

REINSPECTION REPORT

Basingstoke ITeC (Basingstoke Youth Action Trust Ltd) Reinspection

04 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.

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Contents

Summary

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

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	11
Equality of opportunity	13
Quality assurance	14
Business administration, management & professional	15
Information & communications technology	18
Retailing, customer service & transportation	21

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Basingstoke ITeC is a division of Basingstoke Youth Action Trust Ltd and is a registered charity. The Basingstoke ITeC was established in 1985 and offers training in land-based provision, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer service and transportation, and health, social care and public services. Land-based provision and training in health, social care and public services are provided by two subcontractors.
2. Basingstoke ITeC employs eight staff and has a training and administrative centre in Basingstoke. It also provides training at the subcontractors' premises in north Hampshire.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

3. There are currently 15 learners on work-based learning programmes in business administration, of whom six are foundation modern apprentices and nine are advanced modern apprentices. Learners are recruited through Connexions, their employers, and directly from schools. They may join the programme at any time. Learners are visited in the workplace every three weeks, and their progress is reviewed at least once every 12 weeks. All learners are now working towards key skills qualifications and a technical certificate as part of their training programme. There are two assessors and one internal verifier.

Information & communications technology

4. There are 23 learners on using ICT programmes, of whom 21 are foundation modern apprentices and two are advanced modern apprentices. Most are referred by Connexions. All foundation modern apprentices attend an eight-week full-time training course at Basingstoke ITeC. Learners can join the programme termly, and are placed with employers. Currently all but three learners are employed. During the training programme, learners achieve all the key skills required for their framework. Thirty-six per cent of foundation modern apprentices have additional social and learning needs. Basic skills support is offered at a drop-in session every Friday for on- and off-site learners. Learners are visited by an assessor every two weeks and their progress is reviewed at work at least once every two months.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

5. There are 19 learners on customer service programmes, of whom 12 are advanced modern apprentices and seven are foundation modern apprentices. All learners are referred by employers that range from small to medium-sized businesses. All training takes place at employers' premises. One member of Basingstoke ITeC's staff is responsible for assessment and learners' progress reviews. Learners are visited every three weeks and a report is completed at every visit. Learners' progress is reviewed at least once every 12 weeks.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	22
Number of learners interviewed	52
Number of staff interviewed	19
Number of employers interviewed	22
Number of subcontractors interviewed	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	3

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The ALL's inspection in January 2004 found that Basingstoke ITeC's land-based provision and health, social care and public services programmes were good. However, work-based learning was unsatisfactory in business administration, management and professional, ICT, and retailing, customer service and transportation. The organisation's leadership and management and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance were also unsatisfactory.

7. At the end of the reinspection process, the standards in land-based provision and health, social care and public services programmes have been maintained and remain good. Work-based learning in business administration, management and professional, ICT, and retailing, customer service and transportation is now satisfactory, as is the organisation's leadership and management, and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

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

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Land-based provision	2
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	2

Business administration, management & professional	4
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	4

Information & communications technology	4
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	4

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	4

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	3

Information & communications technology	3
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. Since the previous inspection, **retention rates have improved**. Basingstoke ITeC has improved the monitoring of learners' progress and provides better support for learners who are at risk of leaving their programmes early.

9. During 2003-04, all ICT learners, 75 per cent of business administration advanced modern apprentices and 60 per cent of business administration foundation modern apprentices were retained or are still in learning. All the learners who joined business administration or ICT programmes in 2004-05 are still in learning. Retention rates for customer services foundation modern apprentices are improving and are now satisfactory. Of the 10 foundation modern apprentices who started programmes since the previous inspection, seven are still in learning. However, retention rates for ICT advanced modern apprentices have not improved and remain poor at 50 per cent.

10. **Most foundation modern apprentices are making good progress** towards their qualifications. Since the previous inspection, all the foundation modern apprentices in business administration have gained their technical certificates and are making good progress towards their key skills.

11. **Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices are improving** and are good in retailing and customer service. Of the 13 learners who started a customer service apprenticeship during 2002-04, eight achieved the full framework. All the eight customer service foundation modern apprentices who were on programme at the time of the previous inspection have completed their frameworks.

12. **Overall achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices remain low**. For example, in business administration, there were 17 advanced modern apprentices in learning at the time of the previous inspection, but only three have completed their framework. Similarly, of the 32 customer service advanced apprentices who were on programme at the time of the previous inspection, only 12 have completed the framework and six are still in learning.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	5
Total	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	5

13. Learners are matched well to their work placements. Many learners come straight from school or are unemployed, and staff take great care to find them appropriate work placements. Alternative work placements have been found for learners who needed them. Many ICT learners are offered a permanent job by their work-placement provider before the end of their training programme. Customer service learners have good working environments and carry out a good range of work activities.

