

REINSPECTION REPORT

Shape Reinspection

19 January 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

SHAPE REINSPECTION

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

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Shape Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Shape Accredited Training Centre (Shape) was established by Cleveland Youth Association in 1978. Shape is the training arm of Cleveland Youth Association and is a company limited by guarantee. The company has a main training centre in Middlesbrough and additional training centres in Eston and North Ormesby. Shape offers training in health, social care and public services for foundation and advanced modern apprentices and learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Shape also provides foundation training in the form of Entry to Employment (E2E). Shape also offers training in business administration but this area had too few learners to be inspected separately. At the time of the previous inspection, the contract for care of the elderly was due to end in March 2004. However, this contract has been renewed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and has been extended to include the employer training pilots (ETP) programme. The company offered training in construction at the time of the previous inspection but the contract for this provision ended in April 2004.

2. A chief executive who was appointed in February 2003, two learning and development managers, a quality assurance manager, a finance and administration manager and a data analysis manager have responsibility for the operational management of the organisation. Twenty-three training staff are employed by Shape and they are supported by one half-time and three full-time administrative staff. Shape currently has accreditation with Investors in People, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, and a national award recognising the positive attitude and support to people with disabilities.

3. Shape funds its training provision through Tees Valley LSC. In December 2004, Middlesbrough was ranked as the ninth most deprived area in the country. In November 2004, the unemployment rate in the Northeast was 2.2 per cent compared with 2.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

4. There are 115 learners in health, social care and public services. Thirty are in dental training, working towards NVQs at level 3. Twenty-six are in early years care of whom 22 are foundation modern apprentices and four are advanced modern apprentices. Twenty learners are on care programmes, of whom 12 are foundation modern apprentices and eight are advanced modern apprentices. Thirty-nine learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2 as part of the ETP programme. The ETP programme was not inspected separately as it was not offered at the time of the previous inspection. There is currently one male learner in dental training. All learners are employed or are on work placements in day nurseries, residential homes and dental surgeries in the Middlesbrough area. Learners can start their training at any time of the year. Learners can attend the centre

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either in the evenings or during the day for off-the-job training.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learner interviews	30
Number of staff interviews	54
Number of employer interviews	8
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	9
Number of partner/external agency interviews	3
Number of visits	7

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The previous inspection in January 2004 found that Shape's leadership and management, and approach to equality of opportunity were satisfactory. Arrangements for quality assurance were unsatisfactory. Training in foundation programmes was satisfactory, but training in health, social care and public services, and construction was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of provision were found to be satisfactory or better. Standards in foundation programmes are being maintained.

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	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

Construction	4
Contributory grades:	
New Deal for young people	4
Work-based learning for young people	4

Health, social care & public services	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Entry to Employment	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	2

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2
Work-based learning for adults	None

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory and improving. Sixty-eight per cent of the learners who started in 2003-04 have been retained, compared with 47 per cent in 2002-03. In 2003-4, 16 out of 65 learners completed the full framework, and 46 learners are still in learning. All of those learners remaining in learning have achieved their key skills qualifications. One hundred per cent of the early years learners achieved their progression award in July 2004. In 2003-04, 75 per cent of dental learners passed their exam.

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
Health, social care & public services	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

7. **Training in health, social care and public services is good.** Lessons are well prepared and allow learners to work at their own pace. Staff are well qualified and have relevant and recent vocational experience. Learners demonstrate good practical skills in the workplace.

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8. **Learners are given very good support.** This was a strength at the previous inspection. Learners who are unable to attend off-the-job training are visited in the workplace or at home and given individual tuition. Staff have good knowledge of local support agencies and help learners to access these as appropriate. Learners are given good support by the local mentoring service who work with Shape to provide support with personal development and self-confidence.

9. **Partnerships with employers are well established.** Regular and open communication between Shape and employers ensures that learners are supported to make good progress. Employers are fully informed of the requirements of a learners' programme and of the progress being made. Most learners are offered permanent employment by their work-placement providers.

10. **Progress reviews and assessments are very effective.** This was not the case in early years at the previous inspection. Progress reviews are planned and carried out regularly, and clear and measurable targets are set. Employers are fully involved in the review process. Assessments are planned with the learner. Effective use is made of verbal questioning to monitor learners' knowledge and understanding.

11. **Initial assessment is satisfactory.** Learners are assessed for their ability to work with people and for their literacy, numeracy and language support needs. A skills for life team supports learners in the classroom and in the workplace.

