

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **The Insulation and Environmental Training Agency**

**30 June 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
- **learnndirect** 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

## The Insulation and Environmental Training Agency

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Insulation and Environmental Training Agency (IETA) is the training division of the Thermal Insulation Contractors Association (TICA), and has its head office, administrative centre and training centre in Darlington, County Durham. IETA was established as a training provider in 1990, and up to March 2001 subcontracted training to various further education colleges spread over the country. It supports the specialist training requirements of the thermal insulation services industry, through a voluntary training levy on association members. IETA operates on a 'non-profit' basis and works in response to the needs of its members and the thermal insulation industry.
2. From April 2001, IETA has been nationally funded through the Learning and Skills Council national contracting service. It is the sole provider in England of apprenticeships in thermal insulation. IETA supports companies which employ and train apprentices by means of incentive grants.
3. IETA is overseen by the governing council of TICA, which is made up of representatives from member companies. Members of the governing council are senior staff, chief executives, managing directors, training managers and human resources managers of large companies and small to medium enterprises within the industry. Day-to-day management of IETA is through a training manager who reports to the chief executive of TICA. Two craft training instructors/assessors and two key skills tutor/assessors are based at IETA's Darlington training centre. Three training officers each cover a geographical segments of the provision, with one in the South, one in the Midlands, Humberside and Cumbria, and one in the Northeast. These are supported by one administrative officer.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** IETA's leadership and management are satisfactory. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are also satisfactory. Provision in construction training is good.
5. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** IETA's self-assessment process is insufficiently developed, and does not adequately involve the learners, employers, governors and major stakeholders. The self-assessment report does identify a number of the key strengths and weaknesses in construction, and leadership and management, although some of the weaknesses have been overlooked or understated.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** IETA has a clear and effective commitment to continuous improvement. Since the previous inspection, IETA has prioritised and implemented a considerable number of very effective actions plans which have significantly improved the provision. It has further developed and established many aspects of the quality assurance system. Retention and achievement rates are now good.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE INSULATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING AGENCY:

- maintain and improve the high retention and achievement rates
- continue to improve the good training it provides
- maintain the effective support it provides for learners
- introduce sufficient direct observation of assessment in the workplace
- improve the co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training
- introduce effective arrangements for collecting and using learners' and employers' feedback
- maintain the clear strategic development of IETA and its partnerships with employers
- continue actions to improve the quality of provision and quality assurance procedures
- introduce effective processes for self-assessment
- fully implement IETA's strategy for literacy, numeracy and language skills support
- devise and implement effective strategies to recruit learners from under-represented groups

## GRADES

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

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

Construction			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Building services</b>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	81	2	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. IETA only offers apprenticeships in construction. This area of learning was reported on and graded in the contributory area of building services. Evidence was examined during a one-day visit when inspectors looked at externally set assessments. All other inspection took place during the inspection week.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learners interviewed	21
Number of staff interviewed	5
Number of employers interviewed	12
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	11
Number of visits	11

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

8. **Retention of learners to IETA's training programmes is good.** Of the 188 learners who started apprenticeship programmes since 2000-01, 81 per cent have been retained or are still in learning. Retention between 2000-01 and 2002-03 has been on average 74 per cent.

9. **The apprenticeship achievement rate is good.** Seventy-one of the 97 learners starting programmes between 2000-01 and 2002-03 have completed the full apprenticeship framework. Apprentices still in learning are making good progress towards their qualifications.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Construction	0	5	2	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

10. **Training in construction is good.** Learners are taught well by well-qualified instructors with good industrial experience. Seventy-two per cent of the seven learning sessions observed during the inspection were graded good or better. Learners produce high-quality work when applying lagging and fabricating sheet-metal cladding, and have a good technical understanding of the work they carry out. Training in key skills is also good. Tutors make effective use of information technology (IT) and vocational topics to effectively develop learners' skills and understanding.

11. **The quality of work placements is good.** All learners receive good individual supervision from experienced operatives. They are encouraged to carry out tasks using their own initiative, but with good support and guidance. Significant attention is paid to health and safety.

12. **Learners receive a very thorough, well-delivered induction** in which good use is made of videos, interactive sessions and external agencies. Health and safety are extensively

covered and all learners complete the health and safety passport. Equality of opportunity and relevant current topics such as drug awareness are covered well. Learners develop a very good understanding of their apprenticeship frameworks. Their recollection of induction topics is good.