14. Basingstoke ITeC has good relationships with employers and communicates with them well. Workplace supervisors provide learners with good support. Employers contribute well to the training process and set good business standards for learners to follow. However, a few ICT employers are not given enough information about the content of the national vocational qualification (NVQ) framework.

15. Support for most learners is good. The relationships between learners and staff are very good. Staff visit learners frequently and work hard to motivate them. Learners and employers value these visits. Customer service learners are encouraged to contact their assessor by e-mail or telephone for advice and support. ICT learners receive good help to overcome barriers to learning and employment.

16. Training is effective for most learners. Staff provide business administration learners with good individual training. The initial training programme for ICT learners continues to be good, and learners benefit from acquiring a good combination of technical, social and business skills. Teaching and learning for customer service learners is satisfactory. Customer skills are effectively developed through on-the-job coaching from workplace supervisors and the visiting assessor. Many customer service learners receive effective individual support with the work for their technical certificate but training for the technical certificate is limited and is not sufficiently well planned.

17. The monitoring and reviewing of learners' progress has improved since the previous inspection and is now effective. Assessors visit learners in their workplaces every three weeks. A comprehensive review of learners' progress is carried out at least once every 12 weeks. There is a traffic light system to identify learners who are at risk of falling behind with targets, or leaving the programme early.

18. Individual learning plans have improved since the previous inspection. They are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. All learners have a copy of their individual learning plan in their portfolio. Most of the targets set in individual learning plans are good, although for some customer service learners, they are not sufficiently specific, measurable and time-bound.

19. Resources are generally satisfactory. Staff have appropriate occupational experience and qualifications. On-the-job training resources are adequate. Many learners work in modern, well-equipped offices. Resources at the training centre are now effective. Teaching rooms are spacious and learners have access to appropriate ICT resources. However, customer service staff have not received sufficient training or guidance in the delivery of the technical certificate qualification.

20. Assessment practice for business administration and ICT learners has improved and is now satisfactory. Visits made to learners in the workplace are now more frequent and thorough. Assessors agree clear and well-recorded assessment aims with learners before each assessment visit. Learners are prepared well for assessment and receive clear and well-recorded assessment plans. However, some business administration learners do not receive sufficient workplace assessment, and in ICT, the use of assessment documents in addition to assessment action plans is sometimes confusing.

21. **Some assessment and verification practices for customer service learners are weak.** Assessment of the additional units is often late. Assessment decisions are not clearly recorded. There is too much reliance on case studies, and too little use of observation as an assessment method, particularly at level 2.

22. Induction was poor for many learners but has improved and is now satisfactory. It is well planned and covers all the key aspects well. Customer service staff visit the learners in the workplace and carefully cover all aspects of the programme. Learners now have a satisfactory awareness of their programme and know what they need to do to achieve their framework.

Leadership and management

23. **The initiatives to improve standards are good.** Managers and staff have worked well together to improve many of the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection. Basingstoke ITeC now provides better information for learners at the start of their programme and offers an effective trial period to improve learners' choices. Staff and managers now make good use of data to monitor and compare the performance of intakes and have introduced sound arrangements for the monitoring of learners' progress. In all areas of learning, these initiatives have led to tangible improvements in retention rates and in learners' progress and achievement.

24. **Communication is effective and has contributed well to raising standards.** Senior managers have demonstrated good leadership skills and have worked hard to maintain the staff's motivation. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and work well together. Meetings are well organised and managed. Communication with subcontractors remains good.

25. Business planning is satisfactory. The company has appropriate business objectives. Cash flow and expenditure are carefully monitored. Business planning is closely linked with self-assessment and development planning. The three-year development plan has

clear targets for retention and achievement rates.

26. Management of staff performance is satisfactory. It is reviewed every six months, a process which includes effective observations. Assessors' performance is closely monitored each month. New staff receive an adequate induction to their role. Staff are appropriately qualified and have useful job descriptions. Staff training needs are appropriately identified and staff members have good individual training plans.

27. The management information system is effective. It is capable of producing a wide range of reports appropriate to the organisation's requirements. Managers receive regular useful reports to monitor the organisation's performance and have a clear picture of learners' overall achievements and the numbers leaving programmes. Data on early leavers is monitored thoroughly, and Basingstoke ITeC has useful information about learners at risk of leaving their programme early. However, there is insufficient monitoring of unit accreditation and of learners' ongoing achievement of key skills, and Basingstoke ITeC does not sufficiently monitor the average length of stay in training. Managers are aware of this weakness and have adequate plans in place to improve this.

