

INSPECTION REPORT

Lite (Stockport) Limited

17 December 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

Lite (Stockport) Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. LITE (Stockport) Limited (LITE) was established in April 2003, after a local animal care training provider ceased trading. Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council (LSC) approached LITE Limited, an animal care training provider based in St Helens, to invite them to take over the training. The LSC agreed to transfer the remaining learners to the new training provider. The company currently provides training in animal care and veterinary nursing throughout Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Derbyshire and surrounding areas. LITE works very closely with its partner company, LITE Limited, which has been delivering work-based learning in animal care and related areas for 20 years in the Merseyside area. LITE also provides training in customer service but this area of learning was not inspected on this occasion as the number of learners is currently low.

2. LITE has premises in the town centre of Stockport. The premises have been completely refurbished and comprise training rooms, consulting rooms, laboratories and offices. Much of the training is delivered in the workplace, in veterinary practices and hospitals, kennels, catteries, stables, canine grooming establishments, pet stores and animal welfare organisations. Most off-the-job training, including technical certificates, is provided by LITE staff at the Stockport training centre. Management of LITE is the responsibility of a managing director. The company also employs four veterinary and animal care tutor/assessors, one customer care tutor/assessor and two administrative staff. Two specialist staff from LITE Limited work for LITE several days each week. They specialise in literacy and numeracy and counselling, and in health and safety.

3. In November 2004, the rate of unemployment in Stockport was 1.3 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.1 per cent. Four point three per cent of the population of Stockport are from minority ethnic groups, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Land-based provision

4. Currently, 51 learners are working towards qualifications in animal care, veterinary nursing and equine studies. Of these, 33 are foundation modern apprentices and three are advanced apprentices in animal care. Fourteen learners are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 and 3 in animal care, or veterinary nursing. One learner is following an NVQ at level 1 in equine studies. There are no apprenticeship frameworks for veterinary nursing. Many of the modern apprentices in animal care also work towards an NVQ at level 2 in veterinary nursing and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) level 2 examinations. Of the 33 foundation modern apprentices in animal care, 10 are also on the veterinary nursing programme. Three of the NVQ learners are working for a level 3 in veterinary nursing and 10 learners are working towards NVQs at level 2.

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5. Learners are recruited through the Connexions service, through LITE's marketing activities and directly from employers. The manager of LITE interviews every candidate for suitability. After a work placement has been found, a further interview takes place at the employer's premises. Many learners are employed. Employers include a range of veterinary practices, kennels, catteries, pet stores and grooming businesses. Inductions are carried out in the workplace and at LITE's training centre in Stockport. Learners attend a half-day induction at the training centre, which introduces them to the programme. Learners also have a taster period in their work placement to assess their suitability for the programme and the employer.

6. Key skills are taught and assessed using activity-based assignments, projects and by cross referencing work-based evidence from subject portfolios. All learners have formal progress reviews every four weeks, and often more frequently. Most of the training and assessment for learners in animal care is carried out in the workplace. Learners spend a day at the training centre every two weeks for off-the-job training. They are assessed in class and in the workplace. Learners in veterinary nursing attend the training centre one day each week on a college-term basis. Qualified in-house assessors carry out assessment for the veterinary nursing award in the workplace. Eleven learners receive additional support for numeracy and study skills, and two learners have been identified as having additional social needs.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	10
Number of learner interviews	27
Number of staff interviews	15
Number of employer interviews	9
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	12
Number of visits	12

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the leadership and management of LITE are outstanding, quality assurance is also outstanding and equality of opportunity is good. Training in land-based provision is outstanding.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		1
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality assurance		1

Land-based provision		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Animal care - Work-based learning for young people	51	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. **Retention and achievement rates are very good.** Of the 35 learners starting the level 2 NVQ veterinary nursing programme between 2002 and 2004, 34 have been retained or are still in training. The completion rate for those who started in 2002 is 80 per cent.

9. For foundation modern apprentices in animal care, of the 46 learners starting between 2002 and 2003, 39 have been retained or are still in training. All 21 foundation modern apprentices recruited in 2004-05 are still in training. The achievement rate for those starting in 2002 is good, at 62 per cent. This group of learners transferred from the former provider.

