

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ITEC Learning Technologies**

**27 May 2004**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

## Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ITEC Learning Technologies

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. ITEC Learning Technologies (ITEC) was formed in 1983 as Basildon ITEC under a joint Department of Trade and Industry and Manpower Services Commission initiative. It was re-launched as ITEC Learning Technologies in September 2001. It provides work-based learning in engineering, business administration, accounting, information and communications technology (ICT), customer services and warehousing. The number of learners on engineering programmes declined to nine for the week of the inspection, but it was decided to continue inspecting this area of learning. The organisation has 514 learners, of whom 17 are advanced modern apprentices and 64 are foundation modern apprentices. Of the remainder, 341 are on learndirect programmes, nine are in alternative education, and 83 adults are on Profit for Learning programmes.

2. The company operates from one training site in Basildon and contracts with Essex Learning and Skills Council to provide modern apprenticeships. The Basildon district is made up of three towns: Basildon, Wickford and Billericay. The unemployment rate in the district was 1.9 per cent in May 2004, against a national rate of 2.3 per cent. Approximately 30 per cent of the local workforce commutes to London. In 2003, the proportion of school leavers in Billericay and Wickford gaining five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 60 per cent. Basildon schools did less well with 32 per cent. These rates compare with the national average of 52.9 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in the Basildon district is 3.1 per cent compared with the Essex average of 2.9 per cent and national average of 9 per cent.

3. The ITEC is a non-charitable trust, governed by a board of trustees. It is managed by a chief executive and a general manager, and has 15 members of staff, including assessor/trainers, learner support, careers and training co-ordinators, and five freelance assessors. The chief executive has overall responsibility for quality assurance and equal opportunities. The quality assurance of training and assessment is the responsibility of the general manager.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. There are eight foundation modern apprentices and one advanced modern apprentice, all on the repair centre programme. Foundation modern apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and advanced modern apprentices are 19 plus. The advanced modern apprentice and three of the foundation modern apprentices are employed, and the other learners are in work placements selected by ITEC. Initial assessment takes place at the ITEC centre and includes literacy and numeracy. There is no occupational assessment. All training is carried out on employers' sites. Courses in equal opportunities, health and safety and other specialisms are provided both for learners and employers at the ITEC training

## ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

centre. Assessors visit learners every two weeks and focus on national vocational qualification (NVQ) and key skills assessment, and portfolio-building. Progress reviews involve assessors and learners, and are followed by a meeting between the assessor and the employer to review the learner's progress and confirm actions to be taken over the next two weeks. Both modern apprenticeship programmes have small numbers of learners. No advanced modern apprentices have been recruited over the past two years, and the remaining advanced modern apprentice has exceeded the planned duration of his course.

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

5. There are 14 learners on programmes of work-based learning for young people in business administration, management and professional. Of these, two are foundation modern apprentices in accounting and 11 are foundation modern apprentices in administration. There is one advanced modern apprentice in administration. Four learners are in work placements and 10 are employed, all in the Basildon area. Those in work placements have been referred to ITEC by Connexions. Most of the current employers have used ITEC to train their staff in the past. Off-the-job training is provided at ITEC's centre in Basildon.

### **Information & communications technology**

6. There are 45 learners on work-based learning programmes in ICT, of whom 36 are foundation and nine are advanced modern apprentices. There are 34 learners on programmes in installing and supporting information technology (IT). Of the remainder, two are on programmes in customer response, three in using IT, three in developing IT systems and three in developing IT programmes. Nineteen of the learners are in full-time employment and the remainder are in work placements. Most learners receive on-the-job training from their work-placement supervisor. Some attend a training centre for one day a week. Training in key skills, portfolio-building, assessment criteria, and other skills are either provided by ITEC at the training centre or by the assessor in the workplace. Assessors visit the workplace approximately every two weeks to conduct training, progress reviews and assessments.

### **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

7. There are 13 work-based learners in retailing, customer service and transportation, of whom 12 are employed and seven are women. Nine are working towards an NVQ in customer service and the other four are on warehousing programmes. Seven are foundation modern apprentices and the remainder are advanced modern apprentices. Programme lengths range from 12 to 24 months. All assessments are carried out in the workplace, as is most of the key skills training and coaching. There is one assessor for customer service who also has other duties within the company. The warehousing assessor is self-employed, and the internal verifier is employed part time. Some of the employers provide training programmes for their learners.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	24
Number of learner interviews	47
Number of staff interviews	26
Number of employer interviews	32

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The overall quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically the ITEC'S leadership and management and arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance are satisfactory. The quality of provision in business administration, management and professional, ICT, and retailing, customer service and transportation is satisfactory. The quality of provision in engineering, technology and manufacturing is unsatisfactory.

## GRADES

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

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

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Electrical engineering</i> - Work-based learning for young people	9	4

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Business administration</i> - Work-based learning for young people	12	3
<i>Accounting and economics</i> - Work-based learning for young people	2	None

## ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Developing IT systems</i> - Work-based learning for young people	3	None
<i>IT and electrical services</i> - Work-based learning for young people	34	3
<i>Using IT</i> - Work-based learning for young people	3	None
<i>Other contributory areas</i> - Work-based learning for young people	5	None

Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Customer service</i> - Work-based learning for young people	9	None
<i>Warehousing and distribution</i> - Work-based learning for young people	4	None

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

9. **Learners in retailing, customer services and transportation produce a good standard of work.** Portfolios are well presented and the contents closely portray individual experiences and working practices. Learners' previous achievements are recognised, and where appropriate included in the evidence base. Learners take full responsibility for the contents.

