

REINSPECTION REPORT

North London Garage Group Training Association Reinspection

22 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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

North London Garage Group Training Association Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	3
Key findings	4

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	11
Equality of opportunity	12
Quality assurance	13
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	16
Foundation programmes	20

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The North London Garage Group Training Association (NLGGTA) was formed in 1970 by a group of local garage owners, in association with an industrial training board. In 1983, involvement with the training board ceased and since then the association has employed its own staff. The group's management committee meets at least once each year and consists of representatives from each member company. The management committee elects a board, which meets quarterly to monitor performance and future initiatives. The chairman of the association meets each week with the chief executive officer to supervise the operational management of the group. The association maintains contact with more than 300 employers in the motor vehicle trade across north London, of which 100 currently have learners on programmes

2. The association has 21 staff, of whom 18 work full time. NLGGTA moved to an industrial trading estate in Ponders End, Enfield in April 2004. The building contains a suite of management and administration offices, and five classrooms and workshops for training leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in lift truck operation and motor vehicle servicing. NLGGTA also subcontracts training to three further education colleges.

3. At the time of the inspection, NLGGTA provides work-based learning for 158 learners through its contracts with London North Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It also provides commercial basic training in lift truck operations. Of the 158 learners, there are 95 advanced apprentices, 38 apprentices and 25 learners who are on an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme in preparation for employment in motor vehicle trades.

4. The London North LSC area includes the boroughs of Enfield, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Barnet. Unemployment rates within the boroughs vary from 2.6 per cent in Barnet to 4.1 per cent in Waltham Forest, compared with a national figure of 2.3 per cent and 3.4 per cent for Greater London. The 2001 census identifies that the proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups varies from 22.9 per cent in Enfield to 35.5 per cent in Waltham Forest, compared with a London average of 28.8 per cent and a national average of 9.1 per cent. Within the London North LSC area, the proportion of young people aged 16 leaving school to enter either employment or government-funded training is 20 per cent, which is significantly below the national average of 29 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

5. NLGGTA provides training for 133 learners in motor vehicle engineering, of whom 95 are advanced apprentices and 38 are apprentices. Apprentices study for a variety of NVQs in vehicle maintenance and repair (light and heavy options) and body and paint operations. The company recruits learners through a variety of methods, including

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

referrals from employers or Connexions, its own promotional activities and liaison with two local subcontractor colleges. An increasing number of learners apply direct, through NLGGTA's website or by personal recommendation.

6. In addition to NLGGTA's own training centre, the company subcontracts with three colleges and uses the premises of one heavy goods maintenance company for the delivery of off-the-job training. All learners are employed. There is a wide variety of work placements throughout north and northeast London and Essex, which include many main dealers of prestigious vehicles, specialist light vehicle repairers, heavy goods maintenance companies, small garages and fast-fit tyre and exhaust centres. Learners attend off-the-job training one day a week, for 36 weeks each year at the subcontracted colleges or 40 weeks each year at NLGGTA's training centre or the heavy goods company. Off-the-job training includes induction and preparation for key skills and technical certificate assessments.

Foundation programmes

7. NLGGTA offers an E2E programme, which is vocationally focused and offers young people the opportunity to engage in training in motor vehicle maintenance and repair. Referrals are made by local Connexions personal advisers. Learners take part in an induction which includes an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs. On starting the programme, learners attend the centre for up to three days a week and take part in practical exercises and theory lessons. All learners take part in planned work experience. Learners are able to progress to apprenticeships and/or employment. The average length of stay on the programme is 38 weeks. There are currently 25 learners on the programme.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	18
Number of learners interviewed	34
Number of staff interviewed	14
Number of employers interviewed	16
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	19
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The previous inspection in July 2004 identified that NLGGTA's leadership and management, quality assurance and equality of opportunity were unsatisfactory. Work-based learning for young people in engineering, technology and manufacturing and the association's provision for foundation learners were unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision are satisfactory.

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Motor vehicle/cycle</i> - Apprenticeships for young people	173	4	

Foundation programmes			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Employability/employment training</i> - Entry to Employment	26	4	

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Motor vehicle/cycle</i> - Apprenticeships for young people	133	3	

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Employability/employment training - Entry to Employment	25	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

9. **Learners in motor vehicle engineering develop good practical and diagnostic skills** by training in well-equipped garage workshops working on heavy and light vehicle repairs, vehicle body repairs, and refinishing. Employers continue to be positive about the level and standard of the training their learners receive. Learners receive good technical support from employers and supervisors and are able to work with confidence on customers' vehicles using a wide range of modern diagnostic equipment.