12. Resources are satisfactory. There is an adequate supply of books, journals and videos. Rooms are well furnished and there is good access to computers and the internet.

13. Arrangements for induction are satisfactory. Learners are given sufficient information about their programme, including placements and assessments. Equality of opportunity, and health and safety are covered in detail at induction and are reinforced at progress reviews.

Leadership and management

14. **Business and strategic planning are particularly effective.** Key priorities for development have been identified by the board of trustees. Targets are clear and measurable and are shared with staff. The business plan focuses on the learning experience and the continuous improvement of the provision. Internal and external communications are good. There is a planned, regular schedule of team and board meetings.

15. **Staff development and training is well supported by Shape.** Staff are supported financially to participate in a range of external and internal training, including further vocational qualifications and higher degrees.

16. **Very effective strategies, focusing on the learning experience and organisational improvement have been implemented.** A skills for life strategy provides support for staff

and learners across the organisation. Staff are supported by qualified key skills practitioners to deliver and assess key skills. Learning mentors and tutors work together closely to identify and support learners at risk of leaving their programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan.

17. **Quality assurance arrangements are now good.** The newly formed continuous improvement group has developed a comprehensive quality assurance framework and supporting procedures. A well-planned audit process monitors compliance with these procedures.

18. Annual and quarterly conferences provide opportunities for staff to be informed of the organisation's progress and to be involved in target-setting to ensure continued improvement of the organisation and the learner experience.

19. Internal verification is managed effectively. A planned schedule of monthly meetings provides assessors with good training and support.

20. **There are some good initiatives to develop equality of opportunity.** Support for learners and staff with learning and/or physical difficulties is good. For example, workshops have been adapted to provide a safe environment for learners with hearing impairments. Complaints are dealt with effectively following a well-documented process. Staff and learners are clear about the process. Marketing information is available in other languages, if requested.

21. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. All staff contributed to the report. Feedback from learners and employers is included in the self-assessment process.

22. Support for literacy, numeracy and language is satisfactory, available to all learners and adequately promoted.

23. Resources are satisfactory. Learners have access to a range of current journals, videos and textbooks. Recently developed workbooks enable learners to work at their own pace.

24. **Target-setting is inconsistent.** Not all individual staff targets are measurable and timebound. Some targets do not require staff to achieve specific improvements or developments. A few staff are unclear of the targets they have been set or of the expected outcomes.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- particularly effective strategic and business planning
- good internal and external communications

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- very effective strategies to bring about improvement
- comprehensive quality assurance procedures
- good staff development and training
- good initiatives to develop equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed target-setting

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- very good support for learners
- good teaching to develop learners' skills and knowledge
- very effective progress reviews and assessments
- well-established partnerships with employers

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses were identified by inspectors

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

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

Strengths

- particularly effective strategic and business planning
- good internal and external communications
- very effective strategies to bring about improvement
- comprehensive quality assurance procedures
- good staff development and training
- good initiatives to develop equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed target-setting

25. Shape has particularly effective strategic and business planning. The board of trustees has developed strategic priorities which remedy the provision's key problems. These include financial stability, improving the learning experience, and retention and achievement rates. An effective annual business plan has been developed from these priorities. Areas of learning, premises, staffing, equality of opportunity, partnership development, finance, quality assurance, communications and employer engagement are covered in the plan.

26. Business plan objectives have measurable targets and focus on actions to ensure continuous improvement. Progress towards business plan objectives are discussed regularly at board of trustees, senior management team and course team meetings. Links between strategic and business planning and the LSC three-year development plan are clear. Improving the learning experience, and retention and achievement rates are key objectives. Strategic priorities and business planning are well communicated to staff through regular staff conferences.

27. Internal and external communications are good. Meetings for the board of trustees take place every two months. Senior management meetings, and finance and general purposes committee meetings take place every month. Minutes of meetings are made available to all staff. Standing agenda items at senior management meetings include operational performance, finance and progress towards action plans and the business plan. Course team meetings take place every month and consider course planning and learners' performance. Staff are encouraged to contribute, in particular with suggestions which might lead to improvements. All formal staff meetings have standard agendas, detailed minutes with clear actions, timescales and identified responsibilities.