10. **Learners in retailing, customer service and transportation have made good progress in their workplaces.** Some have gained promotion or additional responsibilities. Advanced modern apprentices in customer services have positions of authority. Most learners on work placements have progressed into employment. All learners have improved their personal skills.

11. **Achievement rates are poor for advanced modern apprentices in ICT.** The achievement rate declined steadily to 17 per cent in 2000-01. It improved slightly to 27 per cent in 2001-02.

12. There are **low achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices in engineering** repair centre. Between 1999-2000 and 2001-02, the rates were 33 per cent or less. Although retention rates have improved over the same period, this has not yet made an



impact on achievement rates.

## Quality of education and training

13. Four learning sessions were observed. All were satisfactory or better.

14. **The integration of key skills training with engineering foundation modern apprenticeship programmes is good.** Key skills assignments are planned and carried out by learners using work-based projects. Assignments provide learners with good opportunities for gaining evidence both for key skills and their NVQ portfolios.

15. **There is particularly effective involvement of employers in training.** Workplace supervisors have a great deal of knowledge which they use to enhance and support learners' understanding. Many employers are actively involved in the learning process and participate in progress reviews. Communication between ITEC and employers is effective and any issues are swiftly resolved.

16. **ICT resources are good.** ITEC's ICT training rooms are equipped with a large number of modern desktop computers, and networked printers. Hardware and software meet, or exceed, current industry standards both in the centre's training rooms and at work placements.

17. **Assessment practices on business administration programmes are good.** Assessors set short-term targets and follow them up at subsequent visits. Learners make good progress towards these targets. Prompt action is taken to support learners who fall behind in their work. Assessors manage learners' programmes actively but ensure that the learners accept responsibility for their own progress. Assessors are in frequent contact with supervisors and develop a good appreciation of the pressures in the workplace.

18. **Learners receive good individual support.** Assessors visit them in the workplace every two weeks and provide much-appreciated vocational and pastoral guidance and support. Assessors have a good understanding of their learners' needs. Learners can contact them by e-mail and telephone.

19. **There is some weak target-setting.** Few medium- and long-term targets are set. Individual learning plans do not include target completion dates for NVQ units or for key skills.

20. **Short term targets for ICT learners are insufficiently challenging.** They do not stretch or challenge learners, and most achieve them easily.

21. **Many individual learning plans are not updated or amended.** Additional support given to learners with literacy, numeracy and other needs is seldom recorded.

## ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

22. **Learners in engineering, repair centre are insufficiently involved in the review process.** They do not have suitable opportunities to develop and plan their own learning programmes. Supervisors, learners and assessors do not discuss learners' progress together or plan future learning.

23. **Accounting learners have little understanding of the modern apprenticeship framework.** They do not appreciate the place of technical certificates in their programmes and are not clear about the role of their internal verifier.

24. **There is very little use of assessors' observations in customer service learners' portfolios.** Although assessors visit learners every two weeks, they do not use this opportunity to observe the learners. The assessment process is slow. There is too much reliance on learners writing case studies.

## Leadership and management

25. **ITEC's managers have a good system for monitoring learners' progress.** They arrange monthly meetings with each trainer/assessor where the progress of each learner is reviewed individually. Actions to remedy any problems are agreed, and action points are recorded and reviewed at the next monthly meeting.

26. **ITEC's managers work well with staff to build effective teams.** Staff are informed about strategic issues affecting the organisation through regular meetings. Different members of staff chair each monthly staff meeting. The managers deliberately take a less active role in some meetings to allow staff to develop their own perspective. Staff are confident that they are valued, and they take part in open and honest debate during meetings. The annual staff appraisal system is used to develop their abilities.

27. **ITEC has effective links with a wide range of partners in the community.** These include learning partnerships for Basildon, Harlow, and South Essex, and joint projects with a local further education college and a university. ITEC's staff are members of local business organisations and have started to develop some links with groups representing minority interests in the community. These links are used effectively to market training programmes, to find appropriate work placements for learners and to develop specific programmes in response to local needs.

28. **The organisation has developed good strategies to attract women into learning.** There are good links with local schools, where staff have given presentations and workshops specifically aimed at young women. ITEC is also involved in careers conventions and industry days. A 'Women in IT' leaflet has been developed and is used to market IT courses.

29. **ITEC has good internal verification procedures, and applies them thoroughly.** Internal verification is planned well with an appropriate sample of assessments examined by verifiers. There are regular observations of assessors, and standardisation meetings take place every two months, with issues recorded, actioned and reviewed.

30. **ITEC has no strategy for the support of learners who need additional help with literacy, numeracy, or language skills.** There are links with a partner organisation that specialises in this support, but these are not yet fully established. ITEC's staff are not qualified or experienced in providing support. Some inappropriate advice was given to learners requesting support during the inspection.

31. **There is insufficient recognition or recording of learners' non-accredited achievements.** Some learners are gaining significant personal skills and increased confidence through their workplace and training activities. These achievements are often not recorded or celebrated.

32. **Staff selection procedures are unsatisfactory.** There are no formal job specifications, and applications and appointments are not monitored for equality of opportunity purposes.