10. Learners are involved in a wide range of activities at work and acquire good practical skills. All learners still in training are progressing well towards achieving their training objectives.

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
Land-based provision	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Total	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	5

11. **On- and off-the-job training is very effective.** Veterinary practices offer the full range of veterinary nursing duties. A range of animal care businesses also offer a wide variety of opportunities for learners to develop their skills. The co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is good. The tutors are professional, up to date, and interact well with learners. An appropriate variety of teaching methods are used within lessons to maintain

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learners' interest. Teaching is closely linked to workplace practice and learners are able to understand the tasks they carry out at work.

12. Training resources for off-the-job training are very good. Staff are well qualified and experienced. The training centre has a good range of specialist equipment, appropriate textbooks and interactive learning materials. All work placements have very good resources that are readily available to support learners' training.

13. Assessment practice is thorough and carried out well, both on and off the job. Learners' performances are regularly assessed and they receive constructive feedback following assessments. Learners are encouraged to achieve very good standards. Internal verification is well planned, thorough and provides good support for assessors.

14. Learners' progress reviews are positive and motivate learners to achieve. Employers are closely involved in the progress reviews, helping to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training and ensuring that good progress is being made. Reviews identify learning and assessment opportunities. Clear, short-term targets are set for learners to achieve before the next review.

15. Learners receive excellent individual and personal support throughout their programmes. Initial assessments ensure that learners have the appropriate skills to complete their training successfully. The assessments include literacy and numeracy skills tests to diagnose any support needs. Learners identified as requiring literacy or numeracy support receive excellent individual support at the training centre and in the workplace.

Leadership and management

16. Management of training at LITE is very good. Most learners who enrol on programmes achieve their training objectives. The manager provides effective leadership which is clearly focused on the needs of the learner. An annual business development plan sets clear and concise objectives for the company. These relate directly to the needs of learners and employers. Programmes are planned according to learners' and employers' needs. On- and off-the-job training is co-ordinated effectively.

17. Communications at LITE are very good. Monthly staff meetings are attended by all staff. The main focus of these meetings is to discuss learners' performances and experiences and how to improve the services to learners and employers. All staff have access to e-mail, the internet, and the company intranet. This includes learner performance data, teaching and course management resources. Staff have ready access to the manager and daily contact with each other. Good communications are maintained with employers. Tutors make regular visits to employers' premises. Relationships with employers are good and promote effective training. An employer bulletin is circulated to all employers.

18. Teamworking is very effective. Staff share a commitment to the learners and employers. Individual staff take lead roles in key tasks, such as the analysis of learners' and employers' feedback questionnaires, developing electronic learning materials and

health and safety.

19. **Strong and supportive links have been established with employers.** This provides learners with good work placements where they can learn and gain their qualifications. It also provides them with employment opportunities. All employers are actively involved in delivering training and recording learners' progress in the workplace. Most are also involved in assessments and have their own work-based assessors. LITE is responsive to the needs of employers, and much of the training is designed for their individual needs.

20. Appropriate data is available and it is used to monitor learners' performances and provide a basis for actions. All staff have access to the data which reports on learners' individual progress and current retention and achievement rates for each programme. The data is used to match progress against targets and to contribute to management actions.

21. Annual staff appraisals are carried out by the manager. Although these are well documented, **no specific individual targets are set for each member of staff in their area of responsibility.**

22. **Various very effective actions are employed to promote the social inclusion of learners.** Currently, 38 per cent of learners at LITE have disabilities, learning difficulties or health problems. These learners are integrated effectively into learning programmes. They all receive very good support. Several learners have been provided with specialist resources or adaptations which have enabled them to participate successfully in learning.

23. Actions to promote the training to under-represented groups are satisfactory, mailshots and posters have been used and some work has been done in local schools. LITE has improved the recruitment of male learners, but has been less effective in increasing recruitment from minority ethnic groups.

24. Learners receive an effective introduction to equality of opportunity during induction, their understanding of **equality of opportunity matters is not developed during the course**, however. Questions about equality issues are raised at learners' progress reviews, but these are not used effectively to challenge or develop learners' understanding sufficiently.

