

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Adecco UK Ltd Reinspection**

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

# **REINSPECTION REPORT**

## **Adecco UK Ltd Reinspection**

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Adecco Group is an international company providing human resources services to clients throughout the world. It has over 6,000 offices worldwide. Adecco UK Limited has its head offices in Hertfordshire while the Adecco Corporate Training Department (Adecco), which manages the national vocational qualification (NVQ) and apprenticeship programmes, is based in Greenock, Scotland, close to the site of a large multinational client company.
2. Since August 2002, Adecco has contracted with the National Contracts Service, now the National Employers' Service, of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in business administration, customer services and call handling. The company also provides NVQs for adult learners in business administration, team leading, management, learning and development, customer services and call handling at levels 2, 3 and 4. Adecco contracts with Scottish Enterprise to offer NVQs and advanced apprenticeships to learners in Scotland.
3. At the time of the previous inspection in October 2003, there were 132 learners. At the final reinspection visit there were 39. Twenty learners are employed by a large mail order company in Manchester. The remaining 19 are employed by Adecco and work for a large multinational client on five different sites in the south of England. Most of the Adecco learners and one assessor who is also an internal verifier are based at a site near Portsmouth. The human resources and training manager, administrator and second assessor are based in Greenock, Scotland. One assessor was based in Manchester but recently left the company.
4. The reinspection process consisted of three one-day visits by one inspector, to Manchester in August 2004, Portsmouth in November 2004, and Greenock in January 2005. A final reinspection visit made by three inspectors in March 2005 included a visit to all of the English sites where learners are currently based.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

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

5. There are 28 learners in business administration. Of these, 13 young people are on apprenticeship programmes in administration at levels 2 and 3. They are employed by Adecco, and attend work placements with a large multinational client company whose UK head office is at Portsmouth. Fifteen of the learners are adults working towards NVQs in team leading, management, and learning and development at levels 2, 3 and 4. The adult learners are employed by a large mail order company in Manchester. Most training is carried out on the job, and some learners attend courses as part of their work. All learners have access to online learning materials and CD-ROMs. Learners are assessed in the workplace by Adecco's assessors.

## Retailing, customer service & transportation

6. There are 11 learners on customer service and call handling programmes. Five are employed by a large call centre in Manchester. The others are employed by Adecco and work at sites that are part of a large multinational company. Three learners are adults working towards an NVQ in call handling. There is one apprentice and seven advanced apprentices in customer service. All assessment takes place in the workplace. Training is provided by employers and work-placement providers. Training includes workshops and various customer service courses. Learners are assessed in the workplace by Adecco's assessors.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	15
Number of learners interviewed	19
Number of staff interviewed	11
Number of employers interviewed	9
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	5

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. The previous inspection in October 2003 found that training in business administration, management and professional was very weak and so were leadership and management, including the arrangements for quality assurance. Training in retailing, customer service and transportation was unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, training in business administration, management and professional, and retailing, customer service and transportation is satisfactory. Adecco's leadership and management are satisfactory as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Its quality assurance is unsatisfactory. The quality of provision is now adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it

## GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	5

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	5

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	4

### Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Other government-funded provision	3
Apprenticeships for young people	3

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	3
Other government-funded provision	3

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

8. **Learners develop very good personal and business-related skills.** The standard of their work is good and they talk with confidence and enthusiasm about their NVQ programme. Some management learners have carried out projects that have brought about cost and efficiency savings in their workplaces.

9. Retention rates for customer services and business administration continue to be satisfactory. Few learners have been recruited onto the programme since the previous inspection and most remain in training.

**10. Achievement rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices remain poor.** In the past year, apprentices have made good progress towards their qualifications. Many are now achieving units ahead of their target dates. Key skills and technical certificates are now being introduced earlier in the programmes.

**11. Progress has been slow for many learners.** Many adults have only completed a few units in over a year, and are not expected to complete until after their target end date. A few learners were not assessed for several months when an assessor was on sick leave. Most current learners are now making good progress.

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

**12. There is good training and development for learners in the workplace.** Well-designed short courses and a thorough workplace induction allow learners to develop their skills in team leading, customer service, teamworking and the use of telephones and computers. Some learners have been promoted and welcome the challenge and career potential this brings.

