

INSPECTION REPORT

NLT Training Services Ltd

15 July 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged 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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

NLT Training Services Ltd

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. NLT Training Services Ltd (NLT) is a private training organisation and a registered charity. It provides work-based learning in engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, and retailing, customer service and transportation. The learners are following apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships, national vocational qualification (NVQ) training, and Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) involving training mainly towards NVQs. Most learners are employed and work for engineering companies. The training is funded through the local Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) for Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Humberside, and Lincoln and Rutland. NLT has successfully tendered for a Jobcentre Plus contract to deliver skills for life to adults. In addition to government-funded training, NLT also provides a significant amount of training to commercial clients. At the time of inspection, there were 177 learners in engineering, 57 in business administration and 49 in retailing.

2. NLT has a chief executive and six full-time managers responsible for managing the company. Its 100 member companies elect a board of directors. The company operates at three sites in Chesterfield, Clay Cross and Scunthorpe. The premises in Chesterfield includes an engineering workshop, offices and facilities for conferences. The premises at Clay Cross consists of a small number of training rooms, while at Scunthorpe there are training and conference rooms. There are 45 staff based at Chesterfield, 14 at Clay Cross and a further 15 staff at Scunthorpe. NLT provides some of the training at its training centres and subcontracts the rest to local colleges of further education. NLT produced its most recent self-assessment report in May 2005.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** NLT's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Quality improvement is satisfactory. In engineering, technology and manufacturing the provision is good, while in business administration, management and professional, and retailing, customer service and transportation, the provision is satisfactory.

4. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process at NLT is detailed and thorough, and involves contributions from staff, learners and employers. The self-assessment report produced for the inspection represented a generally accurate description of the quality of provision found by inspectors. The report highlighted good practice at NLT, but was also adequately critical and judgmental about the quality of the provision.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** NLT has improved the quality of all training provision since the previous inspection. This is particularly evident in engineering, technology and manufacturing. Leadership and management at NLT are now placing much greater emphasis upon improving the retention and achievement data, and the quality of training provision received by learners is

improving. Quality improvement policies and procedures are understood and are being implemented by staff, and all aspects of the training cycle are being subjected to better monitoring and review arrangements.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NLT TRAINING SERVICES LTD:

- continue to improve retention and achievement rates
- maintain the significant improvements that have taken place in engineering
- fully implement improvement strategies and actions in business administration and customer service
- more closely and effectively manage and monitor subcontractors

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Mechanical engineering</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	172	2	
Employer training pilot	5	2	

Business administration, management & professional			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Business administration</i>		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	57	3	

Retailing, customer service & transportation			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Customer service</i>		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	14	3	
Employer training pilot	35	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. All areas of learning offered by NLT were reported on and graded. There were no Jobcentre Plus participants undertaking training at the time of the inspection so this provision was not reported on. Inspectors visited NLT for four days from 12-15 July 2005.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	19
Number of learners interviewed	50
Number of staff interviewed	23
Number of employers interviewed	23
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	23
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

7. **Learners in engineering develop good skills.** Learners experience the full range of training opportunities available. They develop a wide range of skills for the achievement of their intended goal and significantly improve their competence in the workplace. Achievement of qualifications in engineering is satisfactory.

8. **Accounting learners make good progress through the different qualification levels.** Learners frequently progress from apprenticeships through to advanced level and onto NVQs at level 4.

9. **There are good achievement rates in ETPs in retailing and customer service.** For the year 2003-04, 70 per cent of learners who started on the programme achieved their NVQ at level 2.

10. **In business administration and retailing and customer service, many learners make slow progress.** This particularly applies to 2002-03 in retailing and 2003-04 in business administration, where few learners achieved that qualification by their expected completion date. Progress made by current learners has improved considerably.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	2	2	0	4
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	3	2	0	5
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	2	0	3
Total	0	6	6	0	12

11. There is particularly effective monitoring of learners' progress in engineering.

Detailed and up-to-date individual records are kept of the progress made by each learner.