25. **LITE has particularly effective quality assurance arrangements** which have enabled many learners to achieve their course aims. The quality assurance policy is comprehensive. It has a strong learner focus, which states clearly what LITE aims to achieve, together with a good range of mechanisms through which quality is assured.

26. LITE has an observation process for teaching and learning. All staff are observed by the manager in teaching sessions. The strengths and weaknesses of the sessions are recorded and a grade is awarded. Areas for development and improvement are discussed and any actions required are agreed.

27. **Learners' and employers' feedback is effective.** Surveys carried out have confirmed a

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very good level of satisfaction with the training that LITE provides. Learners' feedback surveys are carried out three times each year, at entry, during programmes and on exit. Employers' feedback is gathered each year. Each survey is analysed using data processing software, and a report and action plan are produced. As a result of such feedback, improvements in training have been made.

28. Key quality assurance processes for LITE have been identified throughout the year and are planned on a monthly basis. This ensures that key quality assurance processes are planned and carried out effectively.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very good management of training
- very good communications
- very good teamworking
- strong and supportive links with employers
- particularly effective quality assurance
- good arrangements for learners' and employers' feedback
- very effective action to promote social inclusion

Weaknesses

- insufficiently thorough target-setting within staff appraisals

Land-based provision

Animal care

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- very effective on- and off-the-job training
- very good training resources
- thorough assessments
- motivational progress reviews
- excellent individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' understanding of equal opportunities

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LITE (STOCKPORT) LIMITED:

- 'the teaching is interesting and enables me to take part'
- 'enthusiastic staff with wide experience in our industry'
- 'they always encourage you to do your best'
- 'the teacher at LITE is the best I have ever had'
- 'excellent environment which enables us to learn'
- 'they take pride in us and the progress we are making'
- 'up-to-date and good-quality training which is relevant to the job'
- 'allowed time to study and complete portfolios during working hours'
- 'tutors explain things well so I can understand'
- 'lessons are a good mixture of theory and practical'
- 'reviews set demanding targets to help me achieve'
- 'everyone is treated as an individual'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK LITE (STOCKPORT) LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- 'the frequency of lessons from two-weekly to weekly sessions to spread the homework load and help us to remember the theory'
- car parking
- nothing

KEY CHALLENGES FOR LITE (STOCKPORT) LIMITED:

- continue to improve learners' retention and achievement rates
- maintain and improve the quality of learners' experiences
- maintain thorough assessments and develop the monitoring and recording process
- continue to be a supportive and inclusive provider
- introduce effective strategies for developing learners' understanding of equality issues
- continue to build and develop the team
- consolidate and build on the effective employer links
- continue the current approach to continuous improvement
- develop target-setting at staff appraisals

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 1

Strengths

- very good management of training
- very good communications
- very good teamworking
- strong and supportive links with employers
- particularly effective quality assurance
- good arrangements for learners' and employers' feedback
- very effective action to promote social inclusion

Weaknesses

- insufficiently thorough target-setting within staff appraisals

29. The management of training at LITE is very good. Most learners who enrol on programmes achieve their qualifications. The manager provides effective leadership which is clearly focused on the needs of the learner. The management style is open and all staff are encouraged to participate in management decisions. An annual business development plan sets clear and concise objectives for the company. These relate directly to the needs of learners and employers, enabling learners to achieve their qualifications and gain employment and providing a good service to the animal care, veterinary nursing, equine and related industries.

30. Programmes are planned according to learners' and employers' need. On- and off-the-job training is co-ordinated effectively. Details of the programme are incorporated into learners' and employers' handbooks. These include details of the NVQ, technical certificate and key skills, with a weekly schedule of off-the-job training. Learners' progress towards their objectives is carefully monitored at monthly staff meetings. Each learner is discussed individually. Data provided for this meeting identifies units which have been completed in the previous period, together with targets which have been set at progress reviews. Actions are identified and agreed. The meeting also considers progress towards business plan objectives, starters and leavers, performance against the LSC profile, and monthly quality and NVQ activities.

