangements for the programme to bring about more effective training, and has allocated additional resources including the skills of highly experienced senior staff to programme assessment and verification. The company has set clear achievement targets for the learners already on programmes.

22. The company has open and supportive management, with a strong ethos of encouraging staff to progress internally with the support of vocational training. The company places strong emphasis on good working relationships and mutual respect for employees. Staff appreciate the close informal contacts between different levels of the organisation. Within the company, learners have many good role models of staff who have progressed from junior posts to senior management positions. Staff are encouraged to improve their personal and professional skills through the training programmes, and value highly the opportunity to progress. Learners are well motivated and are very supportive of each other. The company celebrates learners' achievements through award ceremonies held at the local stores and gives a prize to successful learners. In addition, learners who leave to take up alternative employment in the retail sector are supported to achieve their awards. Staff appreciate the open management approach and very many employees stay with the company for many years.

23. The company manages staff members' performance satisfactorily. Although no formal system of staff appraisal exists, individuals' performance is reviewed regularly through regular meetings with line managers who use the company's performance standards to discuss progress. Staff are able to apply for staff development at any time during the year, and the company actively supports all training that is relevant to the needs of the company. For example, two employees are currently studying for

accounting awards.

24. Communications within the company are satisfactory. Regular scheduled meetings are held with key staff members in a number of areas. For example, meetings take place every quarter to review the apprenticeship programme. Agendas are circulated in advance and notes taken of the meetings. Area managers meet frequently with individual store managers to discuss progress at the stores against a clear set of standards. Area managers also meet regularly with their group of local store managers to provide them with business information and training. New information is then shared with store employees by the store managers. Further information is sent directly to the stores from head office. However, not all information is effectively communicated back to all employees at store level.

25. The management of resources is satisfactory. The training programmes have adequate learning resources to support training, although too many of these resources are paper-based. The training programmes have sufficient staff who are experienced in retail operations. The use of management information systems is also satisfactory. Management information on the programme is now analysed regularly, and clear actions are taken to resolve concerns. The company has recently introduced a comprehensive database which allows the effective monitoring of learners' progress against fixed review points in their programme. Information is routinely input into this database by an administrator, who is also responsible for monitoring individuals' progress and reporting any concerns to a company director.

26. The company provides an adequate system to identify and meet learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs. At induction, all new learners take a nationally developed initial assessment test appropriate to their age and background. Although staff provide good informal support for learners, they do not have specialist training or qualifications in providing literacy, numeracy and language support. The company has recognised this weakness in its development action plans.

27. Where specific concerns are identified in any area, the company seeks additional advice and support from external agencies and specialists.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

28. The company has satisfactory equal opportunities policies in place. For example, it has clear policies relating to race relations, and to bullying and harassment in the workplace. A senior manager takes clear responsibility for updating these each year, with external advice. The revised policies are routinely circulated directly to all stores. However, in some instances, stores do not always use the latest revised versions of company policies. Nationally produced posters which illustrate key aspects of equality of opportunity in a clear visual way are displayed on stores' notice boards. Systematic training for all staff in equality of opportunity and diversity has taken place recently through the area managers' meetings with store managers. This information is shared at local level through meetings of store managers with their staff. Equality of opportunity is introduced systematically to learners at induction. Learners' awareness is then routinely

reinforced through discussion at formal progress reviews, using a preset question included on all revised review forms. Employees, including learners, have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity in the workplace. Learners have a good understanding of the complaints procedure and know who to contact with any concerns. The company systematically collects data on the ethnicity and gender of learners and evaluates this data annually against improvement targets agreed with the National Employers' Service. However, the company does not make enough use of equality of opportunity data in the evaluation of learners' progress and achievements.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

29. The company's self-assessment process is satisfactory. The company produced its fourth self-assessment report in June 2003. Although most management staff in the company were effectively involved in the development of the report through direct consultation or questionnaire, some staff in local stores were not sufficiently involved. A director of the company monitors the development action plan, which forms part of the self-assessment report, very thoroughly at frequent intervals. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