**13. Learners at IETA benefit from good resources.** The training centre at Darlington has a well-designed and equipped workshop. A good range of tools, equipment, machinery, materials and well-produced learning materials are used effectively to develop learners' skills and understanding. Staff have extensive industrial experience and good vocational qualifications, but no staff are qualified to support learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

**14. Learners receive particularly effective pastoral and learning support.** During induction, all learners receive diagnostic assessment which accurately ascertains their support needs. The results of these assessments are clearly recorded on learners' individual learning plans, along with the level of support that is required and that is being provided. All learners are supported very well by tutors while they are in the training centre. Learners are given extra tuition and instruction in skills they are unable to develop on site. Learners are well supported in the workplace by site supervisors.

**15.** The training programme effectively meets the needs of learners and employers. There is a good and wide range of additional training available. However, no progression opportunities are available beyond level 2.

**16.** Although learners are gathering evidence of the work they complete on site, **there is insufficient direct observation of assessment in workplace.** Assessors make too few visits to observe learners at work. Employers and supervisors are acting as work-based recorders, but few have had training or guidance to carry out this role.

**17. On- and off-the-job training are not sufficiently co-ordinated.** Although training in the workplace and at the training centre is good, too few linkages exist between the two. No plan exists for the off-the-job training which identifies what is to be delivered in each training block. Employers are unable to plan or structure activities on site to complement off-the-job-training.

### **Leadership and management**

**18. IETA has developed very clear strategies to increase demand and organisational capacity for its training provision.** The board members have a wide range of current industrial and commercial experience which is used well to support the training manager. The strategic direction is reflected well in the business plan. The plan sets clear targets for increased recruitment, retention, and achievement rates. Priorities are well communicated and promoted within IETA. Staff have a good understanding of the priorities and are very clear how they contribute towards achieving them.

**19. IETA has developed highly productive partnership arrangements with TICA's employers.** The employers are very supportive and most provide a wide range of experience and good opportunities for learners to develop their skills and knowledge on site.

**20. IETA has prioritised and implemented a considerable number of very effective action**

**plans which have significantly improved the provision since the previous inspection.** The implementation of the action plans is very systematic and well monitored, with clear success indicators. All staff are fully involved in the development and implementation of the improvement plans and take their responsibility for the success of the plans seriously. Many aspects of the quality assurance system have been further developed and established.

21. External and internal communications are effective. The management style at IETA is open, consultative and supportive. Team meetings are regular, well attended and minuted with action points. However, access to centrally held information is not sufficiently developed so that training officers have easy access to the information they need to monitor learners' progress.

22. IETA's equal opportunities policy and procedures are up to date, and are annually reviewed. The policies are effective in setting a clear framework for the learners' rights and responsibilities and protecting them from poor equal opportunities practices.

23. The company has made significant progress in developing and establishing arrangements for monitoring aspects of its training process. It has clear policies and procedures to support these arrangements. Compliance with these procedures is audited regularly and IETA has an effective system for improving any inadequacies. However, some of the procedures have only recently been implemented and are too recent to have had a full effect on the training.

24. Internal verification is satisfactory. IETA has a well-documented and comprehensive sampling plan. This ensures that assessments carried out by assessors are accurate and that assessors are regularly observed.

25. The recruitment of learners from under-represented groups is inadequate. Since 2000, out of 186 learners who have received training, none are women or from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of potential learners applying to IETA for training who were from under-represented groups has been low at around 5 per cent during 2002-04, but was good at 14 per cent in 2004-05. However, none of these have progressed to employment. **IETA has not sufficiently promoted the training to under-represented groups.**

26. **Feedback from learners and employers is inadequate.** The only feedback received is informal conversations of staff with learners and training officers with employers, and none of these are recorded. IETA has no formal system for collecting feedback, and conducts no questionnaires or surveys. That information which is collected is not adequately analysed or used to support improvement.

27. **IETA's self-assessment process is insufficiently developed.** It does not adequately involve the learners, employers, governors and major stakeholders. In IETA's latest self-assessment report, only one board member contributed to the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report has insufficient evidence to support some of the judgements, and many of the areas identified as strengths are no more than normal practice. The report is poorly structured, does not cover all aspects of the learners' experience and is insufficiently evaluative, self-critical and thorough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- very clear strategic development
- highly productive partnership with employers
- good implementation of action plans to improve quality

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently developed self-assessment process
- inadequate feedback from learners and employers
- inadequate initiatives to recruit under-represented groups

## **Construction**

### ***Building services***

***Grade 2***

#### *Strengths*

- high retention and achievement rates
- good training
- very thorough induction process
- good work placements which enhance learning
- good resources
- particularly effective support

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient direct observation of assessment in the workplace
- insufficient co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT THE INSULATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING AGENCY:**