31. Communications and teamworking at LITE are very good. Monthly meetings are attended by all staff. A standard agenda is used and minutes of meetings are recorded, with actions identified for individuals and deadlines set for completion. The main focus of these meetings is to discuss learners' performances and experiences and how to improve the services provided to learners and employers. Assessor and internal verifier standardisation meetings are held. These provide a forum for sharing good practice, in addition to ensuring consistency of assessment. All staff have access to e-mail, the

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internet and the company intranet. This includes learner performance data, teaching and course management resources for all the company's provision. Staff have open access to the manager and daily contact with each other. Communications are good and working relationships are productive between LITE and LITE Limited in St Helens. This benefits both organisations and includes joint staff training, inter-site working, shared resources and procedures.

32. Good communications are maintained with employers. All employers are provided with an employers' handbook which details all LITE contacts and support agencies. The handbook provides extensive guidance in relation to training, employment and health and safety issues. Tutors regularly visit employers' premises to provide support, assessment, observation and learners' progress reviews. Relationships with employers are good and promote effective training. Tutors follow up employers' concerns and queries promptly and appropriately. An employer bulletin is circulated to employers. This keeps employers informed of developments at LITE as well as industry, legal, employment, and health and safety issues. It also celebrates the success of its learners.

33. Teamworking is very effective. Staff have a shared commitment to learners and employers. A company induction is provided for all new staff, which includes shadowing, peer support and mentoring. Most staff are involved in training appropriate to their needs and are developing new skills which are shared with other staff.

34. Strong and supportive links are established with employers. These links provide learners with good work placements. All employers are actively involved in delivering training and recording progress in the workplace. Most are also involved in assessment and have their own work-based assessors. The quality of training and assessment in the workplace is very good and is frequently monitored by LITE's visiting tutors. Employers complete monthly progress reviews with the learners and actions are agreed and followed up. Information from these reviews is included in the learners' progress reviews, carried out by LITE's visiting tutors. Employers are positively involved in the review process.

35. LITE is responsive to the needs of employers. The training is designed for their needs. For example, a large veterinary hospital was having difficulty releasing learners for off-the-job training because of the large amount of travelling involved. Together with the employer, LITE has established a fully equipped training provision based in the practice. Learners receive their training and assessment, key skills and preparation for veterinary nursing examinations in the workplace. A LITE visiting tutor delivers off-the-job training each week and also carries out progress reviews. The training centre has a head nurse, who is a full-time trainer/assessor, and also qualified assessors. Level 2 and 3 NVQ learners are making good progress.

36. Appropriate programme data is available. It is used to monitor learners' performances and inform management actions. All staff have access to the data which reports on the progress made by individual learners and current retention and achievement rates, by programme. It details progress against targets and future management actions.

37. Staff development and training is satisfactory. Most staff are currently undergoing training in line with personal and company needs. All staff development is recorded in a continuing professional development file.

38. The accommodation at the LITE training centre provides a good learning environment. The laboratory is well equipped with veterinary nursing equipment. The training room is equipped with an electronic whiteboard. An appropriate number of computers are available, with internet access and suitable software.

39. Annual staff appraisals are carried out by the manager. Although these are well documented, no specific targets exist for retention and achievement on individual programmes. Reference is made to business plan targets, but these are company targets, rather than programmes for which the individual member of staff is responsible. Staff appraisals are effective in identifying personal and development needs. Most staff are undergoing training which includes teacher training, assessor and verifier awards and a range of short courses.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

40. A variety of very effective actions are employed to promote learner inclusion. Currently, 38 per cent of learners at LITE have disabilities, learning difficulties or health problems. These learners are integrated successfully into learning programmes. They all receive very good support. Several learners have been provided with specialist resources or adaptations which have enabled them to participate successfully in learning.

41. All learners receive effective initial assessments which determine additional support needs. Support requirements are detailed on the learners' individual learning plans and the support is provided. For example, one learner with visual impairment has been provided with a laptop computer equipped with specialist magnification software. This has enabled the learner to read course notes and to carry out assessment activities. Several learners at LITE have learning difficulties. They receive very frequent progress reviews and in some instances one-to-one tuition and support. One learner has attention deficit disorder and can be disruptive in class. The tutor agrees short-term goals and incentives with this learner and this approach has proved successful.