30. The company's arrangements for quality assurance are insufficiently developed and inadequate to secure improvement. It has few documented quality assurance procedures, and some quality assurance processes are incomplete or have only been implemented recently. The company has recognised this weakness in its development action plan, and has taken clear action in many of the areas requiring attention. For example, it has recently introduced a scheme for the observation of training staff and learning processes. However, documents for the scheme are not yet fully developed or are in the early stages of implementation. The actions taken are beginning to have an effect but it is too early to judge whether they will bring about ongoing improvement and continue to improve achievement. The company does not provide enough feedback to staff and carries out too little evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the scheme. The company has also introduced an annual review questionnaire for learners, and has thoroughly analysed responses. However, it carries out too little systematic collection of feedback from learners and evaluation of training programmes over the complete training cycle. Too little routine monitoring of specific aspects of the programme takes place on a planned basis to evaluate ongoing progress and improvement.

31. Insufficient monitoring of internal verification takes place. Internal verification procedures are not clear enough, for example in relation to the sampling of new learners. Internal verification processes do not adequately identify weaknesses in assessment practice, or sufficiently support the development of assessors through routine standardisation meetings to share good practice. Internal verification is not planned in advance enough, for example in the overall planning and sampling of learners and monitoring of assessors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Retailing		
- Other government-funded provision	48	3
- Work-based learning for young people	11	3

Retailing

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good attainment of occupational skills
- good rates of retention on the programme and in employment

Weaknesses

- slow progress towards completion of qualifications
- some weak assessment practice
- insufficient internal verification

Achievement and standards

32. Achievement rates are good on all programmes. Sixty-three per cent of the learners starting the NVQ programme in 2002-03 successfully achieved their qualification. In the same year, 71 per cent of learners who started apprenticeships successfully completed their framework. Achievement rates continue to be good.

33. Rates of retention are good on the programme and in employment. The company has low staff turnover. Many employees have been with the company for considerable periods of time, which is not always a common feature of this sector. Learners have usually been in employment with the company before joining the programme. They are offered the qualification as a way of giving them formal recognition for their workplace skills. Learners stay with the company beyond their completion date and are supported to achieve regardless of the scheduled end-dates of the funding. They are punctual, loyal, highly motivated and in some cases work beyond their scheduled hours. Staff have good company support. Flexible working arrangements allow them to work around personal commitments. The company makes a point of celebrating success when learners complete the programme. They are presented with a certificate along with a bottle of champagne.

34. Learners develop good retailing skills. Their workplaces allow them to develop a

GR AND MM BLACKLEDGE

broad range of skills. They work in positions of trust with high levels of responsibility, for example in merchandising, handling all types of payments, dealing with security of money, and ordering stock and deliveries. Learners work alongside staff who are highly competent and develop their skills while carrying out their daily activities. They develop good customer service skills. Customers spoke highly of the service they got from staff when inspectors visited some of the shops during the inspection. Learners achieve additional health and safety qualifications. They have opportunities to progress to supervisory and management positions in short timescales. Learners acquire a range of additional skills that enable them to work effectively in other stores within the company. Some learners use their skills to take up further employment.

35. Learners on the NVQ programme have made slow progress. The company originally used area managers to deliver the programme, but difficulties arose in co-ordinating managers' training activities with their existing responsibilities. The company decided to appoint two dedicated assessors, one of whom is in place and the other will take up their position in February 2005. Some learners have experienced periods of ill health and have made slow progress. Some learners who started in July 2003 and November 2003 have not completed units. In some regions there are regular assessment visits, and learners in these regions make better progress. Since the restructure, some learners have made recent rapid progress after a slow start. In some regions, assessment is less frequent, and progress is slow. The company has developed a monitoring system to identify those learners at risk of not achieving and is using this effectively to re-target those where there is concern.