- the practical training - 'I learn by doing things'
- varied and very interesting work on site
- the good teaching methods in the training centre
- the opportunity to use new materials and learn new skills in the training centre
- the good support for on- and off-the-job training and personal care
- the staff in the training centre - they are very knowledgeable and experienced
- the good site supervisors and employers
- being given time to learn at work
- meeting other learners from all over the country in the training centre
- the practical work in the training centre which covers all thermal insulation skills
- key skills - 'it's interesting and I have not done them before'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK THE INSULATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING AGENCY COULD IMPROVE:**

- the use of simple language in the NVQ and logbook
- the amount of metalwork in the training centre
- the theory teaching - it could be more interesting
- the location of the training centre - there should be one in the South
- the organisation in the training centre so we make better progress
- the amount of support in workshop - 'I can't get the trainer's attention'
- the variety of work on site

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

#### Strengths

- very clear strategic development
- highly productive partnership with employers
- good implementation of action plans to improve quality

#### Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed self-assessment process
- inadequate feedback from learners and employers
- inadequate initiatives to recruit under-represented groups

28. IETA has developed very clear strategies to increase demand and organisational capacity for its training provision. The organisation is well supported in this process by a governing board and an advisory board. The board members have a wide range of current industrial and commercial experience which is used well to support the training manager. IETA is systematically reviewing its operation, funding sources, and training provision to encourage more members of TICA to train their staff using IETA's resources and facilities. The strategic direction is reflected well in the business plan. The plan sets clear targets which are being met for increased recruitment, retention, and achievement rates. Currently, only an apprenticeship framework in thermal insulation is available. IETA is dealing with this to provide good progression opportunities for its learners. It has already made good progress in developing a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and an advanced apprenticeship framework. Priorities are well communicated and promoted within the company. Staff have a good understanding of IETA's priorities and are very clear on how they contribute towards achieving them.

29. IETA has developed highly productive partnership arrangements with TICA's employers. It uses these well-developed relationships effectively to provide good training for learners. The employers are very supportive and most provide a wide range of experience and good opportunities for learners to develop their skills and knowledge on site. This enables learners to make good progress. Learners receive good support from their employers. They take time to explore concerns with learners, particularly those who are at the risk of leaving their programmes. For example, one such learner whose attendance and punctuality is poor has received extensive support from his employer and is still on programme. IETA's training officers and site supervisors have good working relationships, discussing all aspects of learners' training in an open and constructive way, but in many cases informally. IETA has assisted many learners to find full-time employment through its strong partnerships with employers.

30. External and internal communications are effective. The management style at IETA is open, consultative and supportive. Staff have appropriate opportunities for regular, informal discussion with the senior managers. Team meetings are regular, well-attended and minuted with action points. The training officers, who work remotely in various locations across the country, receive the minutes of the meetings. However, access to

centrally held information is not sufficiently developed so that training officers have easy access to the information required to monitor learners' progress. IETA has recognised this. It has provided staff with portable computers and is in the process of developing better internet-based communication systems.

31. Staff have well-defined job specifications and are offered an appraisal once a year. During the appraisal meetings their performance over the previous 12 months, difficulties encountered and their training needs are effectively discussed. Staff have attended a wide range of training events to improve their knowledge on subjects such as initial assessment, health and safety, equality of opportunity and NVQ training. All training staff have completed a level 3 NVQ in learning and development or are currently working towards it.

32. IETA's management of resources is effective, with staff and equipment deployed well to enhance the learners' experience. Learners have good opportunities to work on complex thermal insulation activities while on site, and the resources at IETA's training centre are good. Attention to health and safety is effective. However, plans for the future replacement or updating of equipment and machinery are insufficiently clear. All staff are appropriately qualified, with the vocational trainers having extensive industrial experience.

33. IETA uses management information adequately to monitor the learners' progress, retention and achievement rates. The information system consists of three appropriate computer databases and paper-based progress monitoring documents and charts. While this arrangement is adequate, training staff do not have direct access to learners' progress information. Systematic analysis of learners' performance for comparative purposes is insufficiently developed. Information systems also record equality of opportunity information including learners' gender, ethnicity, disability and postcodes. However, IETA does not routinely analyse or use this information to support the planning of programmes and future recruitment.

