

INSPECTION REPORT

Eden Training Ltd

15 July 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Eden Training Ltd

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	3
What learners like about Eden Training Ltd	7
What learners think Eden Training Ltd could improve	7
Key challenges for Eden Training Ltd	8

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	11
Quality assurance	12
Health, social care & public services	13

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Eden Training Ltd is a privately owned company formed in January 2003 to provide training and education to learners in the early years care sector. The company offers training for foundation modern apprentices, advanced modern apprentices and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in early years care and education and play work. This is co-ordinated from the training centre at its headquarters in Westcliff-on-Sea. The company is managed by two directors and employs five staff. The company funds its provision through Essex Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It also offers commercial training.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

2. There are 95 learners on programmes in early years care and education. Fifty-one of these are foundation modern apprentices working towards an NVQ at level 2, the technical certificate and the key skills qualification. Most are in work placements and 11 are employed. Forty-four advanced modern apprentices are working towards an NVQ at level 3 and the key skills qualification. All advanced modern apprentices are employed. Eden Training Ltd has been successful in tendering for an additional programme from the LSC. Eighty-three learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2 on a 'profit from learning' contract. This programme allows employed, adult learners to gain an NVQ at level 2. These learners were originally expected to achieve the NVQ by August 2004.

3. The recruitment process for all learners includes an interview, an initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills and an induction, either at the training centre or in the workplace. Training for the technical certificate and key skills qualification takes place at the training centre.

4. Most training is provided on the job. Learners who are employed can also attend training at the centre on one evening each week or on Saturdays. Learners work in pre-schools, day nurseries, schools and crèches. Assessors review learners' progress in their workplace every four to six weeks. Five assessors and one internal verifier work at the centre.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	31
Number of staff interviews	9
Number of employer interviews	12
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	12

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, Eden Training Ltd's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. However, its leadership and management and arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory, as is the quality of its provision in health, social care and public services.

GRADES

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		3
Quality assurance		4

Health, social care & public services		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years		
- Work-based learning for young people	95	4
- Employer training pilot	83	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **The rate of progress towards achieving qualifications is slow for all learners.** However, the standard of practical skills learners demonstrate in the workplace is satisfactory. No learners have completed the modern apprenticeship framework. Since enrolments began in April 2003, only one learner has achieved an NVQ. Learners are also making slow progress in achieving NVQ units.

7. **Arrangements for the provision of key skills training are poor.** Not enough key skills training and assessment take place. Assessors have insufficient knowledge of key skills qualifications and do not use naturally occurring evidence in the workplace for key skills assessment. No arrangements have been made for advanced modern apprentices to receive key skills training, or for those learners who do not attend formal training sessions.

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	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2

8. Training sessions are effective. Weekly sessions for foundation modern apprentices are carefully planned to introduce new information and ensure learners can apply what they have learnt. For example, learners study food groups and then design daily menus for children with different dietary needs. Learners pay attention to the trainer during training sessions and are active in pair and group work.

9. **Guidance and support for learners is good.** Learners are placed on appropriate courses. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily assessed when learners start programmes. Learners with additional learning and social needs are effectively identified. Assessors communicate and offer support by e-mail and telephone text messaging to learners who choose not to attend the centre. Staff provide effective additional support for literacy when a learner is identified as requiring this help.

10. Resources are satisfactory. Training rooms are comfortable and well decorated. There is a small collection of textbooks for learners to use at the training centre and specialist equipment such as children's story books. Trainers and assessors are well-qualified and two have teaching qualifications. Learners who attend the training centre have access to computers. However, insufficient reference is made to using information technology (IT) for research purposes.

11. **There is insufficient observation of learners in their workplaces.** Not enough use is made of witness testimonies, work products or oral questioning. Written work is relied

upon too much. All learners are required to complete written answers to pre-set questions, including those who find writing difficult. Most learners have only been observed in the workplace once since starting the programme.

Leadership and management

12. **There is poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.** On-the-job training is not planned sufficiently to reinforce off-the-job training. Workplace supervisors are not aware of the content of off-the-job training sessions and are unable to support learners' understanding of relevant topics or help them to achieve individual NVQ units.

13. **Eden Training Ltd has a comprehensive internal verification system.** The verifier identifies a different focus of attention according to the experience of individual assessors. The process has identified developments needed in assessors' practice and the verifier has taken action to remedy these.