28. Arrangements for additional learning support have improved and are now adequate for most learners. Staff are suitably qualified. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately assessed as part of their initial assessment. Additional learning support needs are suitably recorded as part of the learners' individual learning plans. Learners' progress towards their individual objectives is now monitored well. However, for a small number of dental learners the identification of additional learning needs and the provision of support is not sufficiently thorough.

29. **Target-setting is incomplete.** The targets in the business and development plans are challenging, but are not effectively passed on to staff. Assessors do not have clear individual targets for retention and achievement rates. The directors are aware of funding body contractual targets, but they have not identified other useful targets to measure overall performance. Directors are effective in monitoring the organisation's financial performance, but insufficient focus is placed on monitoring the retention, achievement and progress of intakes.

30. **The promotion of equality of opportunity has improved and is now good.** Learners are supported well, and all are given useful help to achieve their full potential. Staff have a good knowledge of the local community and a sound appreciation of the types of problems that learners face. Basingstoke ITeC has worked well to improve participation from under-represented groups. Participation by learners from minority ethnic groups has increased from 6 per cent to 11 per cent. The retention rates of learners from under-represented groups are good, and all those recruited since the previous inspection are still in learning and making adequate progress. The analysis of the performance of different groups of learners has improved and is now satisfactory. Overall, the performance of women and men is similar and there are no clear trends.

31. Since the previous inspection, the arrangements for equality of opportunity have been revised. Basingstoke ITeC has appropriate equality of opportunity policies and

plans for their implementation. The policy clearly demonstrates the provider's commitment to equality and diversity and it is effectively communicated to learners, employers, subcontractors and staff. Basingstoke ITeC also has appropriate procedures and systems to combat bullying and harassment. Employers have an adequate understanding of equality of opportunity and know what they need to do to protect learners.

32. Staff have a good awareness of the equality of opportunity policy. Since the previous inspection, all relevant staff have received useful training in equality and diversity.

33. Teachers recognise learners' individual needs and take sufficient account of their preferred learning styles. For example, they use useful group and individual activities to maintain learners' interest and concentration. Staff and managers treat learners with respect and value their views. Learning materials take good account of learners' needs. Literature and publicity materials effectively promote equality and diversity.

34. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and know how they should treat other people. They are given useful information about how to make complaints and how to recognise and deal with harassment. Most new learners have received good training in equality of opportunity and receive useful information about external support agencies that support learners from under-represented groups.

35. Access to accommodation remains difficult for learners with limited mobility. However, the provider has made suitable alternative arrangements and is currently negotiating to move to suitable accommodation.

36. Staff and managers are responsive to learners' feedback and act swiftly to resolve problems. Basingstoke ITeC has **good arrangements for the collection, analysis and reporting of learners' feedback.** This was a strength at the previous inspection and it has been further improved. The views of learners and employers are collected effectively through a series of questionnaires and telephone surveys. This has led to improvements in key skills training and resulted in useful additional training in literacy and numeracy for learners who cannot attend the training centre.

37. Self-assessment and development planning are good and have contributed well to raising standards. The self-assessment process is well established. Staff and managers work closely together to identify key strengths and weaknesses. The development plan is clear and effectively identifies improvement objectives, together with good actions, responsibilities and timescales. Identified strengths and weaknesses are prioritised well.

38. The quality assurance procedures have improved and are now effective. All aspects of training are now observed, apart from on-the-job training. Managers carry out good additional quality assurance surveys by critically evaluating the experience of 10 per cent of learners. Observation of learners' progress reviews is sufficiently thorough. Observation of training is adequate, and staff receive useful feedback to improve their practice. On-the-job training is not observed sufficiently. Overall quality assurance

activities are well organised, but the schedule for off-the-job training observations is not sufficiently planned.

39. The arrangements for sharing good practice within Basingstoke ITeC are satisfactory. However, examples of good practice from the subcontractors are not effectively used to improve standards.

40. The arrangements for internal verification are not sufficiently thorough. Some internal verification reports are not recorded well and agreed action plans are not routinely followed up. Internal verification activities are adequately planned, but have not been effective in improving assessment practice for customer service learners.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good initiatives to raise standards
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good response to employers' and learners' feedback
- effective self-assessment and development planning

Weaknesses

- insufficient target-setting
- insufficiently thorough internal verification

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good progress towards framework achievement for foundation modern apprentices
- good links with employers
- good monitoring of learners' progress

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good progress for foundation modern apprentices
- good development of occupational skills

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- good matching of learners to work placements

Weaknesses

- poor framework achievement for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficient employer involvement in planning training

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- good framework achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices
- good support for learners
- good work placements

Weaknesses

- low retention and achievement rates on advanced apprenticeship programmes
- some weak assessment and internal verification practice