34. The literacy and numeracy needs of learners' are effectively identified during their induction. Learners who require support receive good support during their off-the-job training in IETA's training centre. However, no staff are suitably qualified or trained to provide this support. Learners are provided with telephone numbers for staff at the training centre and some learners have accessed personal support and help during on-the-job training. Although training officers and site supervisors provide good pastoral support to learners on site, IETA does not have clear arrangements to provide literacy and numeracy support to learners during their on-the-job training.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

35. Training during induction covers equality of opportunity thoroughly. The induction programme covers many aspects of equality of opportunity, including diversity, bullying and harassment, and how learners can voice their concerns. Learners watch and discuss a video highlighting some poor equal opportunities practices at work. IETA monitors the effectiveness of the equal opportunities training by assessing the learners' knowledge before and following the induction training sessions. Learners are also provided with IETA's equal opportunities policies and procedures. Most learners have a good understanding of their rights at work and can challenge poor practices. All staff have received training in equality of opportunity and have a clear awareness of the challenges which some learners may face. However, aspects of equality of opportunity other than bullying and harassment are not sufficiently discussed during the learners' progress reviews. There is insufficient

coverage of equality of opportunity in other parts of the training programme. Some employers' premises displayed inappropriate posters which were not challenged by the learners or IETA's training officers.

36. IETA's equal opportunities policy and procedures are up to date and are annually reviewed. The policies are effective in setting a clear framework for the learners' rights and responsibilities and protecting them from poor equal opportunities practice. Detailed procedures covering complaints, bullying and harassment support this policy. IETA has satisfactory arrangements to support learners with learning disabilities or restricted mobility and some staff have received training to support learners with dyslexia.

37. IETA's recruitment of learners from under-represented groups is inadequate. Since 2000, none of the 186 learners who have received training have been women or members of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of applicants to IETA who are from under-represented groups has been low at around 5 per cent during 2002-04, but was good at 14 per cent in 2004-05. However, none of these applicants have progressed to employment. IETA collects information on equal opportunities but does not use this information adequately to develop initiatives to improve recruitment from under-represented groups. IETA's marketing activities do not adequately target or inform the under-represented groups of the opportunities available. Until very recently IETA has been slow in rectifying this concern and its strategy to recruit from under-represented groups is not sufficiently clear. However, IETA plans to interview all the learners who apply for training during its next recruitment period. Many learners in training have been recruited directly by their employers with minimal involvement of IETA.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

38. IETA has prioritised and implemented a considerable number of very effective action plans which have significantly improved the provision since the previous inspection. The implementation of the action plans is very systematic and well monitored, with clear success indicators. All staff are fully involved in the development and implementation of the improvement plans and take their responsibility for the success of the plans seriously. Many aspects of the quality assurance system have been further developed and established. IETA has revised and organised key skills training to improve the learners' achievement rates. Strategies for improving resources have been fully devised and implemented. New staff development has a much stronger focus on improving the skills of the trainers.

39. The company has made significant progress in developing and embedding arrangements for monitoring aspects of its training process. It has clear policies and procedures to support these arrangements. Compliance with these procedures is audited regularly and IETA has an effective system for improving any inadequacies. However, some of the procedures have only recently been implemented and are too recent to have had a full effect on the training. Examples include the observation of the training process, the monitoring of progress reviews, and the collection and use of feedback from learners and employers. Some of the procedures have a strong focus on the completion of tasks rather than their effect on quality improvement and learners' experiences.

40. Internal verification is satisfactory. IETA has a well-documented and comprehensive sampling plan. This ensures that assessments carried out by assessors are accurate and that assessors are regularly observed. However, the internal verifiers' observations of assessors

have not recorded some verbal criticisms made to assessors. Internal verification meetings take place regularly but insufficient standardisation of assessment decisions takes place.

41. Feedback from learners and employers is inadequate. IETA does not collect enough views from learners and employers. The only feedback received is informal conversations of staff with learners, and training officers with employers, none of which are recorded. IETA has no formal system for collecting feedback and issues no questionnaires or surveys. The information that is collected is not adequately analysed or used. Inspectors saw no evidence to demonstrate actions or any effects leading to improvements.

42. IETA's self-assessment process is insufficiently developed. It does not adequately involve the learners, employers, governors and major stakeholders. In IETA's latest self-assessment report, only one board member contributed to the self-assessment process. All staff were involved in the self-assessment process. They met off-site for two days to put the report together and were involved in reviewing the first draft. The self-assessment report has insufficient evidence to support some of the judgements, and many of the areas it identifies as strengths are no more than normal practice. The report is poorly structured, does not cover all the aspects of the learners' experience and is insufficiently evaluative, self-critical and thorough. Several of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection are included in the self-assessment report, although some of the weaknesses have been overlooked and understated.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Construction

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Building services</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	81	2

43. IETA provides training for apprenticeships in thermal insulation. All apprentices are employed by TICA's member companies, which are spread across England. The work involves installation or lagging of plant and pipework in large industrial and commercial buildings such as power stations, petro-chemical plants, oil refineries, airports, sports stadiums, hospitals and factories.