**13. Learners are supported well.** Assessors are based in the workplace and are regarded as an integral part of the team. Assessors fit fortnightly visits around the learners' individual work patterns. Workplace managers and supervisors also provide good support to learners, helping to generate opportunities for assessment and allowing time during working hours for learners to produce evidence for their NVQ.

**14. Learners' success is celebrated well, which motivates them and encourages their work colleagues to participate in training.** There are well-publicised award ceremonies with awards presented by senior managers of Adecco and the client companies.

**15.** Learners receive a satisfactory induction to the training programmes. Assessment practices remain satisfactory, and there is increasing use of digitally recorded professional discussion to improve progress. Feedback from assessors to learners has improved and it is now detailed and useful.

**16. Workplace supervisors and Adecco's human resources consultants and managers are not adequately involved in the planning and monitoring of learning programmes.** Progress reviews have improved and are now satisfactory and learners are aware of the progress they are making. Supervisors and managers are not sufficiently involved in progress reviews, although they receive a copy of the completed paperwork.

**17. Initial assessment has improved but is still unsatisfactory.** Learners have an individual interview, but this does not adequately assess or identify their additional literacy, numeracy, language or dyslexia needs. Key skills are not assessed until part way through the apprenticeship programmes. Learners who require additional support with key skills are given a CD-ROM of practice exercises.



## Leadership and management

18. **There is good training and development for training staff, learners and other Adecco employees.** In the past year, the training staff have achieved a number of relevant qualifications to enable them to support the learners effectively. Good vocational training courses are provided by client companies. Adecco also offers a flexible learning programme with 120 courses available through its website.

19. There have been several recent initiatives to improve the programmes. **A well-designed internal quality audit** has been developed using structured interviews. One full audit effectively identified several issues which have now been appropriately dealt with. Adecco has recently started to use more innovative assessment methods to improve the programmes. Good use is made of digital recording of professional discussions and oral questioning by assessors, and Adecco is finalising arrangements for apprentices to take key skills tests online when they are ready. Adecco has successfully raised awareness of the programmes among managers.

20. Communications have improved and are now satisfactory. There are now regular meetings among the training team. The planning of the apprenticeship frameworks has improved and is now satisfactory, with the key skills training being introduced earlier.

21. Internal verification is satisfactory, although it is mostly carried out at the end of the programme. The company does not have an overall internal verification strategy.

22. **Adecco was slow to plan improvements after the previous inspection.** There was a significant period without clear direction before a new training manager was appointed. The three-year development plan focuses on the current situation rather than the future. Senior managers have been developing the strategic plans but have not shared them with the training team.

23. There has been slow progress in remedying the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection. The post-inspection action plan was not developed until five months after the inspection. **Several weaknesses have not yet been dealt with fully**, such as those in initial assessment and planning for technical certificates. Development of quality assurance arrangements has been slow.

24. There is **no overall policy or framework for the quality assurance.** The current procedures manual does not cover all the key activities. Most procedures do not clearly specify the standards expected. There are few measures or targets by which procedures can be monitored to ensure they are effective.

25. **The monitoring of training and learning is inadequate.** There are no formal plans for the observation of training or other activities such as induction and progress reviews. Adecco has begun to collect feedback from learners, and the first summary report has been produced. It is too early to identify any trends or areas for improvement.

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

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- good training and development
- good recent initiatives to improve programmes

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress in remedying weaknesses
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

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

#### **Strengths**

- very good development of personal and business skills
- good individual support
- good celebration of learners' success

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress towards NVQs on adult programmes
- insufficient initial assessment
- insufficient involvement of employers in planning and monitoring learning

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

#### **Strengths**

- comprehensive workplace training
- well-supported learners

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress for most apprentices
- insufficient initial assessment

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

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

#### **Strengths**

- good training and development
- good recent initiatives to improve programmes

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress in remedying weaknesses
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

26. There is good training and development for the training staff and learners. In the past year the training manager has achieved a Scottish national vocational qualification (SNVQ) at level 4 in learning and development which included both assessor and internal verifier awards. One assessor has upgraded her assessor and verifier qualifications to the new standards, attended courses in key skills and advanced assessment practices, and completed an NVQ at level 3 in management. The other assessor is working towards an SNVQ at level 4 in learning and development and an assessor award. All training staff have attended health and safety awareness training. One assessor has attended an equality and diversity course. All Adecco's employees, including learners, have an annual appraisal which is used effectively to identify their training needs. There are good vocational training courses provided by client companies which Adecco learners and employees can attend. Adecco offers a flexible learning programme with 120 courses available through its website. These include interpersonal skills, customer care, effective presentation skills, leadership development and stress management. Few learners have taken part in these courses.

