

REINSPECTION REPORT

Hawk Management (UK) Limited Reinspection

15 September 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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.*

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hawk Management (UK) Limited (Hawk) is a private limited company established in 1988. It was based in Staffordshire before it moved to Twickenham in 1998. Hawk contracts with London South Learning and Skills Council to provide apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships for young people, mostly in business administration and customer services. Hawk also contracts with Jobcentre Plus to provide a basic employability programme (BET) for unemployed adults. The provision focuses on developing participants' skills in literacy, numeracy, information and communications technology (ICT), as well as employability skills. Most of Hawk's learners live in the London South region that encompasses Bromley, Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, and Sutton. Three directors and a small management team manage the company, which employs 18 staff. Two of the staff are involved with training for Jobcentre Plus participants and eight with the training, assessment and internal verification of the apprenticeship programme.

2. The reinspection reviewed standards in business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer services and transportation, and foundation programmes. At the time of the inspection there were 168 apprentices, 104 advanced apprentices and 26 Jobcentre Plus participants. Over a half of the work-based learners were following customer services programmes.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	43
Number of employers interviewed	5
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	18
Number of visits	3

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

3. The previous inspection in June 2004, judged the quality of provision to be satisfactory in business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer services and transportation, and foundation programmes. Hawk's leadership and management, quality assurance and equal opportunities arrangements were unsatisfactory. The reinspection confirmed that the standards in business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer services and transportation, and foundation programmes are being at least maintained. Leadership and management and quality assurance are now good and equal opportunities is satisfactory.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		
- Apprenticeships for young people	19	4
- New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	17	3
Management		
- Apprenticeships for young people	47	3

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Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Retailing - Apprenticeships for young people	26	3
Customer service - Apprenticeships for young people	210	3
Warehousing and distribution - Apprenticeships for young people	1	None

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Employability/employment training - New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	19	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

4. Since the previous inspection, **overall success rates have improved.** Achievement rates for the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes are now largely satisfactory or better, and they are improving. The proportion of learners who are retained is good.
5. **New learners make good progress** and some now achieve the full apprenticeship framework ahead of their target dates. Learners who have been on the programme for more than nine months are making satisfactory progress. Most foundation participants substantially increase in confidence as a result of their participation in training.
6. In business administration, management and professional, apprenticeship achievement rates have been above 50 per cent for the past two years, but achievement rates on the advanced apprenticeship were low in 2003-04, at less than 20 per cent. At the time of the inspection, all the apprentices and 94 per cent of the advanced apprentices who started in 2004-05 were still in learning or had successfully completed.
7. Achievement rates for retailing and customer services apprentices are satisfactory or better, and retention rates are good. For the past two years, achievement rates have been over 40 per cent, and of the learners who have left recently, 54 per cent were successful.
8. Outcomes for participants on BET programmes are broadly satisfactory. Over a half achieve a qualification in literacy, numeracy or the use of language. The proportion that complete all aspects of their training has improved over the past two years from 54 to 69 per cent. The proportion gaining employment rose to 31 per cent.
9. **Learners are well motivated and enjoy all aspects of the programme.** Apprentices are very clear about the benefits of gaining a qualification and skills in the workplace. The standards of portfolios are good. Some learners produce work of a quality and quantity well beyond that expected.

Quality of education and training

10. **There is much good teaching on the BET programme.** Sessions are well planned and taught by experienced staff. Teaching activities are organised to accommodate participants' different abilities. There is a good variety of small group and individual activities during each session, and participants participate well.
11. **Assessment practice is thorough.** Assessors plan well and give learners very good

feedback on their competency and areas for improvement. The time assessors spend with the learner is used effectively. Paperwork is kept up to date and learners' progress is clearly monitored. Learners and their employers have a very clear understanding of current progress and the work that remains outstanding.

12. Learning reviews are effective. They are well documented and focus on all aspects of the apprenticeship framework. Employers and learners value the reviews and use them effectively to maintain progress.

13. Learners with additional learning needs are supported satisfactorily. Assessors use a variety of resources including those available on the internet. For BET participants, the language and numeracy monitoring system is overly complex. Participants attending language training do not fully understand the planners and recorders or use them effectively. Key skills training is now well integrated with the vocational programme and portfolios are mainly developed through work-based activities.