12. Progress reviews and target-setting in engineering are good. Short-term goals are agreed that clearly help learners to understand their progress, and the activities and tasks they need to complete in achieving their targets. Learners, training officers and employers are fully informed and are aware of the progress learners are making in achieving their occupational framework.

13. Training programmes in engineering are well planned to meet the needs of learners and employers. Employers are fully informed of learners' progress and value the information and feedback they receive from NLT. They are also given the opportunity to give their own feedback and comments to NLT via the review process and programme evaluations.

14. Learners in business administration are well supported. This is provided by both NLT's staff and employers with personal issues and in helping overcome problems with work or the qualification.

15. The arrangements for additional literacy, numeracy and language support are satisfactory. All learners receive an initial assessment and, where a need is identified, appropriate support is provided by qualified and experienced staff.

16. There is no key skills training and assessment at the start of the programme for some learners. Many of these learners have not begun key skills training and assessments until their final year. This problem has been identified by NLT. New learners are now made aware of the key skills at induction and are achieving key skills qualifications within their first year on programme.

17. Learners on the level 2 accounts programme are insufficiently supported in the subcontracted college. Learners often receive insufficient help with their work and there are delays in the assessment of their work.

Leadership and management

18. There is good organisational management at NLT. Training programmes are generally well managed, planned and structured, and communications and management of staff is good.

19. NLT has good links with a range of external partners and agencies. Good working relationships exist with schools, industry and regional partners to widen the training opportunities to learners.

20. There is a well-developed management information system to monitor programme performance. The accessible system produces a range of relevant data and information to monitor and review learners' progress, staff support and overall programme performance.

21. NLT is good at promoting equality of opportunity and developing the awareness of learners, staff and employers of relevant issues. Initial development of understanding is re-inforced well throughout the training programme.

22. **There are good strategies and actions to improve the quality of provision.** Greater emphasis is now placed on learners achieving their qualifications and programme monitoring and recording procedures are now more effective.

23. The self-assessment process is detailed and thorough. The report produced for the inspection identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

24. Assessment and internal verification practice is satisfactory. Procedures are in place to ensure that assessments are carried out effectively through an established observation programme and the sampling of learners' portfolios of evidence.

25. **There has been slow implementation of improvement strategies in business administration and retailing.** Only recently have the improved procedures seen in engineering been applied to these two areas of learning.

26. **Some subcontracted colleges are insufficiently managed.** The monitoring of some colleges and the information received regarding learners' progress is sometimes not sufficient for NLT to ensure that learners are well supported in these locations.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good organisational management
- good links with a range of external partners and agencies
- well-developed management information system to monitor programme performance
- good promotion and development of awareness of equality of opportunity
- good strategies and actions to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient management of some subcontractors
- slow implementation of improvement strategies in some occupational areas

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Mechanical engineering

Grade 2

Strengths

- good skills development
- particularly effective monitoring of NVQ progress
- effective progress reviews and target-setting
- good planning to meet learners' and employers' needs

Weaknesses

- no key skills training and assessment at the start of the programme
- insufficient monitoring of subcontracted colleges

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Grade 3

Strengths

- good progression for accounts learners
- good links between NLT and employers
- particularly good learner support

Weaknesses

- slow progress for learners
- insufficient learning support for accounts learners in the subcontracted college

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Customer service

Grade 3

Strengths

- good achievement rates in ETPs

Weaknesses

- slow progress by many learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NLT TRAINING SERVICES LTD:

- the good off-the-job training
- the support provided by the training officers
- the additional support available - 'good help with information technology after work'
- support provided by staff
- the flexible working arrangements - 'the programme fits around work'
- the good facilities at the NLT centre

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NLT TRAINING SERVICES LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the learning support at college
- the length of the rest breaks at NLT
- the explanation about the NVQ
- the number of changes of assessors in retailing, customer services and business administration
- the repeating of work in different units

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good organisational management
- good links with a range of external partners and agencies
- well-developed management information system to monitor programme performance
- good promotion and development of awareness of equality of opportunity
- good strategies and actions to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient management of some subcontractors
- slow implementation of improvement strategies in some occupational areas