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

Strengths

- good initiatives to raise standards
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good response to employers' and learners' feedback
- effective self-assessment and development planning

Weaknesses

- insufficient target-setting
- insufficiently thorough internal verification

41. The initiatives to improve standards are good. Managers and staff have worked well together to improve many of the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection. Basingstoke ITeC has implemented a good range of initiatives to improve and maintain the rates of retention, including the provision of better information for learners at the start of the learning programme and an effective trial period to improve learners' choices. Staff and managers now make good use of data to monitor and compare the performance of intakes, and have introduced sound arrangements for the monitoring of learners' progress. In all areas of learning, these initiatives have led to tangible improvements in retention rates and in learners' progress and achievement. For example, the organisation has introduced good procedures for the monitoring of learners' progress, and this is now closely considered at monthly staff meetings. When progress is slower than anticipated, this is quickly identified and appropriate action is taken. The monthly review meetings generate useful action plans that have contributed well to raising standards.

42. Communication is effective and has contributed well to raising standards. Senior managers have demonstrated good leadership skills and have worked hard to maintain the staff's motivation. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and work well together. Standing agenda items at meetings include quality improvement strategies and equal opportunities. Useful notes from the meetings are distributed to all relevant staff and action points are followed up well. Informal communication is effective, and staff meet weekly to discuss apprentices' progress and the training issues arising from learners' evaluations. Communication with subcontractors remains good.

43. Business planning is satisfactory. The company has appropriate business objectives. Cash flow and expenditure are carefully monitored. Business planning is closely linked

with self-assessment and development planning. The three-year development plan sets clear targets for retention and achievement. The analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the organisation remains effective.

44. Management of staff performance is satisfactory. Overall performance is reviewed every six months. Before the appraisal meeting, staff carry out an appropriate assessment of their own performance, but they do not have clear criteria for measuring this. Observations of performance are used effectively. Assessors' performance is closely monitored each month. New staff receive an adequate induction to their role. Staff are appropriately qualified and have useful job descriptions. Staff training needs are appropriately identified and individual training plans are good. Appraisals records are maintained appropriately. However, targets set at appraisals are ineffective.

45. The management information system is effective. It is capable of producing a wide range of reports to the organisation's requirements. The finance manager provides timely and accurate reports about the performance of intakes in each area of learning. Managers receive regular useful reports on the organisation's performance and have a clear picture of learners' overall achievements and the numbers leaving programmes. Basingstoke ITeC has useful information about learners at risk of leaving their learning programme early and monitors data on early leavers thoroughly. Reports on data are discussed at monthly staff meetings and adequately reported to the board. Data on learners who have gone beyond the funding period is analysed regularly. Fewer learners now continue beyond the end of their planned learning. However, there is insufficient monitoring of unit accreditation, of learners' ongoing achievement of key skills, and of the average length of stay in training. Managers are aware of this weakness and have adequate plans in place to improve this.

46. The arrangements for additional learning support have improved and are now adequate for most learners. Staff are suitably qualified. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately assessed as part of their initial assessment, and the results are adequately used to plan appropriate individual learning. Additional learning support needs are adequately provided for, and are suitably recorded in individual learning plans. Learners' progress towards their individual objectives is now monitored well. However, for a small number of dental learners, the identification of learning needs and the provision of additional learning support are not sufficiently thorough.

47. There is insufficient target-setting. The targets in the business and development plans are challenging, but they are not passed on effectively to staff. Assessors do not have clear individual targets for retention and achievement rates. Managers work towards suitable objectives identified in the business and development plans but these are not broken down into smaller targets with realistic timescales for individual staff. The directors are aware of funding body contractual targets, but have not identified other useful targets to measure overall performance. Directors are effective in monitoring the organisation's financial performance, but do not focus enough on monitoring retention, achievement and progression rates by particular intakes.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

48. The promotion of equality of opportunity has improved and is now good. Learners are supported well, and are given useful help to achieve their full potential. Staff have a good knowledge of the local community and a sound appreciation of the types of problems that learners face. Basingstoke ITEC has worked well to improve participation from under-represented groups, overcoming complex cultural barriers to learning and employment and providing learners with good individual solutions to their personal and cultural needs. Participation by learners from minority ethnic groups has increased from 6 per cent to 11 per cent. The monitoring of participation, retention and achievement rates across the provision as a whole is good. The retention rates for learners from under-represented groups are good, and all those recruited since the previous inspection are still in learning and making adequate progress. The analysis of the performance of different groups of learners has improved and is now satisfactory. Overall, the performance of women and men is similar and there are no clear trends. Senior managers regularly monitor the overall performance of different groups, but the data is not disaggregated to identify possible trends in the areas of learning.