27. Adecco has recently started to use more innovative assessment methods to improve the programmes. These include digital recording of professional discussions and oral questioning to assess background knowledge. This allows evidence to be gathered more effectively and competent learners to make good progress. This method has been used successfully with two learners and there are plans to make more extensive use of it. Adecco is finalising arrangements for apprentices to take key skills tests online whenever they are ready. The company has successfully raised awareness of the programmes among its own and its clients' managers, through effective presentations and good use of digital voice recordings sent by e-mail. A management information system has been developed and is being used effectively to monitor retention and achievement rates and learners' progress every month.

28. Adecco's senior management was slow to plan improvements after the previous

inspection. There were significant delays before the corporate training department was restructured and a new training manager appointed and during this period there was no clear direction. The new manager had no experience or knowledge of LSC funding, apprenticeship programmes or the 'Common Inspection Framework' and has taken time to assimilate this. The three-year development plan focuses on the current situation rather than the future. When an assessor went on sick leave last summer, some learners had no contact with Adecco for a considerable time and were not told what was happening. Communications are now better and effective contingency plans have been established to cover the departure of the Manchester-based assessor from the company. All learners are aware of these plans. Senior managers have been developing strategic plans for the corporate training department but these have not been shared with the training staff. Restructuring during the past two months has ensured that the training manager is now aware of strategic plans made by senior managers.

29. The training department has made slow progress in remedying the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection. The first post-inspection action plan was not issued until April 2004, and did not adequately cover all the issues. Assessors started to work on some of the weaknesses, but not as part of a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach. It was several months before assessors and learners had copies of all the standards for the framework. Good progress has now been made in many areas but several weaknesses have not yet been fully dealt with, such as initial assessment, planning for technical certificates, and the late introduction of key skills training into the vocational programme. Learners' progress reviews still do not always take place at 12-weekly intervals, and are not always effective. Assessors do not identify when learners' answers to equal opportunities questions demonstrate insufficient understanding of the issues. Adecco has been slow to develop its quality assurance arrangements, and although the manual was written early in 2004 and feedback was received in July 2004, the recommendations have not been fully implemented.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

30. Adecco has a detailed equal opportunities policy that was last updated in August 2004. The policy covers all current legislation and contains useful information about various websites. There is a good policy on disability which clearly outlines Adecco's and its clients' responsibilities. There is adequate access to all sites for people with mobility problems, and appropriate adaptive equipment is made available when required. There is no separate policy on bullying and harassment and these issues are not covered effectively in the equal opportunities policy. Both client companies have good equal opportunities policies and procedures that include details of their approach to eliminating inappropriate behaviour and any forms of bullying and harassment. One client company has a special complaints procedure to deal with incidents of harassment, discrimination and bullying.

31. Learners receive a copy of Adecco's equal opportunities policy at induction. They have also recently been issued with a handbook which includes information on grievance procedures, appeals procedures, health and safety, and a basic statement on equality and diversity. All learners have a good awareness of what to do if they have any

problems. During induction, learners are given a worksheet with 12 questions on equal opportunities to research. They are then asked three questions at random during progress reviews to test their understanding. Some learners' answers show insufficient understanding, and gaps in their knowledge. This has not been picked up by the assessor.

32. Adecco collects data on learners' gender, ethnicity and disability. This has recently been analysed for the two largest groups of learners in Portsmouth and Manchester and compared with the local census data. The company has a large proportion of women learners and in Manchester it has few learners from minority ethnic groups, compared with the local population profile. Further investigations are planned to help understand this, but no specific actions have yet been identified or targets set. There has been some analysis of the success rates for learners taking different qualifications, but little comparison of the success rates for different types of learners.

33. One member of the training team acts as an equality and diversity champion, attending training events and researching topics to share with the others. An equality and diversity action plan has been developed.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 4**

34. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the training manager. In the past year, Adecco has developed a quality assurance manual covering some of the key activities and processes for the adult and apprenticeship programmes. However, there are no specific procedures for training, technical certificates, annual progress reviews or self-assessment. There is no overall policy or framework that specifies what the quality assurance arrangements include. The current procedures do not make clear the standards expected for each process in terms of the timing and frequency of activities, or the expected level of detail that should be recorded. There are few quality measures or targets by which procedures can be monitored to ensure they are effective. Most procedures, flowcharts and documents do not carry a version number or date to ensure that the most recent versions are being used.