27. There is good organisational management at NLT. Training is generally well planned, structured, recorded and helps learners progress. When planning training, good attention is paid to meeting the specific needs of individual learners. Health and safety issues are given very serious consideration to protect the health and wellbeing of learners and staff. As stated in the self-assessment report, internal communications are very effective. There is frequent and constructive informal communication within the company at all levels to support formal management and staff meetings. All formal meetings are minuted and action points recorded. Staff are kept up to date with work issues and developments, and are encouraged to contribute to improvements, initiatives and to share good practice. The company business plan includes objectives and targets that are clearly communicated to staff. There is a well-recorded and applied staff induction, review and appraisal system and staff development plan. All new staff receive a detailed and thorough induction to the company, covering general procedures and information in addition to the requirements of the specific job role. Formal staff reviews take place on an annual basis and these are effective in analysing staff performance and in identifying individual training and development needs. Informal reviews of staff help identify issues of concern at an early stage. Staff are now responsible for personal action and development plans to monitor their progress and agree with managers realistic and achievable targets to improve personal effectiveness. NLT has a good commitment towards the development of staff and personal improvement. Staff are supported through appropriate in-company training or in providing financial assistance or time for employees to attend external courses.

28. As identified in the self-assessment report, NLT has good, well-developed links with a range of external partners and agencies. Frequent communication and contact with employers takes place. There are good working links with local schools to develop vocational initiatives that allow pupils to access training at the NLT centre and progress into further training at the company. NLT works closely with the Connexions partnership to inform and recruit learners. In addition, there are good links and working relationships with a wide range of regional partners to promote occupational developments and training initiatives.

29. The management information system is well developed to monitor programme performance. This is used to manage all aspects of the training provision and staff performance. Good detailed reports are produced on demand to analyse a wide range of information related to recruitment, learners' progress and achievement, employer details, and equal opportunities. The system is updated on a regular basis and is evaluated and further developed as part of an ongoing process.

30. NLT manages its resources efficiently. Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified and staffing levels are appropriate for the number of learners. Learning accommodation and resources used to support training at the NLT centres are satisfactory.

31. There is a satisfactory approach to the identification and support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. All learners have their literacy, numeracy and language skills assessed and where identified, appropriate support is provided by qualified and experienced staff to enable learners to cope with the training programme and job role.

32. There is insufficient management of some subcontracted colleges. In the case of business administration, there is insufficient support provided by North Lindsey College to individual learners. Information from several colleges regarding learners' progress for technical certificates in engineering is insufficiently managed. There are clear contractual arrangements for this information to be supplied to the provider. However, little of this information is received. Training officers are unaware of accurate information on the progress of learners attending college.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

33. There is good promotion and effective development of awareness of equality of opportunity, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Staff have undertaken training on a range of equal opportunities issues and display a good awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity and its application to their work. An equal opportunities policy and detailed procedures are in place covering a wide range of issues including bullying and harassment. There is good promotion of equal opportunities to learners during their induction and this is re-inforced effectively during progress reviews. Issues of learner welfare and understanding are given a high priority. An employers' pack has been produced to inform potential employers about the training programme and explain their responsibilities. Good, ongoing work takes place with employers to develop their awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity and ensure that the safety and wellbeing of learners is given high priority. All learners have a good understanding of the grievance and harassment procedures and know how to make a complaint.

34. Data on equal opportunities is collected, analysed and used to help target under-represented groups. Work has taken place to recruit learners from minority ethnic groups and good work has been implemented to overcome gender stereotyping in occupational areas, particularly in engineering. NLT runs a two-year engineering programme for school-age pupils and is further developing its involvement with schools. In addition, initiatives are developed to engage young people from travelling families in conjunction with local schools. This programme introduces and develops engineering skills and aims to improve attendance at school for these young people.

35. Improvements and adaptations have taken place at NLT's training centres to improve access for people with mobility difficulties. The provision of convenient parking, ramps,

automatic doors, and the installation of a lift has helped considerably in making the training facilities more accessible.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

36. NLT has comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures covering all aspects of company management and training activities. The quality assurance procedures are clearly written and shared with all staff. There is very good monitoring of the quality of provision to ensure continuous improvement. Effective systems are established to ensure procedures are followed, and that issues of concern are identified at an early stage and promptly resolved.