10. **Retention and achievement rates have improved in motor vehicle engineering** since the previous inspection, but are still poor in absolute terms mainly because of the historically high drop-out rate. Data over the past six months shows that there is an improving trend in achievement and retention rates. Most learners in motor vehicle engineering are now making satisfactory progress with their qualifications.

11. **NLGGTA is now focusing more effectively on apprenticeship framework completion** including an emphasis on key skills and the technical certificate rather than just NVQs.

12. **Online testing of key skills is being used fully.** It has contributed to an improvement in the rate of key skills achievement for recently recruited learners, as well as to a corresponding reduction in the backlog of learners without key skills.

13. **Progression rates are improving on the E2E programme.** In 2003-04, the last year for which data is complete, of the 47 learners who started the programme, 22 have progressed to further education, training or employment. In the current year, of the 37 learners who started the programme, five have progressed to employment or further education and 25 are still in learning.

Quality of education and training

14. **The teaching and learning are good on the E2E programme.** Lessons are well planned and delivered by vocationally competent and experienced staff. There is good engagement of learners in all lessons. Good use is made in theory lessons of questioning to test learners' understanding. A range of modern DVDs on motor vehicle engineering is used well to help learners understand automotive processes and to create interesting

lessons. Learners demonstrate that they have learnt new vocational skills and are making good progress. Tutors effectively draw on learners' experience in the workplace and at home to reinforce key points in the lessons.

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in motor vehicle engineering. The provider is using a new CD training package effectively as a resource for whole-class work and as an independent study aid. Learners are involved in a wide variety of activities, are interested in the subject material and are attentive. Class discipline is good and the learners are all actively engaged. Learners demonstrate that they are learning effectively and are capable of working successfully on their own. Tutors make good use of prepared notes for the learners and employ a good selection of bright and interesting posters emphasising good health and safety practices to supplement teaching points. Learners receive good individual support and attention.

16. **NLGGTA makes very effective use of work experience on the E2E programme.** The provider has good working relationships with a wide range of garages throughout the area which include main dealers, specialist light vehicle repairers, heavy goods maintenance companies, small garages and fast-fit tyre and exhaust centres. Some learners have been able to change placements to suit changing circumstances. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that there are good standards of health and safety at the workplace for E2E learners.

17. **All learners in motor vehicle engineering receive good support** from their assessors and employers. NLGGTA provides particularly good support for those learners who have become disaffected and have lost interest in their training programmes through social pressures. Many learners have commented on the good technical and vocational support they receive from their workplace colleagues and supervisors.

18. **Pastoral support for E2E learners is particularly good.** The provider works well in conjunction with a Connexions personal adviser, who spends one day a week at the centre. Learners are referred to the adviser, who is able to offer additional support and access to specialist external agencies including those involved with housing issues, learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

19. **NLGGTA responds well in providing alternative progression routes for E2E learners** who are unable to continue in motor vehicle engineering.

20. **Key skills provision has improved considerably.** Learning material has been standardised and is being used consistently by all tutors delivering level 1 units in information and communications technology (ICT) and level 2 units in communications and application of number. The awarding body has approved a revised portfolio of assignments and the first portfolios have been assessed satisfactorily.

21. **Online testing of key skills has been introduced** and this has enabled the provider to reduce significantly the backlog of learners awaiting testing and has improved the overall achievement rate. Targets for achievement of key skills have been agreed and set for tutors.

22. The classrooms at the training centre do little to encourage learners to study and maintain their concentration. Classrooms which are located within the workshop area have no natural light, and have poor ventilation and extraneous background noise.

23. Programmes in motor vehicle engineering are well recognised within the local community, are extremely popular with learners and meet local employer needs. Employers continue to express their satisfaction with the level and standard of support they get from NLGGTA. Some employers have been working with NLGGTA for over 20 years.

24. The induction programme, which was judged ineffective at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. A new programme has been designed and introduced. The programme is delivered over six weeks to meet framework requirements. Learners have an improved understanding of their apprenticeship programme, the NVQ they are working towards and the key skills requirements of the framework.

25. Following improvements to the arrangements and additional staff training, progress reviews are now satisfactory. The progress reviews are planned and carried out regularly, but some are still ineffective in identifying specific short-term targets that are time based and measurable. Employers or supervisors are now more closely involved in the review process. However, learners' new targets and work carried out during the off-the-job training are not always discussed to encourage learners to progress, and to provide some co-ordination of the on- and off-the-job training.

26. Support for apprentices with literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. NLGGTA carries out an initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills and aptitude for engineering, at the recruitment stage. There are currently 19 learners receiving additional support. They attend for one day a month and are working on e-learning exercises or worksheets that provide basic numeracy and literacy training.