49. Since the previous inspection, the arrangements for equality of opportunity have been revised. Basingstoke ITEC has appropriate equality of opportunity policies and implementation plans, which have been updated to include current and relevant legislation. The policy clearly demonstrates the provider's commitment to equality and diversity and it is effectively communicated to learners, employers, subcontractors and staff. Basingstoke ITEC also has appropriate procedures and systems to combat bullying and harassment. Employers have an adequate understanding of equality of opportunity and know what they need to do to protect learners.

50. Staff have a good awareness of the provider's equality of opportunity policy and use it effectively in their area of learning. Equality of opportunity is a regular part of staff communications within the area of learning teams, and is discussed in all management and staff meetings. Since the previous inspection, all relevant staff have received useful training in equality and diversity.

51. The range of teaching activities adequately meets the needs of individuals and groups. Teachers recognise learners' individual needs and take sufficient account of their preferred learning styles. For example, they use useful group and individual activities to maintain learners' interest and concentration. Staff and managers treat learners with respect and value their opinions. Learning materials take good account of learners' needs. Literature and publicity materials effectively promote equality and diversity.

52. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and know how they should treat other people. They are given useful information about how to make complaints and how to recognise and deal with harassment. Most new learners have received good training in equality of opportunity and useful information about external support agencies.

53. Access to accommodation remains difficult for learners with limited mobility. However, the provider has made suitable alternative arrangements and is currently

negotiating to move to more suitable accommodation.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

54. Basingstoke ITeC has good arrangements for the collection, analysis and reporting of learners' feedback. Staff and managers respond well to it, and act quickly to resolve problems. This was a strength at the previous inspection and has been further improved. The views of learners and employers are collected effectively through a series of questionnaires and telephone surveys. The results of these surveys have been widely used in monthly staff performance and management meetings to improve any identified weaknesses. Staff and managers agree on what needs to be done to effectively monitor the resulting actions. Learners' feedback has led to improvements in key skills training and resulted in useful additional training in literacy and numeracy for learners who cannot attend the training centre.

55. Self-assessment and development planning are good and have contributed well to raising standards. The self-assessment process is well established. Staff and managers work closely to identify and understand key strengths and weaknesses. The development plan is clear and effectively identifies improvement objectives, together with good actions, responsibilities and timescales. Identified strengths and weaknesses are prioritised well.

56. The quality assurance procedures have improved and are now effective. All aspects of training are now observed, apart from on-the-job training. Managers carry out good additional quality assurance surveys by critically evaluating the experience of 10 per cent of learners. Observation of learners' progress reviews is thorough. Observation of training is adequate and staff receive useful feedback to improve their practice. Every tutor and group is observed at least once a term. However, the results of these observations are not brought together to produce an overall report. There is too little observation of on-the-job training. Overall, the quality assurance activities are well organised, but this is not the case for the schedule of off-the-job training observations. Staff awareness of quality assurance and their contribution towards continuous improvement has improved. Staff are very supportive of the new arrangements.

57. The arrangements for sharing good practice within Basingstoke ITeC are satisfactory, but examples of good practice from the subcontractors are not used effectively. For example, internal verification in dental nursing is good, but this example is not used well to improve internal verification practice in other areas of learning.

58. The arrangements for internal verification are not sufficiently thorough. Although adequately planned, some internal verification is not recorded well, and agreed action plans are not routinely followed up. Internal verification has not been effective in improving assessment practice for customer service learners. For example, some assessment decisions and evidence have not been properly checked.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Apprenticeships for young people	15	3

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

Strengths

- good progress towards framework achievement for foundation modern apprentices
- good links with employers
- good monitoring of learners' progress

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices

Achievement and standards

59. Since the previous inspection, retention rates have improved. The lowest point was in 2002-03, when 62 per cent of advanced modern apprentices left their programmes early. Basingstoke ITeC has since improved its monitoring of learners' progress and provides better support for learners who are at risk of leaving their programmes early. These initiatives are working well and during 2003-04, 75 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 60 per cent of foundation modern apprentices were retained or still in learning. All the learners who joined programmes in 2004-05 are still in learning.

60. Foundation modern apprentices are now making good progress towards completing their frameworks. Since the previous inspection, all the learners have achieved their technical certificates. They are making good progress towards their key skills qualifications, and many have completed them early. Of the eight foundation modern apprentices who were in learning during the previous inspection, six have completed their frameworks and two are making good progress.

61. Achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices remain low. Of the 17 advanced modern apprentices who were in learning at the time of the previous inspection, only three have completed their framework. However, those who have been recruited since the previous inspection are making satisfactory progress towards their qualifications. All learners are developing useful business skills and good self-confidence. Learners' NVQ portfolios are well structured and contain a broad range of evidence.