14. The self-assessment report was well structured but did not provide strong judgements in areas such as the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of assessment practice.

15. **Eden Training Ltd has thorough arrangements to develop and train staff.** Staff training and development is clearly linked to the company's business objectives as outlined in the business plan, the self-assessment development plan and the three-year service development plan prepared for the LSC. **The range of staff development is good and includes training for assessment and verification, teaching, occupational updating, and health and safety.**

16. **Eden Training Ltd has good communications and a clear structure.** There are thorough annual staff appraisals, staff reviews every six months and a programme of regular monthly meetings for managers and staff. Meetings cover issues about learners, operational matters and recruitment. Managers produce useful action plans after these meetings to remedy problems. At the next meeting, these action plans are reviewed for their effectiveness.

17. **Eden Training Ltd's business objectives clearly focus on learners' needs and the early years and play work sector.** Managers and staff are aware and supportive of the company's objectives.

18. **The company has clear arrangements to manage resources to support learning.** There are well-established budgetary arrangements to allocate resources. These cover staffing, accommodation and training materials and equipment. Resources for training, accommodation and equipment range from satisfactory to good.

19. **There are weaknesses in target-setting.** Managers have set targets for the successful completion of the advanced and foundation modern apprenticeship frameworks and NVQs in the three-year service development plan produced for the LSC. Recently Eden Training Ltd has set targets for learners to achieve NVQ units but at the time of the

inspection, none of these had been met. The company does not set itself or learners targets for retention rates, achievement of key skills or achievement of the technical certificate.

20. Managers are insufficiently effective in resolving the slow progress of learners in achieving NVQ units. The company has made a major effort, since March 2004, to improve the proportion of learners achieving NVQ units. There has been an increase of just over 10 per cent in the proportion of learners successfully achieving individual units in the three months before the inspection. However, the proportion of learners achieving units remains low.

21. There is insufficient use of management information. The company has a useful computerised system to collect and provide information on learners. The system provides data on gender, ethnicity, learners' additional learning needs, the number of learners starting the programme, those learners leaving the programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan and achievement of units, qualifications and framework. It is only since April that managers have used the system for analysis and to produce reports on unit achievement.

22. Learners' awareness of issues related to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Trainers give learners copies of the company's equal opportunities policy and the complaints procedures at induction. However, the equal opportunities policy has not been reviewed since the company was established 18 months ago. Learners understand these, know who they should contact if they wish to complain and feel confident that any concerns would be treated seriously. Learners are less confident about their rights in the workplace.

23. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment process involves managers and staff. Learners and some employers' opinions contributed to the process through the collection of their views on questionnaires. The self-assessment report used for this inspection was the first produced by the provider. The assessment report is self-critical and informative and provided a useful basis for the inspection.

24. Quality assurance arrangements are ineffective. There is a range of quality assurance arrangements including internal verification, questionnaires, audits of paperwork, self-assessment, training sessions, policies and procedures, including a quality assurance policy.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- thorough staff development
- good internal communication

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting

EDEN TRAINING LTD

- insufficient action by managers to resolve learners' slow progress towards unit achievement
- insufficient use of management information
- ineffective quality assurance arrangements

Health, social care & public services

Early years

Strengths

- effective training sessions
- good support and guidance for learners

Weaknesses

- slow rates of achievement
- inadequate arrangements for key skills training and assessment
- insufficient assessment in learners' workplaces
- poor links between on- and off-the-job training

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT EDEN TRAINING LTD:

- the skills they develop - 'training makes you think about things and then apply them to work'
- that assessors explain things really clearly
- that assessors are patient, reliable and available
- the support they receive from assessors
- that their confidence increases - 'I am more confident at work now'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK EDEN TRAINING LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of visits from assessors - 'I would like more visits from my assessor'
- the amount of writing required while on the programme
- more observations in the workplace
- more coaching during assessors' visits.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EDEN TRAINING LTD:

- increase achievement rates
- develop appropriate key skills provision
- increase the assessment of skills in the workplace
- improve links between on- and off-the-job training
- improve the use of management information
- develop effective quality assurance arrangements
- agree targets for achievement across the programmes
- maintain the quality of teaching
- maintain the arrangements for staff training and development

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- thorough staff development
- good internal communication

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting
- insufficient action by managers to resolve learners' slow progress towards unit achievement
- insufficient use of management information
- ineffective quality assurance arrangements