27. Literacy and numeracy support for E2E learners is satisfactory. All learners take part in an assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs, followed by a diagnostic assessment to identify specific areas of weakness. Learners attend literacy and numeracy lessons every week at the centre and learning materials are differentiated to cater for different levels of need. Learners who have literacy and numeracy needs attend a specialist provider for additional support.

28. The arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory and meet the awarding body's requirements. The company has improved its planning for the internal verification of assessors, the sampling of learners and assessment observations. However, the recording of sampling and the sample size are still to be worked on.

29. NLGGTA makes ineffective use of its systems for monitoring learners' progress on apprenticeship programmes. Monitoring of NVQ assessment progress takes place, but it is not always effectively communicated to workplace supervisors or employers to enable them to plan effective training and evidence-gathering opportunities.

30. **Individual learning plans are not being used effectively** to assist in the recording of learners' progress. In some of the individual learning plans there is no evidence of target dates for NVQ units, or evidence that the document has been updated as learners achieve qualifications such as key skills. The results from the initial assessments are recorded on the individual learning plan, but do not identify requirements for specialist support for literacy, numeracy and language and how this will be met.

31. **Target-setting for E2E learners is poor at progress reviews.** The lack of accurate key objectives makes the setting of relevant and realistic targets difficult. The review process is currently reactive to events and not proactive to learners' needs. The review process is not used effectively to adequately support and enable learners to reach their goals and potential. Additionally it is difficult to identify learners' achievement of personal and social goals given the absence of realistic targets and the poor recording methods used.

Leadership and management

32. **NLGGTA has responded with clearly focused purposeful actions to deal with the weaknesses and key actions identified in the inspection of July 2004.** Staff at all levels have a greater involvement in the operational decision-making and a much greater ownership of the actions identified. With teams meeting regularly, usually monthly, there is now more effective communication and sharing of information and knowledge.

33. Since the previous inspection, NLGGTA has restructured into nine functional and operational teams, each with a team leader. These teams focus on activities such as training officer operations, internal verification, assessment, quality assurance and equality and diversity. **The restructuring has been particularly effective** at engaging all staff in quality improvement activities and developing the company. There is a much greater shared understanding of colleagues' job roles and skills.

34. **Strategic and business planning is effective.** The group chairman meets with the chief executive once a week to discuss strategic and operational issues. Performance, in terms of recruitment, achievement and financial stability is closely monitored.

35. **NLGGTA has effective links with local schools,** through a local education and business partnership, Connexions, employers and the local LSC. These links are beneficial for the learners in providing access to learning opportunities, advice, guidance and support and employment opportunities. They are very successful in promoting the association's range of programmes and in offering an effective way for learners to re-engage in education and training.

36. **Since the previous inspection, NLGGTA has strengthened the provision to support the learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs.** An additional full-time member of staff has been recruited. Diagnostic testing is now more effective at identifying individual learner needs. Some 12 per cent of the apprentices are receiving support by attending tutorial sessions once a month during their day release at the training centre.

37. **There are now sufficient suitably qualified staff to deliver the programme.** Extra staff have been recruited to provide a more equitable sharing of workloads. Many staff have received appropriate training and updating of their vocational and tutoring skills. Teaching resources are appropriate to meet the needs of the learners and the programmes and some good use is being made of e-learning and audiovisual resources.

38. **Retention and achievement rates remain poor.** In the past, the focus for achievement was the completion of the NVQ element of the apprenticeship framework. NLGGTA is now concentrating on the completion of the complete framework and in particular the key skills and technical certificate elements of the programme.

39. There are some early indications of improvements in retention and achievement. A group of learners who left without completing their frameworks have been re-engaged to resume their studies to complete the key skills element of their programmes and complete their apprenticeship framework.

40. **There has been a significant improvement in the arrangements for the promotion of equal opportunities** since the previous inspection. A senior member of staff now has overall responsibility for the promotion of equality of opportunity. The provider has carried out a detailed review of its arrangements for ensuring good promotion of equality and diversity. Since the previous inspection all training and administration staff have attended training sessions on equality of opportunity and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

41. Equality of opportunity is covered during learner induction and each learner is given an abridged copy of the equal opportunities policy, which deals with the essential key points. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is reinforced throughout the programme and checked at progress reviews by training officers asking questions from a prepared bank. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal of opportunity.

42. The NLGGTA manual for employers has been revised and now includes copies of its equality policy and the policy for dealing with bullying and harassment. Employers are encouraged to provide their own equality policy. However, there is little monitoring or awareness-raising of equality of opportunity with employers, in the workplace.