35. A well-designed internal quality audit has been developed which reviews learners' portfolios against set criteria, and tests learners' knowledge and understanding of their programme through a structured interview. A full audit of the Portsmouth office was carried out by the assessor from Manchester. This identified several issues which were dealt with effectively through the development and implementation of a handbook and a detailed contact sheet for learners. Last month, additional audits took place using formal structured interviews to gather feedback from clients' managers, learners and Adecco's human resources consultants and managers. There are no procedures in place to specify how often the internal audits will take place, who will conduct them, the sample size expected, or the process for dealing with any issues identified.

36. The monitoring of training and learning is inadequate. There are no formal plans for the observation of training, induction or progress reviews. Evaluation forms are completed for formal Adecco training courses, but most learning takes place in the

## ADECCO UK LTD REINSPECTION

workplace through projects, courses run by employers and research on the internet, and these are not evaluated. Adecco has started to collect feedback from learners and the first summary report has been produced. Issues raised by learners have been dealt with effectively. It is too early to see any trends or identify areas for improvement. There is insufficient regular feedback from workplace managers and from other Adecco staff involved with the learners.

37. One assessor and the training manager carry out internal verification. One of the assessors is not yet qualified and her decisions are countersigned. The qualified assessor has recently been appointed as lead internal verifier. Internal verification is planned, but it is mostly carried out at the end of the programme. There has been very little interim verification. This has remained unchanged since the previous inspection. Assessors are given written feedback, and action points are checked and signed off. Adecco has introduced standardisation meetings since the previous inspection and these are beginning to raise standards. The company does not have an overall internal verification strategy.

38. The self-assessment process is not well defined. All Adecco's training staff were all involved in the development of the company's self-assessment report dated March 2005. The self-assessment took account of evidence from a wide range of sources. Some of the strengths and satisfactory elements identified were overstated. They were based on the significant distanced travelled since the previous inspection rather than on the current situation.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other government-funded provision	15	3
Apprenticeships for young people	13	3

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

#### Strengths

- very good development of personal and business skills
- good individual support
- good celebration of learners' success

#### Weaknesses

- slow progress towards NVQs on adult programmes
- insufficient initial assessment
- insufficient involvement of employers in planning and monitoring learning

#### Achievement and standards

39. Learners develop good personal and business skills. They talk about their work with confidence and are enthusiastic about how their NVQ programme has improved their knowledge and skills. Their time management, research and communication skills improve quickly through good training, coaching and mentoring. They quickly become valued members of their workplace. Some learners have extended and developed their business skills through promotion and job enlargement, and they welcome the challenge and career potential this brings. Some of the adults on management courses have carried out work-based projects, which have led to cost savings and improvements in efficiency in the workplace. They are very proud of the recognition received from their line managers.

40. At the previous inspection no apprentices had completed their framework. Seven apprentices out of the 15 who were in learning at that time have now done so. However, achievement rates for apprentices remain poor and no advanced apprentices have yet completed their frameworks. The retention rate for apprentices is satisfactory, at around 50 per cent, and for adult programmes it is good, at 84 per cent. In the past year, apprentices have made good progress towards their qualifications. Many are achieving units ahead of their target dates. Work on key skills and technical certificates now begins earlier in the programmes. Some apprentices and advanced apprentices have already passed their key skills tests and are awaiting the results of the technical



certificate tests.

41. Adult learners on NVQ programmes are making slow progress. Many have only completed a few units in over a year and are not expected to complete until several months after the expected end date. Adecco has introduced innovative strategies to speed up completion, which includes a reduction in paper-based evidence and use of recorded professional discussion.

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

42. Learners are supported well. Assessors are based in the workplace, where they have their own workstation, and are regarded as an integral part of the team. They visit learners at their desks at least every two to three weeks, and often more frequently. Learners at remote sites have regular contact by e-mail and telephone. Assessors fit around the learners' individual work patterns, and negotiate with workplace managers if necessary. Learners value the working relationship with their assessors and appreciate the help they are given. Workplace managers and supervisors also provide very good support to learners, helping to generate opportunities for assessment and allowing time during working hours for learners to work on portfolios, or research background knowledge and understanding.