42. All learners requiring support are screened for dyslexia and dyspraxia. Currently, five learners at LITE have these conditions. The screening identifies who should be referred for psychological testing. Support is provided according to the recommendations of the psychologist's report. This can include one-to-one tutorials and each learner is provided with a laptop computer. Software includes a specialist veterinary dictionary and spell checker. LITE has secured additional assessment time for dyslexic learners who take RCVS veterinary nursing examinations.

43. LITE liaises frequently with the parents and employers of those learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and agrees joint actions. These learners are making good progress and several have acquired full-time employment.

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44. LITE has an effective strategy for supporting the literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners. All learners receive an initial diagnostic assessment of their needs. Those who require additional support are provided with appropriate facilities. Some learners are receiving more frequent learner progress reviews, some are receiving individual support, others additional tuition. At six-monthly intervals the learners receiving support are reviewed and re-tested, and support is adjusted appropriately. The support provided is also frequently monitored during learners' progress reviews.

45. Equal opportunities data is satisfactory. It is collected and thoroughly analysed, then presented in data tables and in graphic form. Recruitment data is collected for gender, age, ethnic background, disability, learning difficulties, geographical area and schools attended. The data is used in management actions and recruitment policies. The promotion of training to under-represented groups is satisfactory. Mailshots and posters have been circulated within minority ethnic groups and community centres. Some work has been done in local schools. LITE has improved the recruitment of men but has been less effective in recruiting more learners from minority ethnic groups.

46. Data about current learners is also collected and analysed. This includes those learners who leave the programme before completion. Data is available for qualifications achieved, full frameworks completed and the progress made by individual learners. LITE is able to measure these by gender, ethnic background, disability and learning difficulties. The company sets targets based on this information to improve the recruitment and performance of under-represented groups.

47. The equal opportunities policy includes a statement on disability and makes reference to all current legislation. There is a satisfactory bullying and anti-harassment policy. This is covered at learners' induction. Learners and employers have copies which are included in their respective handbooks. Learners are aware of what to do if they experience bullying. LITE has received three complaints to date and all have been dealt with appropriately.

48. Training for staff in equal opportunities is satisfactory. Most staff have received training within the past six months. This has covered all recent legislative changes relevant to training and equality and diversity matters. More training is planned for all staff.

49. LITE's training centre in Stockport is housed on two floors. The training room, information technology workroom and laboratory are situated on the ground floor. However, there are steps into the building and the toilets are located on the upper floor. This presents access problems for learners with mobility difficulties. At the moment, LITE has no learners with mobility difficulties.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 1

50. LITE has particularly effective quality assurance arrangements which have enabled many learners to achieve their training aims. A wide range of policies include quality

assurance, health and safety, marketing, bullying and harassment and the misuse of drugs and alcohol. The quality assurance policy is comprehensive. It has a strong learner focus, which states clearly what LITE aims to achieve, together with a good range of mechanisms through which quality is assured. The policy identifies LITE's major stakeholders as learners, employers and staff. Separate charters have been developed and agreed for each of the stakeholders. These identify standards and specify the level of service to be provided. Targets and measurable performance indicators have been developed from the standards and have been included in the annual business plan. These are learner and employer specific. They include achieving good success rates, delivering good-quality training, maintaining high levels of satisfaction, and securing employment for learners.

51. All staff are observed by the manager in learning sessions. The criteria for observation incorporate the key questions of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Areas for development and improvement are discussed and any actions required are agreed. The teaching observations form part of the staff appraisal process. Observations are also carried out on assessments in the workplace by work-based assessors and learners' progress reviews carried out by LITE's tutors.

52. LITE's good arrangements for attaining learners' and employers' feedback provides useful information. Surveys carried out have confirmed a very good level of satisfaction with the training that LITE provides. Learners' feedback surveys are carried out three times each year, at entry, during the programme and on leaving. Responses from the questionnaires provide quantitative and qualitative information. The information is analysed using data processing software and a report is produced. A commentary is written to interpret the findings and record the comments made by learners. This is considered and discussed at the monthly team meetings. From this, an action plan is produced to resolve any issues identified. Statistical analysis of the survey demonstrated that 95 per cent of learners rate teaching as very good, 89 per cent rate course materials as very good and 100 per cent consider staff's knowledge of their subject as very good.