Quality of education and training

62. Basingstoke ITeC has good links with employers. Communication is good and workplace supervisors provide good support. Employers contribute well to the training process and set good business standards for learners to follow. Work-placement providers offer learners good opportunities to gain practical skills. Basingstoke ITeC fully understands the business requirements of employers. The needs of the employers are closely matched to the needs of the learners. Employers value their learners and provide them with useful specialist training.

63. Practical training remains effective. Staff give learners good individual training. Learners develop good craft skills. For example, one receptionist in a legal firm was able to manage multiple calls and deal with customers efficiently. Learners are able to apply a useful range of essential business skills in their own organisation, and produce a range of accurate and well-presented business documents.

64. Resources are generally satisfactory. On-the-job training resources are adequate. Many learners work in modern, well-equipped offices. Resources at the training centre are now effective. Teaching rooms are spacious and learners have access to appropriate ICT resources. All assessors are appropriately qualified or are working towards appropriate qualifications.

65. Assessment practice has improved and is now satisfactory. Assessors agree clear assessment aims with learners before each assessment visit. Learners are prepared well for assessment and receive clear and well-recorded assessment plans. Assessment of background knowledge is appropriate and well planned. However, some learners do not receive sufficient workplace assessment. Assessors visit learners every three weeks, but do not use direct observation sufficiently to assess learners' competence. Learners receive useful verbal feedback, but do not always receive prompt written feedback.

66. The monitoring and review of learners' progress has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Assessors visit learners in their workplaces every three weeks, and carry out a comprehensive review of their progress at least every 12 weeks. The reviews cover the progress made against agreed targets and effectively focus on the requirements of the qualifications and the individual needs of the learner. Assessors accurately identify learners who are not meeting targets set at their progress reviews. A traffic light system is in place to identify learners who are at risk of falling behind with targets, or leaving the programme early. Employers are fully involved in progress reviews, and assessors meet workplace supervisors to discuss learners' progress. Copies of review documents are given to the learner and one is kept in the learner's file.

67. Individual learning plans have improved since the previous inspection. They are reviewed regularly and kept up to date. All learners have a copy of their individual learning plans in their portfolio. Target-setting in the individual learning plans is good. Learners have clear short-term and medium-term targets and the individual learning plans clearly record learners' progress towards all aspects of their qualification. All learners

fully understand the requirements of their qualifications.

68. Induction is satisfactory, well planned and covers all the key aspects of training well. Support for learners is effective. Staff and learners have a good working relationship. Staff are particularly effective at motivating learners who are at risk of leaving their programmes early. There are good arrangements for learners to contact assessors. Learners receive good pastoral support and good personal development advice.

69. Arrangements for training in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. All learners receive an initial screening and an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. The results are appropriately recorded in the learners' individual learning plans and they receive appropriate additional support. Resources for literacy and numeracy training are adequate.

Leadership and management

70. Staff are well motivated and have clearly defined roles. They meet formally every month to consider operational matters. Assessors and staff have regular meetings and there is useful informal communication. Managers monitor the staff performance well. Staff have access to appropriate development activities. Equality of opportunity and health and safety issues are covered well during learners' progress reviews. Staff use good case studies to develop learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity matters. Quality assurance arrangements have dealt effectively with many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. The self-assessment process is effective and involves all staff.

Information & communications technology**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Apprenticeships for young people	23	3

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

Strengths

- good progress for foundation modern apprentices
- good development of occupational skills
- good matching of learners to work placements

Weaknesses

- poor framework achievement for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficient employer involvement in planning training

Achievement and standards

71. Most foundation modern apprentices are now making good progress towards their qualifications and they complete their key skills and technical certificate with eight weeks of starting their programme. Basingstoke ITeC has improved the initial off-the-job training programme and all learners who have been recruited since the previous inspection have completed their key skills training and achieved their technical certificate.

72. Most learners continue to develop good occupational skills on the initial training programme and in their work placements. They develop good confidence and self-esteem. Learners' attendance is generally good and employers are enthusiastic about the contribution they make to their businesses. Some learners have the opportunity to extend their skills by attending useful additional training courses provided by their employer.

73. The retention rates for foundation modern apprentices have improved and are now satisfactory. The lowest point was in 2002-03 when 67 per cent of learners left their programme without a qualification. In 2003-04, all 25 learners who started a training programme were retained or are still in learning. All the learners who joined the programme in 2004-05 are still in learning.

74. The retention rates for advanced modern apprentices have not improved and remain poor at 50 per cent. There are few enrolments on advanced modern apprenticeships, and last year no learners were recruited. Most foundation modern apprentices in ICT progress to advanced modern apprenticeships in business administration or customer service.