43. Learners' success is celebrated well, which motivates them and encourages their work colleagues to participate in training. There are well-publicised award ceremonies with awards presented by senior managers of Adecco and the client companies. Successes are publicised well in the local media. In the large call centre in Manchester, achievements are displayed on large VDU screens throughout the offices. Adecco also publishes a newsletter in which learners' achievements are highlighted.

44. There are comprehensive training and development opportunities available to learners in the workplace. Learners value the opportunity to improve their job skills through attending well-designed short courses in the workplace on team leading, telephone techniques, customer service, teamworking and computer skills. They also have access to a wide range of open learning courses through Adecco, although only a few take advantage of these opportunities.

45. Assessment practices remain satisfactory, and there is increasing use of digitally recorded professional discussion to reduce the need for paper-based evidence and to speed up the completion of units. Feedback to learners has improved and is now detailed and useful. Assessment planning is good and provides specific targets for learners to work towards for the next assessment visit. Portfolios continue to be neat and well presented and they contain a sufficient variety of evidence, including personal statements, case studies and work products.

46. Learners receive a satisfactory induction to the training programmes and a comprehensive workplace induction. Assessors provide them with a learners' handbook which outlines key aspects of the programme, and the company's policies and



procedures. Resources are satisfactory. Learners work in well-equipped offices, with their own personal computer and access to the internet. Both client companies have extensive learning resources on their intranets and in paper format. Staff are generally well qualified or are working towards appropriate qualifications.

47. Workplace supervisors and Adecco's human resources manager are not adequately involved in the planning and monitoring of learning programmes. They are given insufficient information and guidance about their roles in the training process. They are not consulted about the choice of option units at the start of the course. Progress reviews have improved and are now satisfactory and learners are aware of the progress they are making. Slow progress is now identified, and reviews highlight where action needs to be taken. Equality of opportunity and health and safety are now reinforced at reviews through a series of questions to test understanding. Target-setting at reviews is still weak and does not always include technical certificates. Supervisors and managers are not sufficiently involved in progress reviews, although they receive a copy of the review paperwork and are required to sign it and add comments.

48. Initial assessment has improved but is still unsatisfactory. Learners have an individual interview, but this does not assess or identify their additional literacy, numeracy, language or dyslexia needs. Learners usually take a skills scan to identify how the tasks they do in their jobs meet the NVQ requirements. The initial assessment now takes into account their prior learning or experience, but there are sometimes delays in obtaining exemptions for key skills where learners have appropriate alternative qualifications. Individual learning plans do not always adequately reflect the results of the initial assessment. The initial assessment rarely identifies training needs and does not result in, or effectively support, planning of the learning.

## **Leadership and management**

49. Internal communications have improved and are now satisfactory. Regular team meetings are held with minuted action points. The planning of modern apprenticeship programmes has improved. Key skills are now integrated fully with the NVQ. Apprentices are supported by a qualified key skills assessor. Technical certificates are introduced into the programme earlier, but guided learning is still not sufficiently planned, and Adecco does not provide enough formal training for level 3 candidates. Adults and young people are achieving units faster. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements, but it is still mostly carried out at the end of the programme. Two of the assessors are qualified, and assessment decisions made by the other assessor are countersigned. Equality of opportunity is reinforced in learners' progress reviews, but learners have only a basic understanding of the subject. Assessors do not identify gaps in learners' knowledge or provide further training.

50. The self-assessment report was broadly accurate, although it was not sufficiently self-critical. Adecco has been slow to deal with the weaknesses identified.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Apprenticeships for young people	8	3
Other government-funded provision	3	3

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

**Strengths**

- comprehensive workplace training
- well-supported learners

**Weaknesses**

- slow progress for most apprentices
- insufficient initial assessment

**Achievement and standards**

51. The standard of the learners' work is good. There is a good variety of evidence and effective use is made of case studies, which are cross-referenced against several units.

52. Retention rates continue to be satisfactory. Only four new learners have been recruited onto the programme since the previous inspection. The three adult learners on the NVQ programme have recently completed their qualification and are awaiting certification. One apprentice has completed the full framework within the past two weeks. Two apprentices have left the programme, one with no qualifications and the other with an NVQ. The remaining learners are all still on the programme.

53. Progress has been slow for some apprentices. A few learners were not assessed for several months when an assessor was on sick leave. During this time they had insufficient information from Adecco about what was happening. During the past six months these learners have been assigned to another assessor and they are now making satisfactory progress.