43. **NLGGTA has improved its arrangements for monitoring equality of opportunity.** The company collects data on the ethnicity, gender and disability of learners, which it retains and monitors. NLGGTA recognises that women are under-represented in the motor vehicle engineering industry and has made concerted efforts to increase their participation. NLGGTA has worked closely with Connexions and local community and teacher groups to increase participation by under-represented groups by arranging open days and career briefings on opportunities in motor vehicle engineering.

44. The self-assessment process is realistic and includes the views of staff, learners and employers. The report structure has been improved and is structured around the Common Inspection Framework. The judgements are now more realistic and sufficiently critical with appropriate identification of weaknesses, which include those from the

previous inspection, along with those identified from staff participation and learner/employer feedback. The development plan is well structured and clearly identifies actions, responsibilities and timescales.

45. Since the previous inspection, NLGGTA has reorganised on a functional basis. Quality assurance is now the responsibility of a quality assurance manager who heads a team focusing on quality assurance.

46. **The quality assurance documents are comprehensive** and cover the key points of contact with the learners. There is regular auditing and updating of these key procedures with information now being located on the company's intranet. These are recent arrangements implemented after the inspection of July 2004. Significant progress has been made in establishing roles and responsibilities and considerable attention has been focused on the improved self-assessment processes and reviewing key practices in the training cycle. There has been insufficient time for these practices to have affected learner or provider performance.

47. The arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory and are in line with the awarding body requirements. The practices and planning of verification have improved since the inspection in July 2004. There is now a team leader with direct responsibility for internal verification, and regular meetings of verifiers and assessors. Documents have been improved and verification now takes place periodically throughout the training programme.

48. **NLGGTA has effective data collection systems** and a comprehensive set of information is collated for each of the learners. However, the analysis of this data is insufficiently robust to support managerial decision-making. The learners' performance is monitored and there is a focus on improving retention. However, many other key performance indicators are not evaluated.

49. **There is no comparative analysis of the performance of groups of learners** following different training arrangements. Similarly there is no comparative analysis of the performance of those who receive additional support and those who do not, or of the performance of learners who enter the programme with different qualifications and experience.

50. Quality improvement practices have been strengthened since the inspection in July 2004. **However, these practices are insufficiently thorough** to promote quality improvement. For example, procedures are in place to try and establish consistency and improvements in the progress reviews, but inspectors identified many reviews that had inadequate or inappropriate targets.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- purposeful action to deal with weakness and key challenges from previous inspection
- particularly effective reorganisation into functional teams

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

- realistic and inclusive self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis of data for decision-making
- insufficiently thorough quality improvement process

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Motor vehicle/cycle

Strengths

- good workplace training and assessment
- good support to re-engage disaffected learners

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- ineffective use of systems for monitoring learners' progress

Foundation programmes

Employability/employment training

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- very effective use of work experience
- particularly good support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning of learning
- poor target-setting at reviews

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- purposeful action to deal with weakness and key challenges from previous inspection
- particularly effective reorganisation into functional teams
- realistic and inclusive self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis of data for decision-making
- insufficiently thorough quality improvement process

51. NLGGTA has responded with clearly focused purposeful actions to deal with the weaknesses and key actions identified in the inspection of July 2004. It has restructured into functional teams to devolve key tasks and responsibilities to teams and team leaders. Staff at all levels have a greater involvement in the operational decision-making and a much greater ownership of the actions identified. With teams meeting regularly, usually monthly, there is now more effective communication and sharing of information and knowledge. All staff now have a greater understanding of the roles and skills of their colleagues. In the past 12 months there has been a significant investment in staff training and development to specifically deal with the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Nearly 160 days of staff training have been carried out, equivalent to an average of eight days for each employee. Topics covered include quality improvement, equality and diversity and the diagnosis and delivery of literacy, numeracy and language support.

52. Since the previous inspection, NLGGTA has restructured into nine functional and operational teams, each with a team leader. These teams focus on activities such as training officer operations, internal verification, assessment, quality assurance and equality and diversity. This restructuring has been particularly effective at engaging all staff in quality improvement activities and developing the company. There is a much greater shared understanding of colleagues' job roles and skills. These teams meet regularly, usually monthly, and since the previous inspection, the focus of these meetings has been to deal with the weaknesses and key challenges from the inspection report and the post-inspection action plan. Most members of staff are a member of at least two teams, and the sharing of information and group working has greatly improved.

53. Strategic and business planning is effective. The group chairman meets with the chief executive once a week to discuss strategic and operational issues. Performance, in terms of recruitment, achievement and financial stability is closely monitored. Although recruitment of apprentices remains stable there has been an increase in the numbers of school link pupils, and increased activity in classroom sessions to meet the key skills and

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

support needs of the learners. Expansion into additional premises is being considered. Accommodation in an adjacent building has become available for NLGGTA to expand into. NLGGTA has evaluated a carefully planned acquisition strategy along with a recovery plan, in case the association encounters any unforeseen operational or financial difficulties.