33. ITEC collects a range of statistical data on recruitment and courses, but this is not used in action-planning. For example, although the organisation is aware that it has few learners from minority ethnic groups, it is not taking sufficient action to target these groups.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- good monitoring of learners' progress by managers
- good team management
- effective use of a wide range of partnerships
- good strategy to attract women learners
- very thorough application of internal verification procedures

### Weaknesses

- no strategy to support literacy numeracy and language skills
- insufficient recognition and recording of learners' non-accredited achievements
- inadequate staff selection procedures
- poor use of equal opportunities data to inform management.

## **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

### ***Electrical engineering***

#### *Strengths*

- good integration of key skills with foundation modern apprenticeship programmes
- particularly effective employer involvement
- good support for learners

#### *Weaknesses*

- low achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices
- weak target-setting
- insufficient involvement of learners in the review process

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

### ***Business administration***

#### *Strengths*

- particularly effective employer involvement
- good assessments

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor support for literacy and numeracy
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

### ***Accounting and economics***

#### *Strengths*

- particularly effective employer involvement
- good assessments

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor support for literacy and numeracy
- inadequate use of individual learning plans
- little understanding of framework by accounting learners

## **Information & communications technology**

### ***Developing IT systems***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

### ***IT and electrical services***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

### ***Using IT***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

## ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

## **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

### ***Customer service***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good progression for learners
- strong level of assessor support in the workplace

#### *Weaknesses*

- no medium-term target-setting
- insufficient use of direct observation
- inadequate support for literacy and numeracy

### ***Warehousing and distribution***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good progression for learners
- strong level of assessor support in the workplace

#### *Weaknesses*

- no medium-term target-setting
- inadequate support for literacy and numeracy

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES:**

- the relaxed and friendly staff
- that the staff motivate me to get on with it
- 'the staff are very supportive'
- the on-the-job training
- 'I really like IT'
- working and getting qualifications at the same time
- the frequent visits from staff
- 'choosing my own study pattern'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES COULD IMPROVE:**

- nothing
- the range of workshops
- the amount of time available to do the NVQ work
- the amount of attention paid to the personal appearance of learners - there is too much

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES:**

- improve the progress of modern apprentices
- develop appropriate use of target-setting
- improve the quality of individual learning plans
- improve literacy and numeracy support
- ensure effective use of equal opportunities data



## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

#### Strengths

- good monitoring of learners' progress by managers
- good team management
- effective use of a wide range of partnerships
- good strategy to attract women learners
- very thorough application of internal verification procedures

#### Weaknesses

- no strategy to support literacy numeracy and language skills
- insufficient recognition and recording of learners' non-accredited achievements
- inadequate staff selection procedures
- poor use of equal opportunities data to inform management.

34. ITEC's system for monitoring learners' progress is good. The general manager holds monthly meetings with each trainer/assessor. At these meetings, the progress of each trainer/assessor's learners is reviewed individually and any barriers to progress are identified. Actions to remedy any problems are agreed. Records are kept of the reviews, and action points are brought forward to the next monthly meeting. These monthly reviews feed into and draw from the formal progress reviews conducted with learners and their employers.

35. The managers and staff of ITEC work well together in a team approach. Managers use regular meetings to keep staff informed about the strategic issues facing the organisation. The staff meeting is chaired by a different member of staff each month. The managers deliberately take a less active role in some meetings to allow staff to develop their own perspective. A recent programme of forced redundancies was handled sensitively. Despite the difficulties the organisation has experienced, staff are ready to debate issues openly and honestly during programme review meetings. Staff are confident that they are valued. The system of annual staff appraisals is used appropriately to develop the abilities of staff, but some appraisals have been held late.

36. ITEC has effective links with a wide range of partners in the community. These include learning partnerships for Basildon, Harlow, and South Essex, and joint projects with a local further education college and university. ITEC is a member of local business organisations and has links with groups representing minority interests in the community. These links are used to market programmes, to seek and secure appropriate work placements for learners, and to develop specific programmes in response to local needs.

37. An internally produced database of learners is used satisfactorily in programme

## ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

reviews and management decision-making.

38. There is no strategy for the support of learners who need additional help with literacy, numeracy or language. ITEC has recently established a partnership with a local training organisation to provide support for learners with specific literacy, numeracy and language needs. Learners who are above the basic level but nevertheless have identified needs in literacy or numeracy may receive some additional support from their trainer. Many of the trainers are neither qualified nor experienced in providing this support. Inspectors observed three learners being advised to follow a television-based programme.

39. There is insufficient recognition or recording of learners' non-accredited achievements. Many learners obtain employment during or after completing their programme, and although this is often recorded in their files, data on these achievements is not collated. Learners are taking part in a wide range of activities both at ITEC and in the wider community. Some of these activities contribute to personal attributes such as social skills and increased confidence. Work-placement providers comment on the improvements they have seen, but these personal achievements are often not recorded or celebrated.

40. The procedures used for recruiting staff are not satisfactory. There are no formal job specifications to assist with appropriate selection criteria. There is no statistical monitoring of applications or appointments to ensure equality of opportunity. New staff selection procedures have been devised but have not yet been implemented.

41. The trustees do not monitor their own performance rigorously. The board of trustees meets every three months, with additional meetings in exceptional circumstances. Four trustees are required at meetings before decisions can be made, but this number has not always been achieved. Several trustees have resigned in the past two years and not been replaced. The board is currently made up of three trustees and the chief executive.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

42. ITEC places an emphasis on equality of opportunity at strategic level. There are recently updated, comprehensive equal opportunities policies and procedures, that give clear guidance on rights and responsibilities, most current legislation, and how to deal with grievances and complaints. Equal opportunities is a standard item in staff meetings. Employers are required to provide information on their equal opportunities policies and procedures when they register with the provider. If they do not have one, they commit themselves to adopting ITEC's policy. However, employers' practise of equality of opportunity is not routinely and regularly checked.