53. Employers' feedback is carried out and analysed in a similar way. An action plan is also produced and a summary of the findings is included in the employers' bulletin. Statistical analysis from the employer survey concludes that 71 per cent of employers think that the training provided meets their business needs, and 77 per cent consider that the teaching and assessment methods meet their requirements. Eighty-eight per cent have said that they will accept another learner from LITE. Response rates were good for both surveys.

54. Key quality assurance processes for LITE have been identified throughout the year and these are planned on a monthly basis. For example, August includes a review of performance and target-setting, in November there is a review of the self-assessment report, and in February a review of schemes of work and lesson plans. The quality monitoring system and progress on the current key processes are discussed at each monthly meeting. This provides a means of ensuring that key quality processes are planned and carried out effectively.

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55. Internal verification is managed thoroughly. The company has an annual programme of assessment and internal verification activities. These are arranged into monthly activities which include registrations, examinations, external tests, internal verification, observations of assessments, and standardisation meetings. Some good practice has been recognised in external verifiers' reports.

56. The self-assessment report for LITE is satisfactory. All staff were actively involved and contributed to the development. The self-assessment report is produced annually and updated every six months. The format covers the key questions in the 'Common Inspection Framework'. The approach to self-assessment was suitably evaluative and self-critical where required. A strong emphasis was placed on continuous improvement. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths found by inspectors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Land-based provision		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Animal care - Work-based learning for young people	51	1

Animal care

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- very effective on- and off-the-job training
- very good training resources
- thorough assessments
- motivational progress reviews
- excellent individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of learners' understanding of equal opportunities

Achievement and standards

57. Retention and achievement rates are very good. Of those learners beginning the level 2 NVQ veterinary nursing programme between 2002-04, 34 of the 35 learners have been retained or are still in training. The completion rate for those who began in 2002 is 80 per cent.

58. Of the 46 foundation modern apprentices beginning in animal care between 2002-03, 39 have been retained or are still in training. Despite a decline from 90 per cent in 2002 to 80 per cent in 2003, the average retention rate over this period was 86 per cent. All 21 foundation modern apprentices recruited for 2004-05 are still in training. The completion rate for those beginning in 2002 is good, at 62 per cent. This group of learners transferred from the former provider. LITE helped four horticulture learners, who were also transferred, to achieve their NVQs, but they were unable to complete the full modern apprenticeship framework with the key skills subcontractor. Many foundation modern apprentices work towards additional vocational qualifications, such as animal nursing assistant and the achievement rate for this qualification is 100 per cent.

59. Learners are involved in a wide range of activities at work and acquire good practical skills. The quality of their written work and portfolios is very good. All learners demonstrate good understanding of the knowledge and practice of animal care and

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nursing, and their course work is very good. Most learners progress to further training and employment. All learners still in training are progressing well towards their course objectives.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	3				4											
Retained*	0				4	100											
Successfully completed	0				2	50											
Still in learning	3				0	0											

*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																	
Apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	21		25		21											
Retained*	0		11		16												
Successfully completed	0		10		13												
Still in learning	21		9		3												

*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																	
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	5		10		20											
Retained*	0		2		19												
Successfully completed	0		2		16												
Still in learning	5		8		2												

*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

60. On- and off-the-job training is very effective. Veterinary practices offer the full range of veterinary nursing duties. These include assisting veterinary surgeons with routine and complex surgery, dealing with clients and their pets, reception duties and the daily care of

sick animals. A range of animal care businesses also offer a wide variety of opportunities for learners to develop their skills. Learners' supervisors are mostly well qualified and experienced and make good use of workplace activities to develop learners' knowledge, skills and experience. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is good. Learners receive a schedule of lessons planned for the year, and where this is shared with their supervisor, co-ordination of training is particularly effective. In general, good use is made of the three hours each week formal on-the-job training time required by the RCVS.