37. There are good strategies and actions to improve the quality of the provision. Good use is made of feedback to influence improvements to the training provision. Learner feedback is collected throughout the training programme. The responses are collated, analysed and actioned in order to improve the quality of provision both for groups of learners and to tackle individual requirements. Frequent employer surveys are undertaken to obtain feedback, comment on the quality of training, and to record suggestions on how the provision can be improved. Responses are followed up by meetings and careful consideration of identified issues to implement appropriate action. Staff are actively encouraged through meetings and reviews to contribute suggestions to improve the quality of provision and share good practice. Improvements made to the quality of provision in engineering have been significant since the previous inspection. Retention and achievement rates are improving, the monitoring of learners' progress is very effective, and clear targets are set for progress in reviews. Improvements in business administration and retailing and customer service have only very recently taken place. In these two occupational areas, staffing issues have caused disruption to the training programmes.

38. The self-assessment procedures are particularly detailed and thorough. Self-assessment within the company is part of an ongoing quality improvement process. Analysis of all aspects of the training programme has improved the provision. The company produced its most recent self-assessment report in May 2005. All staff involved in the management and delivery of training contributed to this process. The report and accompanying development plan highlight many of the issues identified in the inspection. There are highly effective procedures in place to monitor and improve the quality of training. Staff are observed in the delivery of training, assessment and the review of learners' progress. Appropriate feedback is given to observed staff on the quality of their work and where appropriate, development action is undertaken to tackle any issues of concern. All observed activity is clearly recorded.

39. Retention and achievement data is now more effectively analysed to form action plans to improve the provision. Targets are set for learner achievement and development to measure progress as part of a continuous improvement strategy. Learners' progress is generally very well monitored. The monitoring of the assessment process is planned and carried out well. Management of internal verification and moderation of the standard of work for external qualifications is well structured.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Mechanical engineering		2
Apprenticeships for young people	172	2
Employer training pilot	5	2

40. There are currently 177 learners on engineering programmes of whom 77 are advanced apprentices, 64 are apprentices, 31 are working towards engineering NVQs and five are on the ETP. Learners follow programmes in manufacturing operations, engineering design, engineering maintenance, fabrication and welding, technical services, installation and commissioning, and electrical and electronic servicing. A total of 167 learners are employed. Occupations include engineering production and machining, electrical and mechanical maintenance, welding and fabricating, electrical installation, computer-aided design, and machining and tool making. Learners in apprenticeship programmes attend either a further education college or NLT's training centre one day each week, working towards a technical certificate. NLT subcontracts to six colleges comprising Chesterfield, North Lindsey, The Grimsby Institute, Lincoln, Peterborough Regional College and West Nottinghamshire College. Apprentices and unemployed learners can complete a range of additional occupational qualifications. Seventeen members of staff are involved in the training, assessment and progress reviews.

Mechanical engineering

Grade 2

Strengths

- good skills development
- particularly effective monitoring of NVQ progress
- effective progress reviews and target-setting
- good planning to meet learners' and employers' needs

Weaknesses

- no key skills training and assessment at the start of the programme
- insufficient monitoring of subcontracted colleges

Achievement and standards

41. Learners develop good skills during their apprenticeships, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Good training in the workplace is supported very effectively by employers. In-company trainers have a good understanding of the requirements of the NVQ and their roles and responsibilities towards training. They have considerable experience in the engineering industry and share effectively their knowledge and experience with learners. Learners very quickly develop good skills in specialist areas. Once these skills have been acquired, learners progress to further NVQ modules and develop new skills. In many cases, provision is made for learners to transfer to alternative

work areas to give them wider experience and to allow assessment tasks to be completed effectively. Learners experience a wide range of training opportunities and develop all the required skills for the achievement of their intended goal. For example, one learner involved in the production of complex components is developing skills beyond the requirements of the stated competences in the NVQ.