14. Accommodation, facilities and resources for BET participants are satisfactory. There are some good paper-based learning materials, and in some sessions effective use is made of ICT facilities. However, in language and numeracy there is too much emphasis on the use of workbooks. Some supporting materials are available in a number of different languages.

15. Programmes meet employers' and learners' needs. Learners are on the correct level of programme. However, few work towards higher-level key skills. Employers have confidence in Hawk as a learning provider and report favourably on the support they receive. The BET programme is very well designed and meets participants' needs. Literacy, numeracy and language teaching is designed to meet the needs of participants from a very diverse range of cultures and backgrounds, often with little knowledge of this country.

Leadership and management

16. Leaders demonstrate a **strong commitment to quality improvement**. Hawk's staff understand the strategic and development plans and know what they must do if the company is to continue to improve.

17. **Communication is very good**. Leaders have responded positively to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Tutors and assessors are motivated and work effectively together as a team. Governance is good.

18. **Staff at all levels use management information purposefully** to raise overall performance. The previous inspection identified many weaknesses in the accuracy and use of management information. A new system has been introduced that is fit for purpose, simple to use and understood by staff. Hawk's ability to monitor, record and analyse information against set targets has improved significantly.

19. Much management of learning is good, but some aspects still need to be improved.

Managers at all levels are well organised. Achievements and retention rates on most courses have improved to a satisfactory level or better.

20. Additional support for literacy, numeracy and language has remained satisfactory. Awareness training in literacy, numeracy and language has started, but few assessors are yet appropriately trained.

21. Most staff are suitability qualified and experienced. New employees receive good mentoring support. Staff are appraised regularly. Learning resources are satisfactory. On-line materials are often used effectively in the workplace. BET participants taught in a classroom have some good resources, but these are not all fully utilised.

22. The company has **good links and working relationships with employers**. Since the previous inspection, Hawk's focus has moved from sales to supportive working. Employers are now much more involved in the learning process.

23. Employers value the professional approach and occupational expertise of assessors. Assessors understand the commercial and organisational pressures facing employers. Assessment activity is tailored to meet the needs of learners while minimising disruption to employers.

24. There is a satisfactory equal opportunities policy and clear guidance on health and safety, bullying and harassment, and discrimination. Staff have some equal opportunities training at least once a year. Learners have a good understanding of the company's complaints procedure and their rights and responsibilities.

25. The learners' agreement and handbook is used during induction to develop learners understanding of equality of opportunity, but there are no other specific training activities. Tutors on the BET programme adopt an inclusive approach.

26. Hawk has significantly improved its capacity to record and analyse information on learners' gender, ethnicity, age, disabilities, and any additional learning needs. Regular reports are produced, and they are considered at monthly management meetings. There is a wide range of measures to improve equality and diversity.

27. Hawk's arrangements for quality improvement are good. At the previous inspection, the quality assurance procedures were satisfactory but arrangements for implementing them were incomplete. The procedures are much improved. Learners' progress is monitored carefully. Procedures for the observation of training are still satisfactory. Learners' and employers' views are collected and acted on.

28. **The self-assessment process and report are good** and owned by all staff. It is mostly an accurate reflection of the key issues identified by inspectors during the reinspection. The post inspection action plan and development plan are well written, but not all of the issues highlighted at the previous inspection were fully addressed.

29. The internal verification system is much improved, and is now good. It is an

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effective and integral part of the new management information system. Internal verifiers are set clear targets in relation to assessment activities. Learners regularly receive, and value, highly individualised monitoring sheets. These are often shared with employers. Internal verifiers regularly observe assessors and the observation records are held centrally. Portfolio sampling is good.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong leadership
- purposeful use of management information to raise performance
- good arrangements to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- strong leadership
- purposeful use of management information to raise performance
- good arrangements to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

30. Hawk has strong leadership, and its managers demonstrate a strong commitment to quality improvement. Strategic and development plans are compiled and implemented effectively. Plans clearly set out the company's vision and mission and these are shared and understood by Hawk's staff. Priorities for the next three years are clearly articulated. Employees understand what they need to do if the company is to continue to improve. They support the recent actions taken by managers. Communication is very good. Regular, timetabled meetings involve everyone who works for the company. Managers have responded positively to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Effective action has been taken to deal with most of the issues identified, and strengths have been maintained or improved. Tutors and assessors are motivated and work effectively together as a team. Governance is good. The board of directors meets every three months. The minutes of directors' meetings indicate that close attention is paid to the performance and strategic direction of the business.