43. ITEC has developed good strategies to attract women into training. It has produced a marketing leaflet, 'Women in IT', which it has disseminated through well-developed links with local schools. Staff have given presentations specifically aimed at female pupils, at workshops, careers conventions and during industry days. The number of women recruited to the ICT course is still low, but there is steady enrolment into customer

service, warehousing, administration and accounts.

44. Learners sign a clearly written, comprehensive learning agreement at the start of their programmes. The agreement contains a short section on equal opportunities. Most learners remember covering equal opportunities at induction, and their understanding is checked regularly with each learner during progress reviews. Learners also have the opportunity to attend an effective one-day training course in equality and diversity, which takes place at the training centre. ITEC has developed a useful workbook to accompany this course. The training covers a wide variety of issues relating to gender, disability, religion, human rights and criminal convictions. Learners have access to good ICT resources and carry out research using the internet. For example, they have to select one person from a list of people at the forefront of campaigning for human rights or research specific disabilities, such as multiple sclerosis or autism.

45. ITEC is involved in a project funded by the Learning and Skills Development Agency on the range of aids and adaptations available for learners with disabilities. Good links have been made with organisations for people with disabilities, and an internal audit on the accessibility of facilities is scheduled to take place as part of the project. Access for people with disabilities is satisfactory. The building and classrooms are accessible to wheelchair users, and some adapted software is available for visually impaired users.

46. ITEC makes poor use of equal opportunities data in the management of the provision. Staff routinely collect recruitment and enrolment data on learners' gender, ethnicity and disabilities, but do not use it fully in business planning, or to target under-represented groups. Managers are aware that few learners are from minority ethnic groups, but have not taken sufficient action to target these groups. There is no formal procedure for collating and monitoring information on equality of opportunity when recruiting staff.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 3**

47. ITEC has effective internal verification procedures and applies them thoroughly. The general manager is also the lead internal verifier. The internal verifiers examine 25 per cent of all assessments. Each assessor is observed by an internal verifier at least twice a year, and inexperienced assessors are observed more frequently. There is good, constructive feedback to assessors by internal verifiers. Assessment standardisation meetings are held every two months and include all assessors and internal verifiers. Internal verifiers have identified slow progress in some areas of learning and action plans have been devised to rectify this. However, actions to deal with some of the problems identified are still being developed. Any requests by external verifiers are dealt with promptly. External verifiers from different awarding bodies are satisfied with the quality of the assessment and verification procedures.

48. ITEC's extensive quality management manual contains details of procedures, and instructions for maintaining records. The manual is distributed to staff, and the location of all copies is recorded. The procedures are reviewed regularly, and revised pages of the manual are distributed. The manual is actively used by staff, although it contains

## ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

extensive cross-reference codes which make it difficult to follow. Six members of staff have been trained to audit the operating procedures and documents in use in accordance with the quality management manual. They carry out a full audit three times a year. Following each audit, they produce an action plan to avoid any repetition of identified errors and weaknesses. Some significant weaknesses found during audits have not yet been rectified. There is, for example, inconsistent use of individual learning plans.

49. Appropriate procedures are used to obtain feedback about training programmes. Employers and work-placement providers are asked to evaluate ITEC's performance in an annual survey. In 2002-03, 20 per cent of employers responded. Learners are given questionnaires in the middle and at the end of their programme to elicit their views of their experience at ITEC. Learners attending short workshops complete a questionnaire at the end of each session. The feedback from these surveys is analysed and the results are distributed to the staff and used in programme reviews and development planning.

50. In addition to assessment observations, there is a satisfactory programme of trainer observations. Each trainer is observed providing training or support at least twice a year. Newly appointed trainers are closely monitored and observed until they have demonstrated their competence. The results of observations are fed back to the trainer and discussed in their regular monthly meetings with the manager.

51. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. There is an annual programme review during which the whole staff evaluates the organisation's performance and identifies its current strengths and weaknesses. The programme review leads to an annual self-assessment report and development plan. This plan is reviewed at monthly staff meetings. The self-assessment report contained most of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection. An additional self-assessment report produced for the inspection was derived from the annual report process but did not contain all the significant weaknesses identified by inspectors. Many of the areas identified as strengths were judged by inspectors to be no more than satisfactory.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Electrical engineering</i> - Work-based learning for young people	9	4

#### *Electrical engineering*

##### *Strengths*

- good integration of key skills with foundation modern apprenticeship programmes
- particularly effective employer involvement
- good support for learners

##### *Weaknesses*

- low achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices
- weak target-setting
- insufficient involvement of learners in the review process

#### **Achievement and standards**

52. The standard of learners' work is at least satisfactory, and in some cases, it is good. Portfolios are well structured and contain a satisfactory range of evidence including photographs, witness statements, workplace documents, and assignments. Portfolios contain both NVQ and key skills evidence. Most learners are well motivated and interested in their programmes. Many feel that they have developed new and useful skills. In some instances, learners have become permanent employees of their work-placement provider, and taken on increased responsibilities.