54. NLGGTA has effective links with local schools, through a local education and business partnership, Connexions, employers and the local LSC. These links are beneficial for the learners in providing access to learning opportunities, advice, guidance and support and employment opportunities. They are very successful in promoting the association's range of programmes and in offering an effective way for learners to re-engage in education and training.

55. Since the previous inspection, NLGGTA has strengthened the provision to support the learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. An additional full-time member of staff has been recruited. Diagnostic testing is now more effective at identifying individual needs. Twelve per cent of the apprentices are receiving support by attending tutorial sessions once a month during day-release at the training centre.

56. There are now sufficient suitably qualified staff to deliver the programme. Extra staff have been recruited to provide a more equitable sharing of workloads. Many staff have received appropriate training and updating of their vocational and tutoring skills. Teaching resources are appropriate to meet the needs of the learners and the programmes and some good use is being made of e-learning and audiovisual resources. However, although the premises are relatively new, the classrooms and the rest room are drab and only one has natural light. These do not provide a stimulating learning environment especially when learners may be enclosed for long periods.

57. Retention and achievement rates remain poor. In the past the focus for learner achievement was on the completion of the NVQ element of the apprenticeship framework. NLGGTA is now concentrating its attention on the completion of the complete framework and in particular the key skills and technical certificate. It is making effective use of a colour-coding system which targets learners who are near to the end of their planned duration and require greater intervention to ensure timely completion of their apprenticeship framework. There are some early indications of improvements in retention and achievement rates. A group of learners who left without completing their frameworks have been re-engaged to resume their studies to complete the key skills element of their programmes and complete their apprenticeship framework.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

58. There has been a significant improvement in the arrangements for the promotion of equality since the previous inspection. A senior member of staff now has overall responsibility for the promotion of equality of opportunity. The provider has carried out a detailed review of its arrangements for ensuring its good promotion. Since the previous inspection, all training and administration staff have attended training sessions

on equality of opportunity and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

59. The equal opportunities policy has been updated and contains a clear statement of the provider's commitment. The policy now has references to key current legislation and outlines the arrangements for promoting equality of opportunity within the organisation. The topic is covered during the learners' induction and each learner is given an abridged copy of the policy, which deals with the essential key points. Learners' understanding of equality is reinforced throughout the programme and checked at progress review by training officers asking questions from a prepared bank. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. They understand the procedure for grievances and know how to deal with situations that might arise in the working environment, such as incidents of bullying and harassment. NLGGTA responded positively and quickly when a learner complained about racist comments in the workplace. The learner was quickly found an alternative placement and continued to make good progress on the programme. The NLGGTA manual for employers has been revised and now includes copies of its equal opportunities policy and the policy for dealing with bullying and harassment. Employers are encouraged to provide their own policy. However, there is little monitoring or awareness raising with employers in the workplace.

60. NLGGTA has improved its arrangements for monitoring equality of opportunity. The company collects data on the ethnicity, gender and disability of learners, which it retains and monitors. NLGGTA recognises that women are under-represented in the motor vehicle engineering industry and has made concerted efforts to increase their participation. NLGGTA has worked closely with Connexions and local community and teacher groups to increase participation by under-represented groups, by arranging open days and career briefings on opportunities in motor vehicle engineering. As part of its drive to increase participation by a wider group of learners, NLGGTA is currently revising its promotional and recruiting material to include more representative images. Currently 29.1 per cent of learners are from a minority ethnic group. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups on the apprenticeship programmes is 27 per cent which reflects the local figure. However, the proportion on the E2E programmes is well above the local figure at 73 per cent.

61. At the previous inspection, NLGGTA had recently moved into new premises. The workshops and classrooms are all on the ground floor and have good accessibility. Staff accommodation and offices are all on the first floor. There is no lift or toilet facilities for people with disabilities. NLGGTA has completed an accommodation audit in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

62. The self-assessment process is realistic and includes the views of staff, learners and employers. The views of learners and employers are collected through a variety of surveys and a recently introduced suggestion box system at the training centre. The report structure has been improved and is structured around the Common Inspection Framework. The judgements are now more realistic and sufficiently critical with

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

appropriate identification of weaknesses, which include those from the previous inspection and those identified from staff participation and learner/employer feedback. The development plan is well structured and clearly identifies actions, responsibilities and timescales.