31. Staff at all levels use management information purposefully to raise overall performance. The previous inspection identified many weaknesses in the accuracy and use of management information. Over the past year, a new system has been introduced and although now effective, it is constantly being improved. It is fit for purpose, simple to use and understood by all company staff. Information is now accurate and is used well to deal with quality improvement issues. Learners' retention and achievement rates are monitored very closely. Besides producing headline reports, information is used well to focus on other aspects of learning management. This was identified as a key weakness at the previous inspection. For example, every week each learner's progress is recorded in detail on the management system, and assessors are now required to take immediate action if a learner is at risk of not completing their framework or is making slow progress. Information and analysis of learners' performance are shared regularly at staff meetings and are now a standard agenda item. Targets are set for performance and staff are clear about their responsibilities. Assessors, for example, have individual targets for the number of full framework apprenticeships they need to achieve every three months. The new system has been highly effective in improving the progress of new learners and the volume of apprenticeship framework elements completed. However,

some of the learners who have been on their programme longest are only just catching up.

32. Much management of learning is good, but some aspects still need to be improved. Managers at all levels are well organised and have improved their practices. Achievement and retention rates on most courses have improved to a satisfactory level and in some cases to better than satisfactory. Additional support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs has remained satisfactory. There is still no policy but there are clear strategies to deal with weakness highlighted in the development and post-inspection action plans. Awareness training has started in literacy, numeracy and language. The intention is that in the future all tutor assessors will become appropriately qualified and provide effective support in the workplace for learners with additional learning needs. Health and safety policies and procedures for learners are satisfactory.

33. Most staff are suitability qualified and experienced. Tutor assessors are given good personal resources and appropriate guidance to do their jobs. In response to an acute shortage of qualified assessors, senior managers have successfully introduced a policy of training graduates with vocational experience. Working as part of a team and with good mentoring support, they soon develop appropriate levels of skills and experience. Staff are appraised regularly. They are encouraged to improve constantly and they receive financial help to take relevant vocational qualifications. Good opportunities exist within the company for career progression.

34. Learning resources are satisfactory. They are available online both on Hawk's training website and on the company's intranet. This enables learning to be satisfactorily supported in the workplace. Staff can access the intranet from home and add as well as receive information. Learners and staff use these facilities well and the sites receive a relatively high volume of hits. Information on the website and intranet includes company procedures and other relevant information for staff and learners. The online specialist resources to support learners with additional learning needs are satisfactory. Foundation learners taught in classrooms at Hawk's training centre have some good resources, but do not always use them.

35. The company has good links and working relationships with employers. Since the previous inspection, the management team's emphasis has shifted from sales to supported working. Employers are now much more involved in the learning process and have a better understanding of the apprenticeship framework. The employer-liaison team plays an active role in the south London learning partnership work-based learning task force and is involved in a number of employers' forums. The company has a long history of occupational training and commercial links with well-known national employers.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

36. There is a detailed equal opportunities policy, which includes information relating to legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Human Rights Act (1998). The company updates the policy regularly, but it does not include explicit