42. The retention rate on the apprenticeship programme is satisfactory. Over the last two years, of the 118 learners who started the programme, 21 per cent have achieved the full framework and 52 per cent remain in learning and are making satisfactory progress. On the advanced apprenticeship programme, 88 per cent of learners who started in the last two years are still in training. Retention and achievement rates on the NVQ programme are also satisfactory. Of the 102 learners who started the programme in the last two years, 50 per cent have completed their individual learning plan and 25 per cent remain in learning. The achievement rate on the ETP programme is currently 61 per cent.

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		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	37		22		27		23										
Retained*	0		2		2		5										
Successfully completed	0		2		2		5										
Still in learning	36		16		19		6										

*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		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	78		40		12		7	100									
Retained*	12		13		2		2	29									
Successfully completed	12		13		2		2	29									
Still in learning	53		9		2		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																	
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	10		92		87		84	100									
Retained*	1		46		50		52	62									
Successfully completed	1		46		50		52	62									
Still in learning	6		20		5		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

The quality of provision

43. As identified in self-assessment report, NLT's training officers are particularly effective in monitoring learners' progress on NVQs. Detailed, up-to-date individual records are kept of the progress made by each learner. These records provide training officers and employers with a clear and accurate summary of what achievement has taken place and a clear indication of the learner's overall programme. There is an effective system to identify underachievement or slow progress. When a learner is categorised as high risk, the senior NLT manager responsible for engineering training is informed and is closely involved in planning the required individual support. Training staff and employers provide immediate and relevant additional support to learners who require help. For example, one learner at risk of leaving the programme was interviewed by the training officer and employer, was provided with good support and has now achieved most of his targets.

44. Progress reviews and target-setting are effective. During progress reviews learners discuss their recent performance with training officers. Their knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity, and health and safety are also discussed thoroughly at each review. Clear and measurable targets are set for the next 12-week period. Monthly follow-up meetings take place where training officers thoroughly check the progress made against these targets. Good short-term goals are agreed to help learners understand their own progress and the activities and tasks they need to complete to achieve their targets. Learners, training officers and employers are fully informed and are aware of learners' progress.

45. Resources are satisfactory. Learners gain skills in an appropriate industrial environment using relevant machinery and hand tools. Workshop resources at NLT are satisfactory. Good attention is given to health and safety in employers' premises and training workshops. Learners are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment. They have a good knowledge of health and safety, and develop safe working practices.

46. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. When such needs are identified, staff provide appropriate support. Currently, there are few learners who require and are provided with this support.

47. There is no key skills training and assessment at the start of the programmes for some learners. Some learners have not begun key skills training and assessments until their final year. Managers have identified these problems and a dedicated team of key skills tutors now makes effective use of diagnostic tools and through good action-planning has identified that 30 per cent of engineering learners are under achieving their key skills. Key skills tutors work in employers' premises and NLT's workshops to support learners working towards key skills units. In the past three months, learners have achieved 52 key skills units and successfully completed 30 key skills tests. New learners are now made aware of key skills at induction and are achieving key skills qualifications within their first year. In most cases, key skills are not assessed as part of the NVQ.

Leadership and management

48. Good planning of training programmes takes place to meet the needs of employers and learners. Programmes are flexible and are planned to offer the best possible patterns of training. Learners achieve a wide range of additional relevant qualifications and many

complete additional NVQ units that are directly related to their occupation. For example, one learner was provided with additional pneumatics, hydraulics and welding NVQ units. In another company, the employer requested that learners alternate intervals of two weeks of on-the-job training with and two weeks at NLT's training centre for off-the-job training. These learners have made excellent progress in achieving their NVQ and are developing practical skills which are useful to the employer.

49. NLT has well-developed links with local schools, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. It provides work-experience places to 14-16 year olds from 20 local schools and is in partnership with five schools to provide a foundation apprenticeship. Currently, 33 learners are taking part on this programme. NLT also carries out a successful programme, in conjunction with a local school, for travellers. Of these, eight learners have successfully completed NVQs at level 2 and have subsequently returned to school to take general certificates of secondary education.