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28. Informal communication is good and takes place every day. An open management style enables all staff to have good access to senior managers. All staff have a positive commitment to the company's strategic priorities and improving learners' performance. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities

29. Communication with employers and other partners is also good. Regular visits are made to employers' premises to carry out learners' progress reviews. Effective partnerships are in place with local schools, businesses and Connexions. Current initiatives include provision for excluded learners aged 14 to 16, support and training for young mothers and specific training at employers' premises.

30. Staff training and development is good. Staff development is linked to the company's skills needs and to individual needs. Staff are supported financially to attend external training. Development needs are identified at appraisals and during individual meetings staff have with their line manager every month. Current training includes teaching, assessor and internal verification awards, post-graduate qualifications, NVQs, key skills, information technology and health and safety. Internal training is carried out regularly and covers the monitoring of work placements, delivery of key skills and approaches to teaching and learning. Some staff have achieved first aid and food hygiene qualifications. Most staff are qualified assessors and have teaching qualifications. There are 13 qualified internal verifiers, six staff have counselling qualifications, 12 have key skills or literacy, numeracy and language qualifications and two staff are qualified youth workers. Regular staff conferences place a strong emphasis on training. Training workshops during the 2004 conferences included self-assessment, development planning, learners' feedback, the appraisal system and the quality improvement initiative.

31. Very effective strategies have been introduced to improve the company's and learners' performance. A skills for life team has been created, bringing together literacy, numeracy and language skills, key skills and learner support across the provision. A skills for life strategy, with measurable objectives, has been developed. Effective measures, supported by staff training, have been put in place to improve initial assessment and the provision of additional support. For example, learning mentors work with vocational tutors to identify, target and support learners at risk of leaving their course without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan. Good support is provided to vocational staff delivering key skills. Key skills are delivered within a vocational context using good-quality learning materials. Key skills achievement has significantly improved. Most learners achieve the required key skills for their frameworks within the first six months of their course. Most E2E learners achieve at least one key skills qualification. More learners are being retained in learning.

32. Policies and supporting procedures are satisfactory and cover all aspects of the provision. All new staff are provided with comprehensive information about policies and procedures. An annual plan, monitored by the quality assurance manager, ensures that all policies are updated every year. Where appropriate, policies make reference to relevant legislation.

33. The policy and arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. Shape has appointed an experienced health and safety adviser. The health and safety manual is updated every year or more frequently when there are changes in legislation.

34. Appropriate management information systems have been established. Data is available and used to inform the board of trustees and senior managers about performance. This was not the case at the previous inspection. The data is used as a basis for management planning and actions but is insufficiently used by course teams.

35. Staff appraisal is satisfactory. A new system was introduced during 2004. All staff, including the chief executive, have received an appraisal by their line manager. Appraisals have identified training needs and personal targets. Staff are positive about the appraisal process and the outcomes, which are well documented.

36. Resources at the training centre and at the community-based E2E centres are satisfactory. The IT network is to be upgraded during January 2005 enabling all staff to have access to e-mail.

37. Target-setting is insufficiently developed. Targets are set for most learning programmes and staff but some targets are not specific or measurable. A few staff are uncertain of their targets for the year. Setting and agreeing of staff targets is inconsistent. For example, some staff targets identify clear requirements for improvements in learners' retention and achievement rates in the year, whereas others are less specific, requiring staff to develop learning packs or achieve assessor awards.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

38. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. This standard has been maintained since the previous inspection. Shape has comprehensive policies and procedures for equality of opportunity, anti-harassment and complaints. All staff and learners receive copies of these procedures during their induction. A designated member of the senior management team has responsibility for monitoring and improving the arrangements for equality of opportunity through the equality and diversity focus group which was reconvened in October 2004.

39. There are some good initiatives to support and develop equal opportunities at Shape. There is good support for learners who have additional support needs. The new skills for life team supports learners both in the classroom and in the workplace. Support is planned to meet learners' work and home commitments and has been provided in the evenings. The team also supports curriculum staff to develop materials to meet learners' individual needs and to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

40. Equality of opportunity is adequately promoted and leaflets are available on request in other languages. This was not the case at the previous inspection. The centre makes use of links with the local community, community groups and providers to widen participation in learning. These links have been used to provide work placements in

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construction through the local environment task force and to provide accredited training in information and communications technology. Regular meetings provide the opportunity to plan and develop new courses to meet the progression needs of learners and to avoid duplication of courses.