54. Learners do not begin work on key skills until several months into the programme. Some learners complete their NVQ before they start their key skills training. Learners complete additional projects for their communication key skill rather than use their NVQ work. Some learners do not take the external tests until they have completed the NVQ. This delays the completion of frameworks if learners do not pass the test at their first attempt. Since the previous inspection, a fully qualified key skills assessor has begun to support learners. The four learners who have joined the programme in the past year are making satisfactory progress and several have already achieved one or both of their key skills.

## Quality of education and training

55. Learners are all in very good work placements and receive good, comprehensive training. They have well-equipped workstations, make effective use of the equipment, and demonstrate good working practices. The learners based in the Manchester call centre have a very comprehensive four-week induction, which prepares them very well for their new job. This training includes the development of customer care and call handling skills. In addition, all the learners attend various courses to improve their personal and technical skills. Recent examples include dealing with difficult customers, coaching skills, time management, and business report writing.

56. Since the previous inspection, support for learners has improved, and it is now good. Learners value this support and feel that it has helped them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Some of the learners have achieved promotion as a result of their programme. Adecco's assessors are based at the two main sites and are available daily to provide learners with additional support and guidance. Most learners have fortnightly meetings with their assessors, and all have regular e-mail or telephone contact with them. The apprentices are given adequate time during their working week to collect evidence and build their portfolios. Since the previous inspection, the client companies allow assessors to have more contact with the learners and give them more time to carry out assessments. Supervisors are effectively involved in supporting and encouraging their learners. The assessors set and agree action plans with their learners. Supervisors provide on-the-job coaching and send learners on in-house training courses where appropriate. There are examples of supervisors becoming involved in communication key skills projects. These include learners making presentations about new ideas and business improvements.

57. Induction is carried out by the assessor and covers the NVQ, key skills and additional qualifications. Some learners are still unsure about the appeals and grievance procedures, although most have an adequate understanding of equal opportunities and diversity. A few learners do not understand the internal verification process and cannot name their internal verifier. All learners have been given a copy of the new learners' handbook and an up-to-date contact list during the past few weeks.

58. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessment recording has been improved and paperwork has been standardised. All learners are given clear assessment plans and understand what they have to achieve before their next assessment. Some learners, however, do not understand the NVQ monitoring sheets, and some portfolios are missing key documents. All the learners are given verbal and written feedback at the end of the assessment and most understand which units they have achieved and how they have achieved them.

59. Progress reviews have been redesigned and improved. They take place every 12 weeks and involve the learner and the assessor. Learners' understanding of health and safety and equality of opportunity are tested through a series of questions. Their

progress and achievement of NVQ units are recorded and reviewed. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their short- and long-term goals. Line managers do not attend the progress review, but are given a copy on which to add their comments, and to sign. Final copies are given to all parties. Where there is slow progress, it is now being clearly identified. Positive actions are now being taken to accelerate the progress of slow learners.

60. Initial assessment has improved slightly since the previous inspection but is still insufficient. Learners have an individual interview to discuss any additional learning needs. There is no systematic assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs, or identification of additional training to support them. The initial assessment sometimes takes into account prior learning and experience but this is not always recorded on individual learning plans. Some learners are now completing an occupational skills scan to ensure that they are in a job role that will allow them to gather evidence for the NVQ. Initial assessments of key skills are not always carried out at the start of the programme. Those learners who are identified as requiring extra support are provided with a CD-ROM. The two learners who had used this found it was very helpful.

### **Leadership and management**

61. There are currently two assessors, and a training manager who is also a qualified assessor and internal verifier. One of the assessors is not yet qualified and her decisions are countersigned. The qualified assessor has recently been appointed as lead internal verifier. Internal verification is planned, but it is mostly carried out at the end of the programme. This has remained unchanged since the previous inspection. Assessors are given written feedback, and action points are checked and signed off. Adecco has introduced standardisation meetings since the previous inspection and these are beginning to raise standards.

62. Communications have improved since the previous inspection and regular meetings now take place. Minutes and action points are recorded. Target-setting is more effective and learners are all given individual target dates for the achievement of units and key skills qualifications. Learners' managers have a better understanding of how and when units should be achieved. This has made the assessors more focused and has resulted in some learners achieving units ahead of schedule.