25. Eden Training Ltd has thorough arrangements to develop and train staff. Staff training and development is clearly founded on the mission statement and linked to the company's business objectives as outlined in the company's business plan, the self-assessment development plan and the three-year service development plan prepared for the LSC. The range of staff development is good and includes training for assessment and verification, teaching, occupational updating and health and safety. Individual staff development is established and its effectiveness is reviewed particularly well through the annual appraisal system, the six-monthly staff review interviews and individual monthly staff performance meetings. There are training and development plans for individual members of staff and for the company as a whole. The company uses staff meetings effectively to share information from individual training events attended by managers and assessors. All new members of staff have comprehensive induction training, which includes the identification of their individual training needs. Induction covers company policies, procedures and administrative arrangements. Before starting their job, staff spent time working with colleagues in different roles to understand all aspects of the company's activities.

26. Eden Training Ltd has good communications and a clear structure. There are thorough annual staff appraisals, staff reviews every six months and a programme of monthly meetings for managers and staff. Meetings cover issues about learners, operational matters and recruitment. Managers produce useful action plans after meetings to remedy problems. At the next meeting, these action plans are reviewed for their effectiveness. Managers meet with individual members of staff every month to monitor their performance and that of those learners for whom they have responsibility. Managers take action if there are any problems. For example, they have provided specific additional help to staff if they have had a problem with an area of their work. Staff find managers are approachable and responsive to their needs. Staff support one another in their work. There are clear job descriptions for each member of staff, and

EDEN TRAINING LTD

policies and procedures to explain how the company wants staff to provide its service to meet learners' needs. Written agreements with employers detail what training learners should receive in the workplace. However, employers interviewed by inspectors considered that there was insufficient discussion by assessors with them about training and assessment. Eden Training Ltd has a number of useful links with local organisations including local schools, Connexions and early years partnership groups.

27. Eden Training Ltd's business objectives clearly focus on learners' needs and the early years and play work sector. Managers and staff are aware of, and supportive of, the company's objectives. The business plan does not show how the company intends to achieve these objectives. However, this detail and how the company intends to raise standards for learners is contained in the three-year service development plan prepared for the LSC and the self-assessment report's development plan.

28. The company has clear arrangements to manage resources to support learning. There are well-established budgetary arrangements to allocate resources. These cover staffing, accommodation and training materials and equipment. Resources for training, accommodation and equipment range from satisfactory to good. Managers and staff have an appropriate background knowledge and qualifications to provide training to early years and play work learners.

29. Managers have put in place arrangements to provide literacy, numeracy and language support. There is a designated member of staff responsible for literacy, numeracy and language support. At induction, the company assesses all learners to establish if they require support. Eden Training Ltd relies on informal arrangements to provide literacy, numeracy and language support to learners. The company has no policies or written strategies for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support. It does not produce written reports on the effectiveness of the support it provides.

30. There are weaknesses in target-setting. Managers have set targets for the successful completion of the advanced and foundation modern apprenticeship frameworks and NVQs in the three-year service development plan produced for the LSC. Recently Eden Training Ltd has set targets for learners to achieve NVQ units but at the time of the inspection, none of these had been met. The company does not set itself or learners targets for retention rates, achievement of key skills or the achievement of the technical certificate.

31. Managers are insufficiently effective in resolving the slow progress of learners in achieving NVQ units. The company has made a major effort, since March 2004 to improve the proportion of learners achieving NVQ units. There has been an increase of just over 10 per cent in the proportion of learners successfully achieving individual units in the three months before the inspection. However, the proportion of learners achieving units remains low. There are examples of learners achieving only one or two units in a year. Managers have been slow to plan and provide key skills training for advanced modern apprentices. There is key skills provision for foundation modern apprentices but since the company started providing training for learners in April 2003,

there has been insufficient key skills provision for advanced modern apprentices.

32. There is insufficient use of management information. The company has a useful computerised system to collect and provide information on learners. The system provides data on gender, ethnicity, learners' additional learning requirements, the number of learners starting the programme, those learners leaving the programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan, and achievement of units, qualifications and framework. It is only since April that managers have used the system for analysis and to produce reports on unit achievement. There has been no numerical analysis of the data to report on the proportion of learners who leave the programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan or on achievement of different groups including male and female learners, those from minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities and learners receiving additional support.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

33. Learners' awareness of issues related to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Trainers give learners copies of the Eden Training Ltd's equal opportunities policy and the complaints procedures at induction. However, the equal opportunities policy has not been reviewed since the company was established 18 months ago. Learners understand these, know who they should contact if they wish to complain and feel confident to use them. Learners are less confident about their rights in the workplace.

34. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of how to promote equality of opportunity and to celebrate diversity. For example, learners are able to identify suitable foods for a range of cultural and dietary needs. Trainers use a range of children's books from different periods to show how gender stereotyping has changed over time. However, learners find it difficult to express where their learning comes from. There is little discreet, planned training for learners. Reviews are not effectively used to discuss or develop learners' understanding of equality of opportunity even though there is a section for comments on the review record. Recently, a procedure has been introduced for inviting learners to complete questionnaires about equality of opportunity at the end of each unit but these are not yet routinely completed.

35. Equality of opportunity is on the agenda of every team meeting. Management information is available on the gender, ethnicity and additional learning needs of learners. However, managers do not yet analyse this data or use it to identify how successful the organisation is at recruiting and meeting the needs of learners from a range of backgrounds. One trainer has recently attended a day's training on anti-bias practice.

36. Eden Training Ltd has made arrangements to meet the needs of one learner who has restricted mobility. The company has moved a computer to the first floor of the training centre to allow this learner to access toilets and learning resources more easily.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

37. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment process fully involves managers and staff. Learners' and some employers' opinions contributed to the process through the collection of their views from questionnaires. The self-assessment report used for this inspection was the first produced Eden Training Ltd. The self-assessment report is critical and informative and provided a useful basis for the inspection. Most weaknesses identified by inspectors were clearly recorded in the report; but some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report were judged to be no more than normal practice. The report has a clearly written development plan, which includes actions to resolve weaknesses and maintain strengths.

38. Internal verification arrangements are comprehensive but their effectiveness is variable. There are established procedures and policies for verification and sampling plans. Verification includes observation of assessments, checking of portfolios of evidence and interviews with learners. Assessors receive written and verbal feedback from verifiers on their performance. Assessors meet regularly to ensure consistency of standards across Eden Training Ltd. These meetings are used to provide information from the awarding bodies on assessment and to conduct consistency exercises. However, internal verification arrangements have not identified that written evidence is used too much for assessment of competences and that there is insufficient assessment taking place.

39. The company has arrangements to collect the views of learners and employers. These include a questionnaire for learners to complete after their induction and at the end of each unit and a suggestion book. Employers are sent questionnaires about the performance of Eden Training Ltd. Managers produce some analysis of the data from employers' questionnaires but there is no analysis of those completed by learners. However, managers do use the findings from the questionnaires to improve services for learners. For example, the company has increased the time assessors spend with learners to improve their understanding of NVQ units.

40. Quality assurance arrangements are ineffective. There is a range of quality assurance arrangements including internal verification, questionnaires, audits of paperwork, self-assessment, some observations of training sessions, policies and procedures including a quality assurance policy, individual meetings with staff to monitor their performance and a recently introduced system whereby managers monitor assessors' visits to workplaces. While the off-the-job training and support for learners are good and the work produced by learners is adequate, there are weaknesses, some of which are significant and impact on learners.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years		
- Work-based learning for young people	95	4
- Employer training pilot	83	4

Early years

Strengths

- effective training sessions
- good support and guidance for learners

Weaknesses

- slow rates of achievement
- inadequate arrangements for key skills training and assessment
- insufficient assessment in learners' workplaces
- poor links between on- and off-the-job training

Achievement and standards

41. The rate of progress towards achieving qualifications is slow for all learners. However, the standard of practical skills learners demonstrate in the workplace is satisfactory. No learners have completed the modern apprenticeship framework. Since enrolments began in April 2003, only one learner has achieved an NVQ. Learners are making slow progress in achieving NVQ units. Assessors monitor completed units but records are inadequate to show the frequency of assessments or the time it takes for each learner to achieve NVQ units. Forty-seven per cent of foundation modern apprentices who started training in 2002-03 have left their training programme without achieving any NVQ units. Twenty-five per cent of foundation modern apprentices who enrolled in 2003-04 have also left their training programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan. Retention rates for adults on the 'profit from learning' programme have been good with all learners staying in training. The quality of written evidence in portfolios is satisfactory to demonstrate knowledge for NVQs at levels 2 and 3.