63. Since the previous inspection, NLGGTA has reorganised on a functional basis and quality assurance is now the responsibility of a quality assurance manager, who heads a team focusing on quality assurance. Members of this team are also members of other functional teams and are in a good position to gather information and to disseminate quality improvement practices. The quality documents are comprehensive and cover the key points of contact with the learners. There is regular auditing and updating of these key procedures and information is now kept on the company's intranet. These are recent arrangements which were implemented after the previous inspection. Significant progress has been made in establishing roles and responsibilities and considerable attention has been focused on the improved self-assessment processes and reviewing key practices in the training cycle. However, there has been insufficient time for these practices to significantly affect the quality improvement of learners' or providers' performance. There are some early indications of improving retention and more effective support for the literacy, numeracy and language needs of the learners.

64. The arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory and are in line with the awarding body requirements. The practices and planning of verification have improved since the previous inspection. There is now a team leader who has direct responsibility for internal verification and regular meetings of verifiers and assessors. Documents have been improved and verification now takes place periodically throughout the training programme.

65. NLGGTA has effective data collection systems and a comprehensive set of information is collated for each of the learners. However, the analysis of this data is insufficiently robust to support managerial decision-making. Learners' performance is monitored and there is a focus on improving learner retention. However, many other key performance indicators are not evaluated. For example, more than 80 learners attend the training centre for all aspects of their training and the remainder attend local further education colleges for some or all of their training, but there is no comparative analysis of the performance of these two groups. Similarly, there is no comparative analysis of the performance of those who receive additional support and those who do not, or of the performance of learners who enter the programme with different qualifications and experience.

66. Quality improvement practices have been strengthened since the previous inspection, but these practices are insufficiently thorough to promote quality improvement. For example, procedures are in place to try and establish consistency and improvements in the learner progress reviews, but during the reinspection, inspectors identified many reviews that had inadequate or inappropriate targets. It was not possible to determine whether the reviews had been monitored as part of a quality review. Service level agreements are in place with the further education colleges and NLGGTA training officers visit these colleges on a weekly basis. However, improvements have not

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

been made in the quality of the college provision. NLGGTA has made alternative arrangements for some of the learners affected.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle/cycle - Apprenticeships for young people	133	3

Motor vehicle/cycle

Strengths

- good workplace training and assessment
- good support to re-engage disaffected learners

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- ineffective use of systems for monitoring learners' progress

Achievement and standards

67. Good workplace training and assessment opportunities are helping learners develop good practical and diagnostic skills. This strength was identified in the previous inspection and has been maintained. Learners work in a good range of work placements from sole traders to main dealers that cover qualifications from level 1 to level 3 in all aspects of motor vehicle engineering. NLGGTA learners train in well-equipped garage workshops, working on heavy and light vehicle repairs, vehicle body repairs, and refinishing. Many learners develop high levels of competence and confidence and take increasing responsibility to work on customers' vehicles using a wide range of the latest diagnostic equipment. Employers are positive about the level and standard of the training and provide a thorough induction into the workplace. Learners are assigned to a supervisor who will support them through their training. The supervisors are well qualified and experienced and are keen to pass on their knowledge. Most learners are now making satisfactory progress with their qualification.

68. Retention and framework achievement have improved since the previous inspection, but are still poor in absolute terms mainly because of the historically high drop-out rate. There are indications that there is now an improving trend in achievement and retention. The provider has recognised that learners who stay for the duration of the programme are usually successful in gaining their qualifications. Strategies have been put into place to improve retention and to encourage learners who left the programme early without qualifications to resume their learning and complete their programmes. However, at the time of the reinspection it was too early to see any significant improvements. NLGGTA is now focusing more effectively on framework achievement including an emphasis on

key skills and the technical certificate rather than just NVQs. There has been a significant improvement in the rate of key skills achievement, with over 72 units being achieved in recent months.

Quality of education and training

69. All learners receive good support from their assessors and employers. NLGGTA provides particularly good support for those learners who have become disaffected and have lost interest in their training programmes through social pressures. One learner who had experienced severe social and family problems that were putting him at risk of being dismissed from his employment, was given strong support and encouragement to continue his training by his assessor and employer, who could see the learner's ongoing potential. The learner is now continuing his training and is proving to be a very useful member of the employer's staff. Another learner who was on an E2E programme was not enjoying his work placement and was considering dropping out of the programme. His assessor found another placement for him with a specialist sports car franchise within two days of him identifying his dissatisfaction with his current placement. The new proprietor was very satisfied with the learner's attitude and ability and has subsequently employed him. The assessor and the new employer are now encouraging the learner to obtain further qualifications through the apprenticeship programme. Many learners have commented on the good technical and vocational support that they receive from their workplace colleagues and supervisors.