75. Historically, achievement rates have been low. Although the rates for foundation modern apprentices have improved and are now good, they remain poor for advanced modern apprentices. Of the 10 foundation modern apprentices who were in learning during the previous inspection, six successfully completed their framework and three are making satisfactory progress. However, of the six advanced modern apprentices who were in learning, only one has completed and the two still in learning are making slow progress.

Quality of education and training

76. Learners' initial training programme continues to be good. Learners benefit from acquiring a good combination of technical, social and business skills. They develop useful basic ICT skills and make swift progress with their key skills. They gain in confidence and are motivated to find employment. It is the first time many of these learners experience the responsibilities of working life. Basingstoke ITeC has recently introduced work trials. Learners identified as being at risk of leaving their programme early can try the programme for a period of four to six weeks. During this time their aptitude for ICT and their suitability for the qualifications is effectively assessed. On completion of the work trial, learners who continue to show aptitude and interest are accepted on to the programme. Learners for whom the programme is unsuitable are effectively referred to other programmes.

77. Learners are well matched to work placements. Many learners come straight from school or are unemployed, and staff take great care to find them appropriate work placements. Alternative work placements have been found for learners who could not complete their work placement for personal reasons. Most learners are offered a number of suitable interviews quickly. They also receive a good level of individual support and appropriate referrals for a range of personal difficulties, from prejudice to behavioural disorders. Employers remain supportive and offer a wide variety of training opportunities. Learners are often offered a permanent job by the work-placement provider before the end of their training programme. Workplaces are good and learners benefit from the resources available to them. For many learners their work placement is an opportunity to become a permanent employee.

78. Assessment has improved and is now satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, two new assessors have been appointed. Visits to learners in the workplace are now frequent and thorough. Learners' portfolios are well structured and contain a variety of evidence, including witness testimonies, records of observation, questioning and product evidence. Learners have appropriate assessment plans. However, the use of assessment documents as well as assessment action plans is sometimes confusing. Learners' progress is closely monitored using a traffic light system, and all learners know what they need to do to complete their qualifications. However, their ongoing achievement is not routinely recorded on the cross-reference sheets.

79. Basingstoke ITeC has good relationships with employers, but does not brief them sufficiently on the content of the NVQ framework. Employers receive feedback from

BASINGSTOKE ITEC (BASINGSTOKE YOUTH ACTION TRUST LTD) REINSPECTION

assessors as part of the review process but there is insufficient joint planning of on-the-job learning opportunities. To improve this, Basingstoke ITeC has recently introduced a more comprehensive quarterly progress review form, which also includes relevant aspects of equality of opportunity and health and safety.

80. Resources remain satisfactory. Learners have access to appropriate hardware and software and to the internet. Five new personal computers have been purchased for the training room since the previous inspection as part of a continuing replacement programme.

81. The initial interview and assessment process is satisfactory. All learners have an initial interview and complete a literacy and numeracy skills diagnostic test. The results of the test are used well to identify the learners' key skills levels and whether they need additional literacy or numeracy support. This information is now recorded well in the learners' individual learning plan. All learners are aware of their entitlement to exemptions from key skills tests. Learners receive appropriate literacy and numeracy support during their initial training from appropriately qualified staff and have access to useful workbooks and training materials.

Leadership and management

82. Managers have introduced good initiatives to monitor learners who are at risk of leaving their programmes early. Newly appointed staff are well motivated and work well as part of the team. Staff work closely together and benefit from good informal communications. Internal verification is now satisfactory, and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Sampling of assessments is planned and carried out regularly. Regular meetings between the internal verifier and assessor are thorough and constructive. However, some internal verification records are not sufficiently detailed. For example, action points for assessors are not clearly recorded and dates are often missing. Learner tracking sheets are completed well and accurately record learners' progress. The self-assessment report is evaluative and identifies similar areas of strength and weaknesses to those found by inspectors. Feedback from learners during their training programme has led to improvements. For example, the training for the more able learners is now more challenging. Equality of opportunity is promoted at reviews by the use of scenario cards to generate discussion.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Apprenticeships for young people	19	3

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

Strengths

- good framework achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices
- good support for learners
- good work placements

Weaknesses

- low retention and achievement rates on advanced apprenticeship programmes
- some weak assessment and internal verification practice

Achievement and standards

83. The achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices are good and improving. Of the 13 learners who started their apprenticeship during 2002-04, eight achieved the full framework. All eight foundation modern apprentices who were on programme during the previous inspection have completed their framework.

84. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices are improving and are now satisfactory. Of 10 foundation modern apprentices who started programmes since the previous inspection, seven are still in learning and making satisfactory or good progress towards achieving their NVQ. However, some learners are making slow progress towards completing key skills qualifications and technical certificates.