42. Arrangements for the provision of key skills training are poor. Not enough key skills training and assessment take place. Assessors have insufficient knowledge of key skills qualifications and do not use naturally occurring evidence from the workplace for key

skills assessment. Trainers effectively assess key skills in communication for the foundation modern apprentices who attend the centre as part of the technical certificate. However, no arrangements have been made for advanced modern apprentices, or for those learners who do not attend formal training sessions at the centre. Most learners do not know which key skills they need to achieve. They do not have copies of the NVQ standards and do not understand what evidence they need or how they will be assessed.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			27		29											
Retained*			2		0											
Successfully completed			0		0											
Still in learning			23		21											

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			48		32											
Retained*			2		2											
Successfully completed			0		0											
Still in learning			34		17											

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Employer training pilot																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			85													
Retained*			0													
Successfully completed			0													
Still in learning			83													

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

Quality of education and training

43. Training sessions are effective. The weekly sessions for foundation modern apprentices are carefully planned to introduce new information and ensure learners can apply learning. For example, learners study food groups and then design daily menus for children with different dietary needs. Learners pay attention to the trainer during training sessions and are active in pair and group work. They confidently report what they learn to the larger group. Handouts are clear and well designed and learners use them to record evidence of their learning. The two early years care and education training sessions observed during inspection were good.

44. Guidance and support for learners is good. Learners are placed on appropriate courses. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily assessed when learners start programmes. Learners with additional learning and social needs are effectively identified. Induction is satisfactory with aspects of the programme explained in detail. Assessors visit learners frequently in their workplaces and give detailed written guidance about how to complete knowledge evidence and reflective accounts. Short-term targets are set and learners know how to provide additional evidence to complete units. Assessors communicate and offer support to learners who choose not to attend the centre by e-mail and telephone text messaging. Staff provide effective additional support for literacy when a learner is identified as requiring this help. However, strategies are not in place to help learners to improve their spelling. Learners have good oral skills for summarising and reporting information.

45. Resources are satisfactory. Training rooms are comfortable and well decorated. There is a small collection of textbooks for learners to use at the centre and specialist equipment such as children's story books. Trainers and assessors are well qualified and two having teaching qualifications. Those learners who attend the training centre have access to computers. However, little reference is made to using IT for research purposes.

46. There is insufficient observation of learners in their workplaces. Not enough use is made of witness testimonies, work products or oral questioning. Written work is relied upon too much. Most learners have only had one observation since starting the programme. When observations are carried out, assessors write detailed observation reports and reference these appropriately to several units. They ask relevant questions and record the learners' answers. Witness statements are collected to show that learners consistently demonstrate skills for ensuring the care and education of children. However, assessors require too much written evidence to demonstrate learners' knowledge. All learners, including those who find writing difficult, are required to provide written answers to a set of questions. Learners are often required to write reflective accounts to describe skills which need to be observed. Eden Training Ltd has recognised this recently and training is being carried out with assessors to change their practice. Assessors do not explain to learners who have achieved NVQ at level 2 how they can use their existing evidence for level 3 NVQ programmes. Too often they repeat evidence rather than making efficient use of the evidence they already have.

Leadership and management

47. There are poor links between on- and off-the-job training. On-the-job training is not planned sufficiently to reinforce off-the-job training. While there is a planned schedule of off-the-job training sessions, workplace supervisors are not aware of the content of these sessions and are unable to support learners' understanding of relevant topics or help them to achieve individual NVQ units. There is frequent informal contact with some employers who are informed of learners' progress. However, most employers do not effectively contribute to reviews of learners' progress. Some employers do not understand the NVQ and are unable to contribute effectively to the training process. Many work-placement providers and employers provide additional training courses related to learners' NVQs. These include child protection, dealing with challenging behaviour and awareness of abuse. However, this additional training is not always recorded in individual learning plans and new knowledge and understanding are not always used as evidence for the NVQ.

48. Staff understand their roles and there are regular meetings of staff teams. In addition to team meetings, the verifier meets all staff individually to monitor progress and personal development. Staff work together co-operatively.

49. Eden Training Ltd has a comprehensive internal verification system. The verifier identifies a different focus of attention according to the experience of individual assessors. The process has identified developments needed in assessors' practice and the verifier has taken action to remedy these. However, changes are too recent to have had an impact on the over-reliance on written evidence and the insufficient number of observations of learners in their workplaces. The verifier has not routinely carried out observations of assessors assessing learners in their workplaces.