50. Internal verification is satisfactory. Planning, sampling and recording of assessment activities meet the needs of the awarding body.

51. The self-assessment process for engineering is inclusive. Staff are consulted and contribute to the report. The report accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, and is an accurate summary of the engineering provision.

52. Information from colleges regarding learners' progress on their technical certificates is insufficiently monitored. There are clear contractual arrangements for this information to be supplied to the provider. However, little of this information is received. Training officers are unaware of accurate information on the progress of learners attending college. This information is not recorded on their file and is not included in the monitoring system.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Business administration</i> Apprenticeships for young people	57	3 3

53. NLT has 57 learners on business administration, management and professional programmes, of whom three are on accounting apprenticeships, five are on accounting advanced apprenticeships, and four on level 4 accounting. The remainder are on apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships or NVQs in business administration. Most learners are employed. They can be referred to NLT by Connexions but most are self-referred or hear about NLT from their employers. All learners have a one-day induction at an NLT training centre and an additional induction into the workplace and their training programme. Accounting learners attend North Lindsey College for theory training one day each week during college term time. Administration learners attend off-the-job at one of NLT's training centres for a day or half day each week. Lessons support technical certificate, key skills or basic skills development if needed. Progress is reviewed every six to eight weeks.

Business administration**Grade 3***Strengths*

- good progression for accounts learners
- good links between NLT and employers
- particularly good learner support

Weaknesses

- slow progress for learners
- insufficient learning support for accounts learners in the subcontracted college

Achievement and standards

54. Progression for accounts learners is good. Learners progress through apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships and then on to a level 4 NVQ during their funded learning programme. They significantly improve and develop their competence and responsibilities in their work role.

55. Achievement on the advanced apprenticeship programmes is satisfactory at 57 per cent for 2003-04. There has, however, been slow progress for foundation apprenticeship learners and very poor achievement for 2003-04 at 19 per cent with a further 19 per cent still in learning. However, in the current year, retention on all programmes is showing marked improvement at 89 per cent, 94 per cent and 100 per cent on apprenticeship, advanced apprenticeship and NVQ programmes respectively. The achievement of technical certificates and key skills units has also increased significantly during 2004-05 with 16 completed technical certificates to date, compared with seven during 2003-04.

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		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	17		7	100	7	100	4	100									
Retained*	0		4	57	6	86	1	25									
Successfully completed	0		4	57	6	86	1	25									
Still in learning	16		0	0	0	0	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		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	29		47		11	100	20	100									
Retained*	1		9		6	55	7	35									
Successfully completed	1		9		6	55	7	35									
Still in learning	26		9		0	0	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																	
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	4		2		0		5	100									
Retained*	0		0		0		4	80									
Successfully completed	0		0		0		4	80									
Still in learning	4		2		0		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

The quality of provision

56. NLT's staff have developed good and productive links with employers. Learners are well matched to placement and job requirements, and employers are involved in the recruitment process. Employers frequently refer to NLT's training officers when needing to fill vacancies. Employers are fully informed of learners' progress and make good use of the information and feedback they receive from NLT. They also give their own feedback and comments to NLT through the review process and programme evaluations.

57. Pastoral and personal support for learners is particularly good, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Training officers make frequent visits to learners in the workplace to carry out progress reviews and assessments. There is a clear distinction between these two activities. Most employers support learners in time for study in work and provide day-release sessions at NLT to study on technical certificates, information technology (IT) and with basic skills or key skills. Problems are dealt with promptly to the

satisfaction of employers and learners. For example, one learner experienced problems with a college tutor and has been supported by his training officer in going through the college's complaints procedure. NLT gives good individual support in the workplace and at training centres in portfolio-building, assignments and case studies. However, insufficient learning support is given to level 2 accounts learners at the subcontracted college. Work has been lost and the standard of some of IT lessons is poor. Learners make appointments for tutorial support that are not met by the tutor. A number of learners have missed deadlines and suffered delays in accreditation of their NVQ programmes.

58. Off-the-job training arrangements are satisfactory. The scheme of work for technical certificates is well structured and well attended. There are lesson plans for all sessions. Teaching is supported by good handouts and an appropriate range of other learning support materials. The standard of accommodation in the training centres is satisfactory, and staff are appropriately experienced and qualified.