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references to more recent legislation. Staff and learners can access a copy online. Accompanying the policy is a monitoring and evaluation procedure, but there are no formal timescales in which actions should be reviewed. There is clear guidance on health and safety, bullying and harassment, and discrimination. Learners have a good understanding of the company's complaints procedure. Publicity and promotional materials contain positive images, but they do not refer specifically to Hawk's commitment to equal opportunities. The learners' agreement and handbook contains an equality of opportunity and diversity statement. This is used during learners' workplace induction to develop their understanding of equality of opportunity. As part of this process, learners are encouraged to review their employer's own equal opportunities policy and are tested using a set of standard questions. The process is satisfactory, but there are no other specific training activities. At each progress review, learners are randomly asked questions on equality of opportunity from a set list to reinforce their understanding. The approach is satisfactory, but sometimes tutors do not always expand on learners' responses. The personal support learners receive from tutors is good. Tutors who teach on the BET programme adopt an inclusive approach. The senior managers set high standards and issues raised by staff and learners are dealt with sensitively. Employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures are formally checked before learners start their programme. Where an employer does not have a sufficiently robust policy, Hawk offers its own as an alternative. The monitoring of employers' policies and procedures is satisfactory.

37. At least once a year, all staff at Hawk receive training and updating on some aspect of equality of opportunity. For example, in April 2005 there was a half-day training event on the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). The induction programme for new staff includes some equal opportunities training. Assessors have had training in how to identify learners' additional learning needs, but they are not yet qualified to support those needs even though they all do so. Currently, 35 per cent of apprentices have identified additional needs. Hawk has significantly improved its capacity to record and analyse information on learners' gender, ethnicity, age, disabilities, and any additional learning needs. Regular reports are produced, and they are reviewed at monthly management meetings. These reports and decisions for action are shared with tutor assessors. The big improvement in the quality of information has already highlighted performance issues such as the lower achievement rates among 16-18 year olds, and the improving success rates for learners with additional needs and those from minority ethnic groups. To deal with these and other issues Hawk has committed itself to a set of equality and diversity actions. Hawk's training centre is on the second floor of a town centre building. There are no lifts, and access for people with restricted mobility is limited. Hawk plans to move to alternative, more suitable premises before the end of 2005. There are posters and information displayed in the training centre to promote the company's commitment to cultural diversity. There is a named person responsible for younger learners, as required by child protection legislation, but some assessors are still awaiting clearance by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 2**

38. The self-assessment process and report are good. The report is compiled and owned by all staff members. It has useful contextual information, identifies and concentrates on the relevant challenges, and covers all aspects of the company's provision. It is a generally accurate reflection of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors during the reinspection. However, a few of the shortcomings identified at the previous inspection have not all been fully dealt with. Some aspects of the provision that are claimed as strengths are no more than normal practice. Other judgements are more about business challenges than strengths or weaknesses of the provision itself.

39. The post-inspection action plan and recent development plan are good. They accurately outline the priorities and action needed to improve quality. Many aspects of the post-inspection action plan have been implemented well. Particularly good progress has been made in the use of data produced by the company's new management information system. This has markedly improved Hawk's ability to monitor, record and analyse information against set targets. Assessors, internal verifiers, administrative staff and managers have full ownership of the provision's quality. Each aim and objective defined in the plans identifies clear lines of responsibility. Staff are encouraged to propose and implement improvements. Progress is recorded systematically against the full range of company plans.

40. At the previous inspection, quality assurance procedures were satisfactory but were not always being implemented. The new procedures are much improved and staff implement them methodically. Each learner has a coherent programme of study and the assessors are well organised. Learners' progress is carefully monitored. For example, when a learner on an apprenticeship programme started to have attendance problems at work, it triggered an investigation. It was soon discovered the learner had difficulties with accommodation. The support was immediate and effective and as a result the learner stayed on the programme. Learners are clear about their rights and responsibilities. Procedures for the observation of training are still satisfactory. Twice-yearly telephone surveys are taken of learners' and employers' views. Findings such as the under-involvement of employers in reviews have been acted on. Employers are adequately monitored and assessed for risk to learners.

41. The improved internal verification system is good, and is an effective and integral part of the new management information system. Verifiers regularly hold standardisation meetings. Tutor assessor and internal verifiers are clear about how to use the information systems. They are individually held accountable for maintaining accurate notes and judgements on learners' progress. Assessments and the verification of assessments are planned well. All internal verifiers are set clear targets in relation to assessment activities. Staff are responsible for the progress monitoring systems. Learners regularly receive highly individualised monitoring sheets, which they value and often share with employers. Internal verifiers regularly observe assessors and observation records are held centrally. Portfolio sampling is good.