53. Between 1999-2000 and 2001-2002, retention rates for foundation modern apprentices improved from 33 per cent to 63 per cent. They are now satisfactory.

54. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices is low. Between 1999-2000 and 2001-02, the rates ranged from 17 to 25 per cent. Historically, there has been some slow progress among foundation modern apprentices. However, of the three who have exceeded the planned duration of their programme, one has completed it during the inspection and a further two are scheduled to complete within the next four weeks. The eight still in learning are expected to finish their programme on time.

ITEC LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts					2				4		2				
Retained*					1	50			0	0	1	50				
Successfully completed					0	0			0	0	1	50				
Still in learning					1	50			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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	5		3		8		6		3		1				
Retained*	0		0	0	5	62	3	50	1	33	0	0				
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	25	1	17	1	33	0	0				
Still in learning	4		2	67	2	25	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

55. There is good integration of key skills training with foundation modern apprenticeship programmes. Key skills assignments are planned and carried out by learners as part of projects that are useful to their employers. For example, one learner reviewed the equipment and facilities needed for repairs, and gave a presentation on the outcome. The proposal was adopted by his employer. The learner gained evidence of application of number, communications, and IT. The fully integrated work tasks meet all the key skills requirements.

56. There is particularly effective employer involvement in training. All workplace supervisors have very good product and process knowledge which they use to enhance learners' knowledge and skills. They provide a good learning environment with appropriate facilities, and a range of tools and equipment that exceeds NVQ requirements. For example, in an equipment sales, repair and refurbishing business, learners gain work experience in different parts of the company. This ranges from pre-delivery inspection and testing of new products, to disassembly, repair and reassembly of refurbished equipment. Learners develop a wide and detailed knowledge of the inspection, test and repair processes, and also further develop specific skills such as soldering. However, in some cases there is no formally planned training programme or list of the background knowledge topics to be covered.

57. ITEC provides good support for learners. Assessors visit learners at work every two weeks, and provide much-valued vocational and pastoral guidance and support. They can also be reached by e-mail and telephone, and they respond very quickly to problems. In one case where an employed learner was made redundant, ITEC found a suitable placement within two working days. The learner was able to continue his programme without a significant delay. Employers and learners value the training and guidance provided by ITEC. Learners who are not already employed in IT receive an eight-week induction programme before starting their modern apprenticeship. This includes health and safety, equal opportunities, and vocational training to give them an understanding of IT support and develop essential skills such as basic soldering. On completion of their induction, learners receive a nationally recognised level 2 vocational qualification. Employers and learners report that this is very effective in preparing learners for their modern apprenticeship programme. Initial assessment includes interviews and tests of literacy, numeracy and IT. Any additional learning needs and support are identified at fortnightly visits from assessors and the 12-week review. These focus strongly on learners' personal development.

58. ITEC's assessment and internal verification staff are qualified as required by the awarding bodies and have appropriate industrial experience. Resources for learners in the ITEC centre and in the workplace are satisfactory. The IT equipment in the ITEC centre is up to date, and includes modern computer workstations, data projectors and interactive whiteboards. The resources in the workplace are adequate and meet the needs of learners.

59. Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Assessors visit the workplace every two weeks, review learners' work and identify the tasks they need to do next. They use a range of methods to assess the quality of learners' work, including on-the-job observations, guided discussion, product evidence and document review. The process is led by the assessor, with the focus on short-term achievement.

60. The progression of programmes available to learners is satisfactory. ITEC offers learners a chance to progress from foundation to advanced modern apprenticeships. It also provides industry-standard courses at a discount for learners who complete their apprenticeships within the planned timescale. Although there has been a strong drive by ITEC to increase the number of learners on IT programmes, this has had little impact on recruitment to the repair centre programme. Learners take health and safety, and equal opportunities courses during their modern apprenticeship programmes to enhance their awareness.

61. The literacy, numeracy and language provision is adequate for repair centre learners. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed during induction. Most learners' support needs are appropriately identified, and learners are working towards the correct level of qualification. Additional literacy and numeracy support is sometimes provided by the assessor during workplace visits. One learner who was having difficulty in handling long lists of activities or instructions was supported by the assessor, who simplified the lists and clarified the context. This enabled the learner to progress as planned.



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62. Target-setting is weak. Assessors set effective short-term targets at their fortnightly visits, but do not set medium- or long-term targets. The individual learning plan does not include target completion dates for NVQ units or for the key skills programme. Learners and employers do not know until late in the programme when learners are expected to complete NVQ units or key skill qualifications.

63. There is insufficient involvement of the learners in the review process. Although progress in completing portfolios has improved, learners do not have suitable opportunities to develop and plan their own learning programmes. Assessors sometimes discuss possible tasks for the learners with their supervisor. Learners are not fully involved in this process. Supervisors, learners and assessors do not meet to discuss learners' progress and help them plan and understand their own learning. This was recognised as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

### **Leadership and management**

64. Assessment and training staff have a good understanding of ITEC's aims, and work as part of a team to provide effective support for learners. There is good communication at all levels.

65. The self-assessment process is adequate, but the self-assessment report did not identify all the strengths and weaknesses in this area of learning found during the inspection. The self-assessment report claimed as a strength strategies that have yet to make an impact on learners' experience. The June 2003 report identified the absence of occupational screening as a weakness. This is still not in place, although all the ICT learners are satisfied with the level and content of their courses.