70. Key skills provision has been improved considerably. Learning material has been standardised and is being used consistently by all tutors delivering level 1 units in ICT and level 2 units in communications and application of number. The awarding body has approved a revised portfolio of assignments and the first portfolios have been assessed satisfactorily. Online testing has been introduced and this has enabled the provider to reduce significantly the backlog of learners awaiting testing, and has improved the overall achievement rate. Targets for achievement of key skills have been agreed and set for tutors.

71. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in motor vehicle engineering. The provider is using a new CD training package effectively as a resource for whole-class work and as an independent study aid. Learners are involved in a wide variety of activities, are interested in the subject material and are attentive. Class discipline is good and the learners are all actively engaged. Learners demonstrate that they are learning effectively and are capable of working successfully on their own. Tutors make good use of prepared notes, and a good selection of bright and interesting posters emphasising good health and safety practices are used to supplement teaching points. Learners receive good individual support and attention. However, the classroom environment does not encourage learners to study and maintain their concentration. Classrooms which are located within the workshop area have no natural light, and have poor ventilation and extraneous background noise.

72. Programmes are well recognised within the local community, are extremely popular

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

with learners and meet local employer needs. Employers continue to express their satisfaction with the level and standard of support they get from NLGGTA. Some employers have been working with NLGGTA for over 20 years. One employer wanted to start a learner from E2E four months earlier than anticipated. To ensure the learner completed early, the training officer visited weekly for two months to observe assessments for the level 1 NVQ.

73. The induction programme which was ineffective at the previous inspection is now satisfactory. A new programme has been designed and introduced. The programme is delivered over six weeks to meet framework requirements. Learners have an improved understanding of the apprenticeship programme they are on, the NVQ they are working towards and the key skills requirements of the framework.

74. At the previous inspection, learners' progress reviews were unsatisfactory. Following improvements to the arrangements and additional staff training, progress reviews are now satisfactory. The progress reviews are planned and carried out regularly, but some still do not identify specific short-term targets that are time based and measurable. Employers or supervisors are now more closely involved in the review process. However, new targets and work carried out during the off-the-job training are not always discussed to encourage learners to progress, and to provide some co-ordination of the on- and off-the-job training.

75. The previous inspection identified inadequacies in the arrangements for providing additional support for learners. Support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs is now satisfactory. NLGGTA carries out an initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills and aptitude for engineering at the recruitment stage. There are currently 19 learners receiving additional support. They attend one day a month and work on e-learning exercises or worksheets that provide basic literacy and numeracy training.

76. The arrangements for internal verification which were inconsistent and insufficiently thorough at the previous inspection, are now satisfactory and meet the awarding body's requirements. The company has improved its planning for the internal verification of assessors, the sampling of learners and assessment observations. However, the recording of sampling that has taken place and the sample size are still to be worked on.

77. NLGGTA makes ineffective use of its systems for monitoring learners' progress. Monitoring of NVQ assessment progress takes place, but is not always effectively communicated to workplace supervisors or employers to enable them to plan effective training and evidence-gathering opportunities. This information is recorded in portfolios but it is not always readily available. During progress reviews, when portfolios are unavailable, accurate target-setting for assessments cannot be achieved. Individual learning plans are not being used effectively to record the learners' progress. In some of the individual learning plans there is no evidence of target dates for completion of the NVQ units or evidence that the document has been updated as learners achieve qualifications such as key skills. The results from the initial assessments are recorded on the individual learning plan but do not identify requirements for specialist support for

literacy, numeracy and language and how this will be met.

Leadership and management

78. NLGGTA's management of its motor vehicle engineering programmes has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. The association has introduced a range of measures to overcome many of the weaknesses identified earlier. These revised procedures are beginning to have a beneficial effect, although the association recognises that it still needs to continue developing its processes. The good communication and links between NLGGTA and its member companies continue to provide good opportunities for learners in the workplace to develop practical, vocational skills and to gain employment.

79. Self-assessment of the motor vehicle programmes has improved since the previous inspection with a more realistic recognition of the areas of strength and weakness in the provision. Following the restructuring of the organisation, staff have a clearer understanding of the whole business and the internal communication has improved.

80. Quality assurance monitoring of processes and procedures in motor vehicle engineering is satisfactory. However, there is still some insufficient completion and use of learners' documents.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability/employment training</i> - Entry to Employment	25	3

Employability/employment training*Strengths*

- good teaching and learning
- very effective use of work experience
- particularly good support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning of learning
- poor target-setting at reviews

Achievement and standards

81. Progression rates are improving on the E2E programme. In 2003-04, the last year for which data is complete, of the 47 learners who started the programme, 22 progressed to further education, training or employment. In the current year, of the 37 learners who started the programme, five have progressed to employment or further education, and 25 are still in learning.

