

REINSPECTION REPORT

IPS International Ltd Reinspection

28 April 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. IPS International Ltd (IPS) operates as a privately owned commercial training and consultancy business which provides a range of training opportunities, supported by private and public funding bodies. It became a limited company in 1997 and the present company was formed after a management buy-out by the current team of three directors in February 2000. About 50 per cent of provision is covered by a contract with the Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council to provide work-based learning for young people in engineering, administration and care. It has recently been recognised as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in advanced maintenance engineering. It has provided government-funded training since the mid-1980s. IPS's headquarters and main training facilities are situated on an industrial estate, close to Rochester, with good public transport. Care provision is managed from a smaller office in Folkestone, but training is provided across the whole of Kent. Only care was reinspected.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

2. There are 34 advanced apprentices, 40 apprentices at level 2, and eight young people on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes. Eighty-nine adult learners are working towards an NVQ as part of the employer training pilot (ETP) 'profit from learning' scheme. All the learners are employed in care homes or are working in domiciliary care. A wide range of homes are used, from large homes for elderly people to small ones for young people with learning disabilities. The care team has eight staff who are all vocationally qualified and experienced. All have assessor and internal verifier qualifications. Three are teacher trained and others are working towards a teaching qualification. Learners are trained at the Rochester and Folkestone centres and in their workplaces.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| Number of inspectors | 3 |
| Number of inspection days | 12 |
| Number of learners interviewed | 43 |
| Number of staff interviewed | 15 |
| Number of employers interviewed | 15 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 2 |
| Number of partners/external agencies interviewed | 1 |
| Number of visits | 21 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

3. At the previous inspection, provision in engineering, technology and manufacturing was good, in business administration, management and professional was satisfactory, but was unsatisfactory in health, social care and public services. At the end of the reinspection process, the provision in health, social care and public services is now satisfactory to meet the needs of those receiving it.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Engineering, technology & manufacturing | 2 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Apprenticeships for young people | 2 |

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

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Health, social care & public services | 4 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Apprenticeships for young people | 4 |

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Health, social care & public services | 3 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Employer training pilot | 3 |
| Apprenticeships for young people | 3 |

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Employer training pilot | 89 | 3 |
| Apprenticeships for young people | 82 | 3 |

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

Strengths

- well-planned, responsive learning in well-resourced environments
- very flexible programmes tailored to meet employers' and learners' needs
- well-supported learners showing good progression
- good team working

Weaknesses

- late introduction of technical certificates for some learners
- insufficient direct observation in the workplace

Achievement and standards

4. At the time of the previous inspection, completion rates for the full framework were very poor, but retention was showing an improving trend. Since then, retention and achievement have continued to improve and are now satisfactory. Thirty-two per cent of advanced apprentices who started in 2002-03 completed the full framework and 56 per cent were retained. Fifty-four per cent of those who started in 2003-04 have almost completed the framework. Of the 46 apprentices who were present at the previous inspection, 12 remain in learning and 10 of 34 leavers have completed a full framework. The average time to achieve NVQ units has halved in the past two years and learners are making good progress. Retention rates on the ETP programme are high. Sixty-eight per cent of learners who started in 2003-04 are expected to achieve their NVQ.

5. There is a good standard of work in portfolios with good links between background knowledge and practical work. Portfolios are comprehensive and are relevant to workplace situations. Only one learner has failed the key skills test this year. Some learners achieve key skills at a level above that required by the framework and they are also offered to ETP learners as an enhancement.

Quality of education and training

6. Learning is well planned and responsive. Learning environments are well resourced.

IPS INTERNATIONAL LTD REINSPECTION

All but one of the seven teaching sessions observed by inspectors was good. The teaching weakness identified at the previous inspection has been rectified. Links between background knowledge and practical work are well made and learners are able to demonstrate how they apply their knowledge. The staff are suitably experienced and appropriately qualified to support the range of learning. They communicate their good occupational knowledge enthusiastically to learners. Most training rooms are well appointed with a good range of resources. Some are conveniently sited in care homes. However, training rooms in some of the care homes have a dual use which can detract from the learning. Resource boxes contain a good range of helpful materials which are well used by staff and learners in most care homes. This has dealt with a weakness identified at the previous inspection.