66. The workplace appears to be a safe and non-threatening environment. Learners have a sound understanding of the principles of equal opportunity and most have attended the one-day course provided by ITEC to refresh and improve their awareness. However, in one placement there were unsuitable posters on display. The employer was aware of this and was taking action to have them removed.

67. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Reports of learners' progress and outcomes of reviews are analysed and a monthly report is prepared by the general manager. This is reviewed by the senior management team and relevant action is taken to resolve any issues. The internal verification process is satisfactory and meets the awarding body's criteria. There is a well-structured internal verification plan which identifies monitoring visits and portfolios for review. Visits are carried out as planned and assessors are monitored during their direct observation of learners and also during reviews. Portfolios are reviewed and evidence that has been sampled is clearly signed off by the internal verifier. Assessors attend meetings to ensure they are up to date with the latest developments, but these standardisation meetings do not take place regularly enough. There are too few specialist assessors. When the freelance assessor for the repair centre programme is away there is no other assessor available to offer learners vocational support.



## Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Business administration</i></b> - Work-based learning for young people	12	3
<b><i>Accounting and economics</i></b> - Work-based learning for young people	2	None

### ***Business administration***

#### *Strengths*

- particularly effective employer involvement
- good assessments

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor support for literacy and numeracy
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

### ***Accounting and economics***

#### *Strengths*

- particularly effective employer involvement
- good assessments

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor support for literacy and numeracy
- inadequate use of individual learning plans
- little understanding of framework by accounting learners

## **Achievement and standards**

68. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2001-02, 62 per cent of foundation modern apprentices were retained and achieved their learning goal. Of the 2002-03 intake, 53 per cent have either completed their courses or are still in learning. Seven of the eight who started in 2003 are still in learning. Most are making satisfactory progress and achieving a good standard of work. The number of advanced modern apprentices is very small. Of the four recruited between 2001-02 and 2002-03, none has achieved, and only one is still learning.

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LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		2				2		5		1				
Retained*	0		0	0			1	50	4	80	1	100				
Successfully completed	0		0	0			1	50	3	60	1	100				
Still in learning	1		0	0			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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	8		17		13		16		16		17				
Retained*	0		4	24	8	62	6	38	11	69	9	53				
Successfully completed	0		3	18	8	62	5	31	9	56	9	53				
Still in learning	7		6	35	0	0	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

69. Learners' employers and work-placement providers support them well. They are actively involved in many aspects of the learning process. ITEC has many longstanding links with employers. Employers understand the need to give learners work that satisfies the requirements of their NVO. They help to plan ways in which learners can perform additional tasks in order to gain evidence. They release them readily for off-the-job training, and value the benefits derived from assessors' visits. Assessors develop good relationships with supervisors and managers. Supervisors attend learners' progress reviews. They allow learners to work on their evidence during office hours. Employers find that training programmes improve learners' knowledge and performance. Many learners are making good progress in their jobs and work placements, and some are taking on a wider range of responsibilities. Many learners who start out in work placements are offered jobs in the same organisations. Learners value the way in which many employers consider their training towards their qualification to be an integral part of their job.

70. Assessment practice is good. Assessors visit learners every two weeks. Appointments are made and kept by assessors and learners. Short-term targets are set and are followed up on each visit. Learners understand and implement the planned actions, and they make good progress towards their targets. Assessors act promptly to help anyone who falls behind to replan their work and learning. They carry out a skill

scan at the beginning of the programme to gain a clear insight into the opportunities for learners to gather evidence in their jobs. They help the learners to identify a wide range of diverse evidence and produce a good standard of work. Learners develop many case studies in which key skills are well integrated with the NVQ requirements. Assessors manage their learners' programmes actively but ensure that the learners take responsibility for their own progress. Copies of progress monitoring records are held by learners as well as assessors. These record the planned and actual dates of assessments, progress reviews, observations and internal verification. Assessors are in frequent contact with learners' workplace supervisors, and develop a good appreciation of current and forthcoming pressures in the workplace. They understand the needs of each employer. Supervisors value the prompt response by assessors to any difficulties or other issues that arise. Employers regard the frequent visits by ITEC's staff to assess and review their learners as constituting a good service to them and the learners. Learners who leave their work placements or jobs are soon found new positions so that their learning can continue.

71. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory. Most learning takes place on the job. ITEC provides learners with a schedule of workshops in preparation for key skills and technical certificate assignments and tests, as well as for some aspects of their NVQs. Employers are happy to release their learners for these workshops, and they are well attended. Learners find the workshops useful in developing their knowledge and understanding and in preparing for tests. Assessors are occupationally competent. They are liked and respected by learners and their supervisors. Training rooms are well lit and ventilated, and comfortably furnished. There is a good range of industry-standard computers with appropriate software.

72. Learning programmes meet the needs of learners, and most are satisfied with all aspects of their learning. There are learners from minority ethnic groups on business administration programmes but not in accounting. Only 14 per cent of business administration learners are men.

73. Learners with identified needs for literacy and numeracy support are accepted as learners, but not always given sufficient support. Staff are not trained to teach literacy and numeracy.

74. Individual learning plans are used inconsistently. Many are not updated or amended. They are not used adequately to record the dates when targets are achieved. The provision of additional support to learners with literacy, numeracy and other needs is seldom recorded. Individual learning plans are placed in portfolios but learners do not refer to or update them. Short-term targets are recorded on separate action plans, but medium-term targets are not recorded or updated.