36. Learners make slow progress in some aspects of the apprenticeship. Key skills and technical certificate training and assessment are not fully integrated with the programme. Learners' progress with key skills qualification is delayed. The company has had problems with the awarding body and a shortage of materials, and the start of the technical certificate has been delayed. An employee's rights and responsibilities handbook has been introduced which gives learners comprehensive lists of contacts to explore their rights and responsibilities. However, it is too early to judge what effect this will have. Learners can refer to it for extra support.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		11		7		4		8							
Retained*	0		3		5	71	3	75	3	38						
Successfully completed	0		0		5	71	2	50	3	38						
Still in learning	5		5		0	0	0	0	0	0						

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

Quality of education and training

37. Training on and off the job is satisfactory. Learners on apprenticeships attend the head office one day a week and cover background knowledge for the NVQ and key skills qualifications. A range of teaching activities are used effectively. The environment is suitable for learning and learners enjoy having the opportunity to meet other learners from different stores and share their experiences. Resources to support teaching and learning are adequate, but some material is uninspiring and unimaginative and too much use is made of paper-based activity. The working environment in the stores is well set out, bright and friendly.

38. The company now has a comprehensive progress review system in place. This encourages learners to evaluate their own progress. The review document also collects good, clear information on equality of opportunity. Health and safety monitoring is carried out during the review process. The review process now involves the shop manager, and the learners value the amount of time that assessors spend with them on their visits. Not all reviews or assessment plans set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound targets. Some learners are unsure of what they have to have done before their next review visit. Targets on some reviews are clear and learners work well towards completion of these.

39. The company has introduced a new initial assessment process which collects more accurate data about the specific support needs of learners. NVQ learners receive a second assessment if their initial results show additional support needs. The initial assessment covers literacy and numeracy support needs, and assessors and managers provide support for NVQ learners if they need it. No current learners have been identified as needing additional support. The company has no specialist staff to identify or support learners who may need additional support, but seeks external specialist advice and support if it needs to. Visually impaired learners have been supported. The company carries out disability audits at its premises to ensure that learners can fulfil their work roles.

40. Little use is made of accreditation of prior learning. It is recorded but it is not used effectively to support individual learning plans. Individual learning plans are not always used effectively for planning and recording achievement. Learners are satisfied with the support arrangements supplied by the company. They know whom to contact when they have any concerns at work or with their NVQ programme.

41. The company plans that all employees will be able to take retailing qualifications. It has issued a questionnaire to establish the extent of the interest. Managers have been the first to qualify. The company supports its employees to achieve formal accreditation for their work skills.

42. Some assessment practice is weak. Assessors use too narrow a range of assessment methods, relying mainly on observation, witness testimony and written questioning. Too much reliance is placed on using written questioning to test learners' background

knowledge. Targets on assessment plans are not always specific and can make it difficult for the learner to understand what action they should take. Assessment is planned on a unit-by-unit approach rather than to take advantage of evidence as it occurs and fit it to the relevant unit. Assessment team members have insufficient experience to recognise where more appropriate or efficient assessment methods could be used.

Leadership and management

43. Lines of communication are clear from head office through the area managers to the stores. Many of the shops use message boards to keep staff updated. This is an effective means of communicating with staff working different shift patterns. Learners have a good understanding of their employment rights and responsibilities. The grievance procedure is clear and used effectively to deal with concerns in the workplace. The company has a whistle-blowing policy in place. Each store keeps copies of all company information, and staff have access to all policies and procedures.

44. The company's self-assessment report is an honest review of its performance, and the development plan has begun to have an effect. Staff involved in the programme are aware of the targets for completion of programmes. All learners who have made slow progress have been given achievement targets of the end of March. Progress is now adequately monitored. Some internal verification is weak. No overall internal verification plan is in place to ensure the sampling of assessors, learners and mandatory and optional units. The internal verification process takes place when learners complete units or NVQs. Learners' portfolios do not have evidence of ongoing sampling by the internal verifier. When sampling takes place it is satisfactory and brief feedback is given to the assessor. The internal verification process has identified learners making slow progress but has had little effect in rectifying this. Learners are aware of who the internal verifier is and what their role is. Learners are familiar with the assessment appeals process.