59. Initial assessment of learning needs is satisfactory. All learners are tested for literacy and numeracy levels on entry, with an additional diagnostic assessment to indicate specific areas of weakness. Learners and employers also take part in a skills assessment to match their job roles against the requirements of their learning programmes. Results of initial assessment are recorded on learning plans. Learners on day release, work on a range of workbooks and other learning resources, such as online literacy and numeracy sessions to develop and build on existing skills. An additional assessment of learning styles is done during off-the-job training sessions. Induction onto NLT's programmes is also satisfactory and comprises one day at an NLT centre, an additional workplace induction and a separate induction into the learning programme by a training officer.

60. Assessment planning and target-setting have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory. However, NLT has experienced difficulties with some staff and also with the unexpected loss of a key member of staff who quality assured the assessment process. The progress of a number of learners was affected by these difficulties. Over recent months, new and re-deployed staff have taken over the responsibility for these learners and progress is now satisfactory. There is now thorough and detailed preparation and planning at every stage of the assessment process, and learners are fully involved in the process. Assessors use a good range of assessment methods including workplace observations, witness testimonies, reports and photographs. Learners' portfolios are well presented and clearly referenced throughout. Learners fully understand their frameworks, qualifications and the purpose of the portfolio and are able to efficiently match their own progress and cross-reference evidence.

61. The review process is satisfactory overall although records show that previous staff have not set clear or specific targets for learners and did not re-visit action plans. Current reviews are very detailed and thorough. Action plans and previous reviews are discussed at the start of each review. All aspects of the apprenticeship programme are discussed and recorded, such as health and safety, equality and diversity, basic and key skills, NVQ units and technical certificates. Comments recorded on the equality and health and safety sections arise from discussions around different topics and show the learner's knowledge and understanding. The second part of the review is an action plan that includes targets for completion of parts of the programme. Learners and their workplace supervisors are left with copies of all the agreed actions and know exactly what needs to be achieved by the deadlines. Employers are fully involved in the process by giving written and verbal

feedback to learners on their personal effectiveness in the workplace.

Leadership and management

62. There have been significant improvements in the management and co-ordination of the business administration programme over recent months and it is now stronger than indicated at the time of the previous inspection. Difficulties with staffing and internal verification have now been resolved, although senior management were slow to implement the necessary changes. Internal verification systems and procedures are now sound and thorough. There is a cycle of quality assurance checks that covers all key aspects of the business administration programme. This includes the observation of teaching and assessment practices, as well as interviews with learners and employers. Learners have a good awareness of equality and diversity issues. The self-assessment report was clear, thorough and generally accurate in its judgements of strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. Several of the issues identified as weakness have now been resolved.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Customer service		3
Apprenticeships for young people	14	3
Employer training pilot	35	3

63. There are 49 learners working towards qualifications in retailing and customer service. Of these, 35 ETP learners are working towards NVQs at level 2. The other 14 learners include 11 apprentices, two advanced apprentices and one learner on NVQ-only training. NTL recruits learners onto the training programmes either through Connexions or by companies contacting NTL directly with requests for training for their employees. Training officers work from the different sites to ensure they are fully accessible to the companies and learners. Assessors visit the learners in the workplace at two-monthly intervals, although these visits can be made more frequently if required. Recently, two assessors have left the company and new staff have been appointed to cover their work.

Customer service**Grade 3***Strengths*

- good achievement rates in ETPs

Weaknesses

- slow progress by many learners

Achievement and standards

64. Achievement on the ETP programme is good. Of the 37 learners who started in 2003-04, 26 have successfully completed it. All 35 learners who started on the programme in the current year are still in learning and making good progress.

65. Since 2003, none of the 22 learners who started on apprenticeship programmes have successfully completed it. Progress has, until very recently, been slow. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors cross-reference work evidence to all relevant elements of the NVQ. Most learners have been assessed on a number of units, but these have not been fully completed. Learners are working towards key skills and technical certificates and are building portfolios of evidence. Three learners have recently passed the technical certificate tests. There have been very recent changes in staffing and new assessors have been recruited. Some learners are now making better progress. More frequent assessments are taking place and NVQ units are beginning to be completed.