Quality of education and training

82. The teaching and learning are good on the E2E programme. Lessons are well planned and delivered by vocationally competent and experienced staff. There is good engagement of learners in all lessons. Good use was made in theory lessons of questioning to test learners' understanding. A range of modern DVDs on motor vehicle engineering is used well to help learners understand automotive processes. Tutors combine this with explanations and other activities to create interesting lessons. In the practical lessons, tutors have designed a range of exercises that involve learners in using a range of hand tools for measuring and marking out, filing and sawing. Tutors emphasise the importance of producing good work and maintaining good standards of safety throughout the lesson. Tutors effectively draw on learners' experience in the workplace and at home, to reinforce key points in the lessons. Learners demonstrate that they have learnt new vocational skills and are making good progress. There is a good rapport between learners and tutors and good evidence of learning taking place. Suitable resources are made available for all lessons.

83. NLGGTA makes very effective use of work experience. At the time of inspection, 14 learners were taking part in planned work experience. The provider has good working relationships with a wide range of garages throughout north and northeast London and Essex, which include main dealers, specialist light vehicle repairers, heavy goods maintenance companies, small garages and fast-fit tyre and exhaust centres. Learners attend their work-experience placements for up to four days a week. The provider arranges placements to suit learners' career interests and ensures they are within easy travelling distance of their homes. Staff make regular contact with employers by visits and telephone to check attendance and progress. Some learners have been able to change placements to suit changing circumstances. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that there are good standards of health and safety in the workplace for E2E learners.

84. Pastoral support for learners is particularly good. Many young people arrive with significant barriers to learning. Many have had poor school experiences and come from areas of deprivation. Some have become disaffected and disengaged with any form of education and training. The provider works well in conjunction with a Connexions personal adviser, who spends one day a week at the centre. Learners are referred to the adviser who offers additional support and access to specialist external agencies including those involved with housing, learning difficulties and behavioural problems. NLGGTA provides alternative progression routes for learners who are unable to continue in motor vehicle engineering. One learner developed dermatitis while on the programme and the provider was able to secure a place with another provider. The learner is currently working towards a business administration NVQ at a local college. The association was also able to transfer another learner to an E2E programme which focuses on participation in sport. Learners have good support from employers throughout their work experience.

85. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. All learners take part in an assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs, followed by a diagnostic assessment to identify specific areas of weakness. Learners attend literacy and numeracy lessons every week at the centre and learning materials are differentiated to cater for different levels of need. Records are kept of learners' progress. Learners who have greater literacy and numeracy needs attend a specialist provider for additional support.

86. The planning of learning is inadequate. Inadequate use is made of the first six-week period of the programme. This assessment period does not accurately identify learners' barriers to progress and form the basis of an individual programme of training. Key objectives currently identified in learning plans are standard for all learners and are based on the achievement of vocational qualifications and on the improvement in their literacy and numeracy skills. There is insufficient emphasis of personal and social development within the learning plan and a lack of clear objectives relating to this area of the programme. Learning plans are not used as the basis of the review process and are not modified to take account of changes in learners' circumstances.

87. Target-setting at progress reviews is poor. The lack of accurate key objectives makes the setting of relevant and realistic targets difficult. The review process is currently

NORTH LONDON GARAGE GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

reactive to events and not proactive to learners' needs. In one review the target was to ask for help if needed and in another the target was to complete all work set in class. The review process is not used effectively to adequately support and enable learners to reach their goals and potential. Additionally, it is difficult to identify learners' achievement of personal and social goals given the absence of realistic targets and the poor recording methods used.

Leadership and management

88. NLGGTA has well-established and effective links with a range of external agencies and other training providers. These links include a local authority adult learning service which provides support and guidance in preparing curriculum vitae, a London construction training organisation that provides taster experience for learners in construction and an agency that provides programmes for those with learning needs and personal and social development needs.

89. The provider has made some progress in dealing with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. There is now satisfactory specialist support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs. Some progress has been made in supporting learners to develop their personal and social skills. However, there has been little progress with improving the quality of learning plans and review processes. There is insufficient personal and social skills training within the programme. Currently, the programme is focused on training young people for employment within the motor vehicle maintenance and repair industry. However, it is not recognised that for many learners on the programme this may not be their eventual progression route.

90. There are insufficient performance indicators that would identify good practice and areas for improvement. While a wide range of data is available, there is insufficient analysis to allow management decisions to be made. Details of attendance, sustainability of progression options and information relating to retention, for example, are not routinely analysed.