41. All staff have recently attended disability awareness training. Most staff have attended recent appropriate training on equality and diversity, and their understanding of equality of opportunity is good.

42. Learners have a basic understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity and most understand their own roles and responsibilities. Learners are aware of what action to take if they are treated inappropriately. Most learners know how to use the complaints procedures and the few complaints received have been effectively resolved.

43. Board of trustee membership is now representative of the local minority ethnic population and also includes women. Enrolments for 2003-04 reflect the local population. However, staff are under represented. Currently there are no staff from minority ethnic backgrounds.

44. Access to training areas for people with disabilities is satisfactory. No staff have physical disabilities. The organisation has received an award recognising its positive approach to training people with a disability. All the off-the-job training is carried out in single-storey premises.

45. A system to collect and analyse equal opportunities data was introduced in September 2003. The system is used to collect data on staff and learners. Some analysis of this data has taken place. However, the data is not used consistently to contribute to marketing, target-setting or to use as a basis for management and staff decision-making.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

46. New quality assurance arrangements have been introduced since the previous inspection. These have been written, trialled and produced by the new continuous improvement group. A detailed system of quality assurance procedures which is regularly updated is now used to inform staff of current standard practices. The procedures are clearly defined and detailed and are used appropriately by staff. Compliance with the processes is closely monitored through a well-planned audit process. All new staff receive an induction to the quality assurance procedures. There is a good focus on the learner throughout the quality assurance system and most aspects of the learning experience are monitored and evaluated.

47. Ten focus groups have been established covering the company's key activities to monitor and improve quality. Examples include workforce development, quality improvement, business development and employer engagement. All staff and trustees contribute to these groups which identify improvements and strategies to achieve these improvements.

48. Regular staff conferences identify key improvement themes for Shape, such as building on success, creating a better future for learners and driving continuous improvement. At annual conferences, the trustees and chief executive review progress over the year and share with staff the key objectives for the following year. Staff, employers and major partners are effectively involved in the conferences where a celebration of staff and learners' success also takes place.

49. Shape has been involved in an LSC-funded quality improvement initiative that has supported the introduction of improved financial planning, target-setting, management information systems, marketing and employer engagement.

50. Internal verification is well managed by a lead internal verifier. There is a detailed internal verification procedure with supporting documents. The process involves a well-planned schedule of assessment and internal verification observations and sampling requirements. Monthly internal verification and assessor panel days are held to standardise work, deliver training and share good practice. Employers who are work-based assessors and internal verifiers are encouraged to attend these days.

51. Shape has a planned programme of observation of teaching and reviews. All staff are observed at least six times a year carrying out all aspects of the learning experience. Assessment is carried out against clear criteria. Areas for development identified through this process are used as a basis for staff development targets and in appraisals. Employers who are also work-based assessors are also observed at least twice a year.

52. Feedback is collected from learners at the start of their programme, during training and on completion of the programme. This feedback is analysed thoroughly. Learners are asked about their experiences of induction, content and structure of taught sessions, guidance and support provided and overall impressions of the programme. Learners are also asked for feedback on the quality and content of their taught sessions. Managers are asked every year for their views on the quality of the provision. They are asked for feedback on the apprenticeship programmes, communications with the training team, quality and frequency of information received from the training team, usefulness of the progress reviews and support for learners.

53. The self-assessment report is a part of the quality assurance process. The report is self-critical and mainly accurate. Staff understand the importance of self-assessment as a means of improving the provision. Staff contributed to the report at the staff conference, and during team meetings. Feedback was also received from learners and employers. Inspectors gave the same grades as those given in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	76	2
Work-based learning for adults	39	None

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

Strengths

- very good support for learners
- good teaching to develop learners' skills and knowledge
- very effective progress reviews and assessments
- well-established partnerships with employers

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses were identified by inspectors

Achievement and standards

54. There is good relevant teaching and practical experience for learners. Learners gain a good understanding of the technical skills that support their work and demonstrate good skills in the workplace. Learners carry out responsible work roles and demonstrate good practical skills. In care and early years, learners are expected to plan and carry out daily activities. In dental nursing, learners work alongside dentists, preparing for procedures including extractions and anaesthesia. They are able to talk knowledgeably about their role. All employers interviewed stated that they are pleased with learners' skills and competences. Employers comment on the quality of the training delivered and Shape's actions to remedy any problems.

55. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory and improving. For example between 2002-03, 47 per cent of learners were retained, and in 2003-04, 68 per cent of learners have been retained. At the time of the previous inspection, only two out of 181 learners who started had completed the framework. In 2003-04, 16 of the 65 learners completed the framework, and 46 of these learners remain in training. All of those learners still in training have achieved their key skills qualification and are making good progress towards achieving the NVQ. In early years programmes, 100 per cent of foundation modern apprentices who took their progression award exam in July 2004 achieved the qualification. In 2003-04, 75 per cent of learners in dental nursing passed their exam. Learners are now completing the framework in their funding period.

Quality of education and training

56. Very effective progress reviews are carried out at least every four weeks. Employers are fully involved in the progress review process and agree targets to be met in the workplace. Targets set at one progress review are reviewed at the next one. Reviews include clear, detailed plans for assessment. Assessments are now more frequent, well planned and make good use of detailed questions. Assessment was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Clear feedback is given to learners following a practical assessment. Assessments are challenging and enable learners to demonstrate skills learnt and to identify future learning needs. Assessment of learners' portfolios is satisfactory. Sufficient evidence is now used to make judgements on learners' work. Written feedback informs learners of the progress they have made and of any further actions they need to take to complete a unit.

57. Well-established partnerships with employers provide learners with good work-placement opportunities. Learners enjoy their work as their skills are valued and they gain employment. Learners' skills and qualities are carefully matched to appropriate employers. Effective and open communication systems between employers, learners and learning facilitators ensures that learners make good progress and develop good practical skills. Good use of partnerships enables learners to change placements where difficulties arise. These partnerships also enable learners with specific difficulties to be placed in supportive placements. For example, a learner with dyspraxia has been placed with an employer who has supported the learner to remain in the work placement and achieve the qualification. Employers are used to deliver specific off-the-job training and assessment.

58. Support for learners is very good. Support was identified as a strength at the previous inspection. Learners unable to attend off-the-job training are given individual support. One pregnant learner has been supported to complete her foundation modern apprenticeship by staff visiting her at home on alternate weeks. Another learner who has been through bereavement has been supported to continue with the course by the provision of home support and tuition. Training days and times have been altered to meet learners' workplace requirements and staff provide individual support in the workplace for learners unable to attend the centre. Support to meet individual needs has also been provided by the creation of a small, separate learning space for less confident learners. Staff from the skills for life team support learners in the workplace with their literacy and numeracy needs. Assessors make frequent and regular visits to the workplace, at least once a month and every week if necessary. Assessors are also readily available over the phone. Learners and employers comment positively on the speed of response to requests for support. Learners unable to complete their programme in the planned timescale are given help and support to continue in training and achieve their qualification.

59. Resources are satisfactory. Teaching rooms are well decorated and provide sufficient space for learners to work. Reference books, journals and learners' work packs enable learners to access current and relevant information. Learners have access to

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laptop computers and a good-quality computer suite with internet access. All staff have relevant vocational experience and qualifications, and are qualified assessors. Most staff are qualified internal verifiers and those who are not are working towards the qualification. This was not the case at the previous inspection.

60. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners are assessed for their ability to work with people as well as for their literacy, numeracy and language support needs. Support for literacy and numeracy is set in a vocational context and most learners stated that they found the additional support useful.

61. The induction programme for learners is satisfactory. Learners are given copies of Shape's policies on health and safety, and equality of opportunity. Learners participate in activities focusing on these policies, and staff monitor their understanding. Learners are given sufficient information about course requirements including work placements. All placements are visited before a learner starts to assess health and safety and to inform the work-placement provider of the training programme. All employers are provided with a comprehensive employer guide that covers areas such as absence reporting, discipline problems, and health and safety.

Leadership and management

62. Internal verification is now thorough and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. There is a clear strategy for sampling portfolios and a comprehensive plan details when portfolios are to be internally verified. Internal verifiers are suitably qualified and have a good range of experience. At the previous inspection there were no qualified internal verifiers in early years. Assessors are well monitored and observed regularly. New assessors are well supported and provided with sufficient training. Assessments carried out by unqualified assessors receive 100 per cent sampling. Monthly internal verification panel days allow assessors and internal verifiers to share good practice, sample portfolios and participate in training.

63. All staff contributed to the self-assessment report through monthly team meetings, staff conferences and focus groups. Inspectors identified most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. The inspectors did not identify the weakness identified in the self-assessment report.