75. Accounting learners have little understanding of their modern apprenticeship framework. They do not appreciate the place of technical certificates in their programmes and are not clear about the role of their internal verifier. They have taken part in regular progress reviews but do not know when they are due to complete all aspects of their learning programmes.

## **Leadership and management**

76. Most aspects of training are managed satisfactorily. Assessors plan and deliver well co-ordinated programmes of NVQs, technical certificates and key skills. Internal verification is well planned and thorough. Assessors are observed by internal verifiers at least twice each year, and receive critical developmental feedback. There is a consistent standard of assessment for all business administration learners.

77. The self-assessment report for this area of learning was not detailed enough. The strengths and weaknesses in the report were different from those identified by inspectors.

78. Staff and most learners demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities.

## Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Developing IT systems</i> - Work-based learning for young people	3	None
<i>IT and electrical services</i> - Work-based learning for young people	34	3
<i>Using IT</i> - Work-based learning for young people	3	None
<i>Other contributory areas</i> - Work-based learning for young people	5	None

### *Developing IT systems*

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

### *IT and electrical services*

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

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### ***Using IT***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of training
- good ICT resources
- good employer partnerships

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficiently challenging short-term targets for learners
- poor support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs

## **Achievement and standards**

79. Achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices are poor. In 1997-98, the achievement rate was 50 per cent, and this declined to 17 per cent in 2000-01. Of the advanced modern apprentices recruited in 2001-02, 27 per cent have achieved and 45 per cent are still in learning, but of those recruited in 2002-03, none have achieved and less than half are still in learning.

80. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices are satisfactory. Between 1999-2000 and 2001-02 they showed an upward trend from 38 per cent to 58 per cent. Of the learners recruited in 2002-03, 11 per cent have achieved so far, with a further 43 per cent still learning.

81. The retention rates for modern apprentices are satisfactory. Retention rates on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes rose from 60 per cent in 1998-99 to 74 per cent in 2001-02. They fell to 11 per cent with a further 43 per cent still learning in 2002-03. The retention rate for advanced modern apprentices rose from 50 per cent to 83 per cent between 1999-2000 and 2000-01. However, the maximum possible retention rate for advanced modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 is 43 per cent.

82. Learners are gaining good practical skills, which they use competently in the workplace. Qualifications are matched well to their job roles, enabling them to gather relevant evidence for their portfolios. They are also effectively developing in employment and gaining confidence in their work.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	1		7		11		6		4		10		2		
Retained*	0		0	0	3	27	5	83	2	50	6	60	1	50		
Successfully completed	0		0	0	3	27	1	17	1	25	4	40	1	50		
Still in learning	1		3	43	5	45	0	0	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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	32		28		19		32		13		5				
Retained*	0		3	11	14	74	22	69	6	46	3	60				
Successfully completed	0		3	11	11	58	14	44	5	38	3	60				
Still in learning	23		12	43	1	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

83. Training sessions are well structured and new concepts are explained well. The standard of training is good and learners put into practice new techniques learnt in the training centre. Some of the training is used to support evidence in portfolios. There is regular and effective checking of learners' understanding by the trainer. A wide range of visual aids is used, and learners are offered support throughout their training programmes, including during assessments and reviews. Learners receive sufficient guidance and support from trainers to enable them to gather evidence at work. They also receive relevant on-the-job training from their workplace supervisors and managers.

84. The ICT training rooms at ITEC are well equipped with a large number of modern desktop computers and networked printers. Both the hardware and software meet current industry standards. The training rooms are well lit and spacious. The large number of computers allows learners access to carry out extra work in portfolio-building

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and independent study. The ICT equipment in the learners' workplaces meets or exceeds current industry standards.

85. There are four staff members responsible for training and assessing the 45 learners. All have a good understanding of the NVQ processes for the ICT programmes and are appropriately qualified in the occupational area. The internal verifiers and assessors are appropriately qualified and occupationally competent.

86. ITEC has established a good network of employers. Employers regard their relationship with ITEC as an effective partnership. ITEC makes an initial visit to the work placement to ensure it is appropriate for ICT programmes. Learners are effectively matched to relevant work placements. They work in a variety of ICT contexts and organisations. Employers confirm that ITEC has a good reputation with them. Some employers use ITEC as a highly effective recruitment agency, identifying suitable employees for advancement. When issues arise, they are swiftly and effectively resolved. There is regular and effective formal and informal communication between line managers and ITEC. The programmes being offered in ICT meet the needs of the learners and employers well.

87. Induction is satisfactory. Some learners attend supplementary workshops during their programme to increase the range of evidence they can gather. Learners have an adequate understanding of equal opportunities, health and safety, their programmes and the requirements for assessment to achieve their qualification. Throughout the programmes, learners are actively encouraged to raise any issues with a member of staff.

88. Most learners are exempt from some key skills assessment. They take regular tests to check their skill levels in literacy and numeracy, but if they are identified as needing training in these areas they receive only minimal support.

89. ITEC has identified weak assessment practices as having had a negative impact on achievement in the past. The organisation has made staff changes to deal with the problems, but it is too early for these changes to have had an effect. All learners are assessed at the start of their programme.

90. In the workplace, evidence is gathered from a wide range of sources. Most product evidence is held on computer and made available for on-screen viewing by the internal and external verifier. Portfolios are structured and regularly assessed. Short-term targets are set at each assessment but do not stretch or challenge learners. They state only minimal requirements. Most learners achieve the targets with ease. At the end of each assessment, learners are given feedback identifying areas of insufficient evidence. The internal verifiers use appropriate sampling techniques, and internal verification is well recorded and effective.