7. Very flexible programmes are tailored to meet employers' and learners' needs. Employers appreciate the frequent communication with a single point of contact at IPS. IPS offers a customised service which minimises the cost to increase the skills of employers' workforces and takes account of their priorities and service needs. They share information about legislation. Flexible, well-planned and reliable programmes develop learners' self-esteem and confidence. Employers see a marked improvement in learners' skills and practice. The trainers have a good knowledge of the workplace context and help learners to select appropriate optional units.

8. Well-supported learners show good progress. Programmes are individually planned with individual tuition and support. Learners who are at risk of leaving early are identified at team meetings so that additional support can be provided. Innovative approaches have been developed to overcome barriers to learning. For instance, IPS trained a learner's colleagues in one home to support her disability. She has achieved her NVQ and has now been promoted. Support for literacy and numeracy is good. Only one learner has identified language needs and these are being supported. Learners with poor literacy and numeracy are given more time to meet targets. They can use a good range of alternative assessment methods such as tape recording and scribing. Colour coding is used to support dyslexia. Assessment is planned sensitively to accommodate shift patterns. If learners cannot come into the centre, tutors will give them tuition and support in their workplace. IPS provides transport and lunch to encourage learners to attend sessions at the centre. Flexibly planned sessions and a choice between computerised or paper tests for key skills provide maximum opportunity to pass. The review process is regular and encompasses professional, academic and personal needs. Progress with each unit is clearly identified and targets are set and endorsed by employers.

9. Learners progress well. Many are retained between levels 2 and 3. Fifteen learners have entered nurse training in the past two years and four more will join this year. IPS has developed an information pack to help learners apply. Seven learners have gone on to registered manager awards since 2002 and four out of six assistant managers in one employer have been appointed from learners.

10. Insufficient direct observation in the workplace is used as performance evidence. Learners who have been training for some time have not been observed. Some ETP

learners have up to 15 years' experience and opportunities to accredit their skills have not been taken. Observations are lengthy and cover many aspects of the qualification. However, they are not started until all the written work is complete. There is too much emphasis on writing in NVQ portfolios. Observation is not used as a formative assessment tool or to assess some parts of the background knowledge. When assessment takes place in the workplace it is well planned and confirms competence. However, some of the elements and performance criteria were not covered by observation. Internal verification is very thorough and detailed, but the procedures have not been monitored by the awarding body since autumn 2003. No external verifier has been made available by the awarding body for guidance and support during this time. There has been some ambiguous guidance by the awarding body by telephone and e-mail.

11. The technical certificate has been introduced late for many of the learners. Some learners have achieved NVQ and key skills, but have yet to start their technical certificate. The programme has been changed for current learners, and the work is now an integral part of the training sessions for key skills and the NVQ.

Leadership and management

12. Leadership and management are very effective with good team working. The care team has enhanced its strategies to improve retention and achievement rates. Measures include the early introduction of key skills and integrating the technical certificate and key skills work into units. Practice tests are now used to help learners take exams. Good practice is shared with other vocational groups. The IPS equality and diversity champions are part of the care team. The learners who were interviewed had a very clear understanding of equality and diversity. Teams work well across two sites that are 50 miles apart. Engineering colleagues who are part of the IPS CoVE observe and train care assessors and tutors. They share a common approach to documents and internal verification. Good formal and informal communications support the team with a comprehensive meeting structure. Monthly care meetings are booked into diaries well in advance so that all staff can attend. The care manager also has regular individual meetings with staff.

13. The company has a clear strategy to develop good working relationships with employers throughout the programme. Senior care home staff on the new registered managers' course and team leader qualifications give feedback which is used to develop the provision.

14. Detailed use is made of data to monitor the learners' performance. An administrator in Folkestone manages the data, co-ordinates communications and maintains the learner files.

15. There is no access to premises at Folkestone for staff or learners with restricted mobility. However, alternative arrangements are made if necessary.