61. Off-the-job training is very good. Detailed lesson plans link training sessions to the knowledge requirements of the NVQ. The tutors are professional, have up-to-date background knowledge and interact well with learners. An appropriate variety of teaching methods are used within lessons to maintain learners' interest. Tutors use an interactive whiteboard most effectively to make learning lively and interesting. Learners participate well when working in groups, in discussions and in practical applications. Verbal and written questions are used to good effect to challenge and check learners' understanding of the subject and good use is made of tutors' and learners' practical experience. Each lesson is reinforced by a pack of learning materials and handouts, also available on a compact disk. Employers help learners to use the knowledge gained during off-the-job training quickly. Teaching is closely linked to workplace practice and learners are able to understand the tasks they carry out at work. This allows them to put the knowledge gained into practice with confidence.

62. Training resources for off-the-job training are very good. The training centre has a good range of specialist veterinary equipment, appropriate textbooks and interactive learning materials in a dedicated teaching room and laboratory facility. The classroom has an interactive whiteboard and sufficient up-to-date computers are installed. LITE's manager and four tutors are well qualified and experienced in animal care and veterinary nursing. All staff are well respected by learners and their employers. All work placements have very good resources that are readily available to support learners' training.

63. Assessment practice is thorough. Assessments are carried out well, both on and off the job. Learners' performances are regularly assessed and they receive constructive feedback following assessment. To prepare learners for their qualifications, assessors monitor their progress closely and set very good standards and tight timescales. Homework to develop background knowledge is set frequently and marked promptly. In on- and off-the-job training, learners are encouraged to attain high standards, to enable them to achieve the required skill levels. LITE and all veterinary practices have an appropriate number of trained assessors for the number of learners in training. Internal verification is well planned, thorough and provides good support for assessors. Assessors meet regularly to assure standardisation in assessment practice.

64. Reviews of learners' progress are positive and motivate learners to achieve their goals. Employers are closely involved in reviewing learners' progress. In all workplaces, an identified supervisor arranges monthly progress reviews with learners to monitor their progress. The results of the reviews are shared with LITE and form the basis for formal learner progress reviews, which are carried out at least every six weeks. The review

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process is used effectively to monitor learners' progress in key skills, as well as their occupational training. Progress reviews identify learning and assessment opportunities. Clear, short-term targets are set for learners to achieve before the next review. Tutors and supervisors share the review findings, which helps to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training and ensure that good progress is being made. Learners find this process very valuable and most are well aware of the progress they are making to achieve their training goals.

65. Learners receive excellent personal support throughout their programmes. Their inductions to LITE and to the workplace are good and ensure that they fully understand their jobs and training programmes. Learners are given a useful handbook that explains the course, health and safety matters, equal opportunities and actions to take if they encounter problems. Initial assessment ensures that learners have the appropriate skills to complete their training successfully. It includes an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, to diagnose any support needs. Where appropriate, a dyslexia indicator test is given to learners. Two members of staff are qualified in teaching literacy and numeracy. Learners identified as requiring such support receive excellent individual tuition at the training centre and in the workplace. At intervals they are reassessed to evaluate their progress.

66. Some learners have been given laptop computers with very specific software to help them improve their skills. Learners feel well supported by their tutors and supervisors and have access to a counsellor if needed. Those learners interviewed feel that any concerns they have are listened to and acted on promptly.

Leadership and management

67. All aspects of training programmes are well managed. There is a good team spirit among all staff and they work together enthusiastically and effectively to improve learners' experience and success. Managers set clear standards and targets for a very good-quality provision. The implementation of management systems is good. The range of programmes meets the needs of learners and employers effectively. All aspects of the programme are well co-ordinated and the teaching programme is well planned. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Communications within the staff team and between staff and learners are very good. Liaison with employers is strong. The quality of training is monitored effectively. LITE regularly seeks the views of learners and employers about the quality of the provision. The results are analysed effectively to bring about improvements. Learners receive an effective introduction to equality of opportunity during induction, but their understanding of equality of opportunity is not developed sufficiently during the course. Questions about matters of equality are raised during learners' progress reviews, but these are not used effectively to challenge or develop learners' understanding.