85. Historically, retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices have been unsatisfactory. They remain low. Of the 32 advanced modern apprentices at the time of the previous inspection, only 12 have completed their framework and five achieved their NVQ. Six are still in learning and some continue to make slow progress. Of the 15 who started their training during 2003-04, only six remain in learning. These learners are now making satisfactory progress. The monitoring of early leavers is good. Staff are now more aware of the needs of advanced modern apprentices and provide them with good initial advice and guidance to prepare them for their learning programmes. In 2004-05, only one learner has been recruited onto this programme.

Quality of education and training

86. Learners have good work placements in good working and learning environments. Workplace resources, including the equipment at the learners' workstations, are also good. Learners carry out a good variety of work activities and have good opportunities to collect evidence of their competence. They are effectively developing their customer service skills and knowledge, and are able to meet the needs of their customers well. They enjoy their jobs and have good opportunities to widen their experience and to gain promotion. For example, two learners at one employer have just been promoted while still in learning. At the previous inspection, employers' involvement in training was inadequate. The provider has taken effective action to provide employers with better information on the training programme and learners' progress. Employers are now effectively involved in learners' progress reviews and have a good understanding of their progress. Employers make a good contribution to learners' success and have an adequate understanding of the qualifications they are working for.

87. Support for learners is strong. The relationships between learners and staff are very good. Staff visit learners frequently and work hard to motivate them. Learners and employers value these visits. Learners are also encouraged to contact their assessor by e-mail or telephone for advice and support. Learners are now more confident about their performance. Assessors and other staff provide learners with good additional individual coaching and effectively help them prepare for key skills examinations.

88. At the previous inspection, the identification of learners' literacy and numeracy needs and the provision of additional learning support was a weakness. This has improved and is now effective. A new basic skills tutor has been recruited, and learners' literacy and numeracy needs are identified using appropriate diagnostic tests. Learners receive good individual support to improve their literacy and numeracy. Staff record learners' identified needs and the support provided, and effectively monitor their progress. However, for a few learners initial assessment takes place late.

89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Customer service skills are developed effectively through on-the-job coaching by workplace supervisors and the visiting assessor. Learners are able to carry out useful research using the internet. All the foundation modern apprentices and five of the advanced modern apprentices are following the new framework, which includes a technical certificate. Effective individual teaching and support for the technical certificate is provided in the workplace and accurately recorded on the learners' individual learning plans. However, this training is not sufficiently well planned. Learning materials to support the technical certificate are being developed but are not yet complete. Staff have appropriate occupational experience but have not received enough training and guidance for the delivery of the technical certificate qualification.

90. At the previous inspection, poor individual learning plans were identified as a weakness. They have now been improved and are satisfactory. They are updated regularly with learners' achievements. Progress reviews take place at least once every 12

weeks. They are effective and the results are clearly recorded both in the review sheets and also in the learners' individual learning plans. However, for some learners, actions and targets are not sufficiently specific, measurable and time-bound.

91. Induction was poor, but has now improved and is satisfactory. Staff visit learners in the workplace and carefully cover all aspects of the programme. Learners now have a satisfactory awareness of their programme and know what they need to do to achieve their framework. However, the requirements of the new technical certificate are not clearly understood by some learners. The induction process is now observed under new quality assurance arrangements.

92. Some assessment and verification practices are weak. Some learners' job roles do not give them enough opportunities to demonstrate competence. These learners are struggling to collect evidence for their customer service NVQ. Assessment of the additional units is often late and assessment decisions are not recorded clearly. There is too much reliance on case studies, and not enough assessment by observation. Portfolios are generally satisfactory and contain some good workplace evidence. However, mandatory knowledge and understanding requirements are not adequately assessed. Internal verification has not been effective in improving assessment. Where action points are identified, these are not clearly monitored to raise standards.

Leadership and management

93. Staff have appropriate occupational experience and good access to an appropriate range of staff development activities. They have received training in key skills and equality of opportunity, and have recently started training for internal verification. Communication is good. Staff work closely together and meet regularly to discuss learners' progress and other training issues.

94. Equality of opportunity is discussed effectively at induction and at progress reviews. Staff use good resources to get learners to think about issues, and they check their understanding. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity.

95. Quality assurance arrangements introduced since the previous inspection monitor all the key elements of training. They include observations of induction, reviews and assessment and have been effective in dealing with the weaknesses identified by the inspection. However, although standardisation meetings are held for assessors, internal verification has not dealt effectively with all the assessment weaknesses.

96. All appropriate staff were involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report was not sufficiently detailed and did not identify all the key weaknesses.