## Leadership and management

91. There are regular meetings between trainers, assessors and internal verifiers. Staff have a good understanding of ITEC's procedures and paperwork. Meetings are well



planned. Work-placement managers and supervisors are very satisfied with the communication and support from ITEC. Resources are well managed. Learners have an adequate understanding of equality of opportunity. Self-assessment was accurate in identifying that ICT training was satisfactory. However, the process did not identify the same strengths and weaknesses as the inspectors. The self-assessment report mainly focused on learndirect provision.

**Retailing, customer service & transportation**

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Customer service</i> - Work-based learning for young people	9	None
<i>Warehousing and distribution</i> - Work-based learning for young people	4	None

***Customer service****Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good progression for learners
- strong level of assessor support in the workplace

*Weaknesses*

- no medium-term target-setting
- insufficient use of direct observation
- inadequate support for literacy and numeracy

***Warehousing and distribution****Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good progression for learners
- strong level of assessor support in the workplace

*Weaknesses*

- no medium-term target-setting
- inadequate support for literacy and numeracy

**Achievement and standards**

92. Learners produce a good standard of work. Portfolios are well presented, and learners clearly have a pride in their work. Portfolio contents closely portray individual experiences and working practices. Learners' previous achievements are recognised and where appropriate included in the evidence base. Learners make an effort to present their work professionally and take full responsibility for the contents.

93. Learners have progressed well in their workplaces. Learners who were originally on

work placements have now gained full-time employment. Most learners have gained either promotion or additional responsibilities. Advanced modern apprentices in customer service have positions of authority. Many learners in warehousing are now in supervisory positions. All learners have improved their personal skills, and are regarded by their employers as respected and valuable members of the workforce. Some learners have had their full potential recognised and are now on management courses.

94. Achievement and retention rates are satisfactory. Of the learners recruited during the past four years, 21 per cent of learners have achieved the full modern apprenticeship framework and a further 46 per cent are still in learning. The achievement and retention rates for foundation modern apprentices are better than those for advanced modern apprentices.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	4		2		2		2									
Retained*	0		0		0	0	1	50									
Successfully completed	0		0		0	0	1	50									
Still in learning	4		2		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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	4		8		3		3									
Retained*	0		2		3	100	2	67									
Successfully completed	0		2		2	67	1	33									
Still in learning	4		3		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

95. Assessors provide strong support for learners in the workplace, visiting them every fortnight. The visiting pattern has established productive working relationships between employers, assessors and learners. Assessors have a good understanding of their learners' needs and working practices, and are able to set tasks that enable learners to maximise their evidence gathering. Employers help with evidence gathering and take a

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keen interest in learners' progress. There are many good examples of employers' involvement in authenticating evidence or providing witness statements. Learners know that they can approach assessors at any time, and although there are few examples of extended pastoral support, learners are well aware of its availability.

96. The NVQ assessment process is satisfactory. Assessors are appropriately qualified and have acceptable levels of commercial experience. NVQ evidence is carefully assessed against the occupational standards and efficiently cross-referenced across all units. Assessors accurately identify gaps in evidence so that learners can deal with them. Assessors set authentic short-term targets to be achieved by their next visit, and pinpoint what learners need to achieve. Targets are focused and achievable and directly relate to NVQ evidence requirements. A few learners are behind their target completion dates, but most are either on or ahead of their target dates.

97. Work placements are well resourced, enabling learners to achieve their NVQs and reflecting good examples of commercial practice. Most of the employers are prestigious, local organisations that will enhance learners' curriculum vitae and career progression prospects. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Induction is satisfactory; learners remember it clearly and are well aware of their rights and responsibilities. The review process is satisfactory with good employer involvement. Progress review documents are well written and record discussion of all the relevant topics. However, the targets set in reviews are often too general and do not always include deadlines. Most of the learners have exemptions in key skills but where learners are working towards key skills qualifications, progress is satisfactory.

98. There is inadequate support for learners with additional literacy needs. Learners identified as needing additional help with grammar and spelling are not always given appropriate support. In some cases they are referred to national websites or given self-tuition computer programmes to use on their own. Where this happens, ITEC's staff do not check any of the work done. Assessors do not always correct grammar and spelling mistakes in learners' work. However learners with more severe barriers to learning who are identified as needing additional support do receive it. No learners are currently identified as having additional numeracy or language needs.

99. Individual learning plans do not contain target completion dates for either NVQ or key skills units. The only completion target given is the end date for the whole framework. Learners are not set any interim targets. Not all individual learning plans are kept up to date and form an accurate record of learners' progress.

100. Very little evidence of assessors' observations is recorded in customer service learners' portfolios. There is too much reliance on learners' written case studies, and this disadvantages some learners. The assessment process is slow. Assessors visit learners every fortnight but do not use this opportunity to carry out observations. The lead internal verifier has identified this weakness but so far it has not been remedied.

## Leadership and management

101. Internal verification is thorough and is integrated well with assessment procedures. The learning options available are limited. Learners who work in shops cannot follow the retail NVQs that would be more appropriate to their working situations.

102. While some employers are providing very good training, others are not. Some learners are getting very little formal training to help them achieve their learning objectives. ITEC has no overall plan to deal with this. There is no effective strategy to deal with employers who refuse to release learners for off-the-job training. In some cases learners are missing essential training in both equality of opportunity, and health and safety.