66. Achievement rates on the NVQ programme in 2003-04 were good, with two of the three learners completing their individual learning plan and the other still in learning. Retention rates have improved since the previous inspection. The two advanced apprentices who started in 2004-05 are still in learning. On the apprenticeship programme, 44 per cent were retained in 2003-04 and this has increased to 64 per cent in 2004-05.

67. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory and contains a good range of evidence against the required performance criteria.

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	2		0	0	4	100											
Retained*	0		0	0	2	50											
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	50											
Still in learning	2		0	0	0	100											

*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		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	11		9		5	100	7	100									
Retained*	0		0		0	0	3	43									
Successfully completed	0		0		1	20	3	43									
Still in learning	7		4		0	100	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																	
Employer training pilot	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	35		37	100													
Retained*	0		26	70													
Successfully completed	0		26	70													
Still in learning	35		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

The quality of provision

68. Learners receive a satisfactory induction from NLT, which includes information on equal opportunities, the content of their programmes, and health and safety. Their understanding of the information is checked and they receive various written materials to refer back to at a later stage if required.

69. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory. Learners prior learning and qualifications are discussed during the process of initial assessment and learners undertake appropriate tests. Any additional learning or social needs are identified, and satisfactory arrangements are made to deliver any appropriate additional support. Learners receive satisfactory personal support from NLT's staff. Individual's learning plans

are produced but are not always used effectively during learners' progress reviews.

70. The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory and learners are developing a good range of occupational skills. Weekly off-the-job training sessions are now delivered for some of the learners for the technical certificates and key skills. The training sessions have detailed lesson plans and handouts, and attendance is monitored. These learning sessions are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, training resources have improved and are now satisfactory and include videos, booklets, handouts and various reference materials. For other learners, the training is all delivered in the workplace. Learners complete an assessment to identify any training needs to cover the qualifications in their job role. Discussions regarding the qualification take place with the employers. In some cases, some employers have a poor awareness of the specific content of the qualifications. Some employers deliver in-house training and although the training officers and assessors are aware of this and discuss this with the learners, the training is not incorporated into their individual learning plans.

71. As identified in the self-assessment report, until very recently there has been slow progress for most learners. The target achievement dates for units were not being met and some learners have been on the training programme for long periods of time without any units completed. In addition to this, there have been a number of staffing changes with some learners having a number of different assessors and sometimes having to wait for long periods of time for the assessors to visit. There has been insufficient, effective target-setting in progress reviews and, in some cases, the reviews have not been sufficiently thorough. However, the quality of training, assessment and progress reviews has improved considerably very recently. Assessment practice is now satisfactory and learners are now progressing through their qualifications. New assessors have spent time with learners, identifying the stage they have reached and what needs to be done. Learners are set more effective targets and receive more frequent visits from staff.

Leadership and management

72. The area of learning has not, until recently, been particularly well managed. Although NLT has introduced a number of new systems and arrangements to improve the training provision, the impact of these has only very recently started to take effect. The slow progress for learners through their qualifications was identified at the previous reinspection in 2003, but has only very recently been rectified. There have been a number of staff changes. The new staff brought in have started to have a positive impact and progress for learners is now improving.

73. Satisfactory internal verification systems and practices are in place, with portfolios being regularly checked and assessors observed. Feedback is given to assessors and acted upon. Internal verifiers carry out interviews with learners and employers. Feedback is collected from learners and employers, and staff contribute their comments through various meetings to improve the quality of the provision. The management information system allows a wide range of information to be used regularly by staff.

74. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. They receive information during their induction and learners are asked during each progress review if they have any issues of concern. Learners are aware of the procedures and who to contact if they have any problems. Employers are asked if they have equal opportunities policies when first signing the contracts with NLT. An information booklet for employers is currently being

produced that contains a range of details on equal opportunities issues. The self-assessment was generally accurate.