44. IETA currently has 81 apprentices. It is split into three regions for on-site training and learner support purposes, each region co-ordinated by a training officer. In the South, Southeast and Southwest region there are 31 apprentices, in the Midlands, Humberside and Cumbria region there are 37 apprentices and in the Northeast region there are 13 apprentices. Learners are mainly recruited through Connexions or employers who interview and select their apprentices for the training programme. All learners are reviewed by the training officers at 12-weekly intervals. The apprenticeship framework is made up of a level 2 NVQ in thermal insulation, a recently introduced level 2 technical certificate in thermal insulation, and key skills qualifications in communications and application of number at level 1. All of the framework components are delivered by IETA. There are currently no advanced apprenticeship programmes for thermal insulation. Off-the-job training is block-release attendance and takes place at IETA's training centre in Darlington. The training centre is an accredited assessment centre and has a large workshop to simulate on-site activities, classrooms, learning resource centre and an IT suite. The training programme is planned and delivered over two years. Each year includes 10 weeks of off-the-job training. All off-the-job training is delivered in two-week blocks and learners are accommodated in local hotels.

### **Building services**

### **Grade 2**

#### *Strengths*

- high retention and achievement rates
- good training
- very thorough induction process
- good work placements which enhance learning
- good resources
- particularly effective support

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient direct observation of assessment in the workplace
- insufficient co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training

## Achievement and standards

45. Retention of learners to IETA's training programmes is good. Of the 188 learners who started apprenticeship programmes since 2000-01, 81 per cent have been retained or are still in learning. Retention for learners starting between 2000-01 and 2002-03 has been, on average, 74 per cent. Of the 91 learners starting apprenticeship programmes since 2003-04, 81 are still in learning. The achievement rate for apprenticeships is also good. Seventy-one of the 97 learners starting apprenticeship programmes between 2000-01 and 2002-03 have completed the full apprenticeship framework.

46. Most learners achieve additional qualifications as part of their apprenticeships. These include the health and safety passport and key skills qualifications in the application of IT, which are not part of the current framework. Many learners also achieve key skills qualifications communication and application of number at level 2, although the framework requirement for these is level 1. Apprentices still in learning are making good progress towards their qualifications.

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

Inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	39		52		35	100	34	100	28	100						
Retained*	0		0		26	74	25	74	21	75						
Successfully completed	0		0		26	74	24	71	21	75						
Still in learning	36		45		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

## The quality of provision

47. Training in construction is good. Learners are taught well by well-qualified instructors with good industrial experience. Seven learning sessions were observed during the inspection, 72 per cent of which were graded good or better. Trainers relate well to the needs of learners. Learners are keen to develop their skills and are enthusiastic about their work. Trainers use a good range of applications, methods and products to ensure that learners gain the range of experience required for their qualification. Learners produce high-quality work, applying lagging and fabricating sheet metal cladding, and have a good technical understanding of their work. Occasionally, trainers struggle to meet the needs of all the learners in the workshops. Learners also produce work on-site of a good industrial standard. The work carried out on the job by learners is carefully planned by site supervisors working with the training officers. The range of work carried out by learners is wide and includes hot and cold insulation using fibrous and cellular plastics, the installation of metallic and non-metallic cladding, and finishes to simple and complex surfaces. Often work is at height and learners work effectively alongside other construction workers including welders, fitters and scaffolders. When necessary learners are moved between jobs to cover the range of tasks required. Training in key skills is also good. Trainers make effective use of IT and vocational topics to effectively develop learners' skills and understanding.

48. The quality of the work placements are good. All learners receive good individual supervision from experienced operatives. They are encouraged to carry out tasks using their own initiative, but with good support and guidance. Significant attention is paid to health and safety and learners are not allowed to work alone. Substantial additional training is provided by employers. Most employers are effectively involved in progress reviews to ensure that learners are making sufficient progress. Most learners receive regular and useful toolbox talks at work.

49. The induction of learners is very thorough. In addition to the induction from IETA, most learners also receive a comprehensive induction from their employer. Induction is delivered well, making good use of videos, interactive sessions and external agencies. Health and safety are extensively covered and all learners complete the health and safety passport. Equality of opportunity and relevant current topics such as drug awareness are covered well. On completing induction topics learners receive certificates which they file in their portfolios. Learners' recollection of induction topics is good. During induction, learners develop a very good understanding of their apprenticeship frameworks, their training and how they will be assessed.

50. Learners at IETA benefit from good resources. The training centre at Darlington has a well-designed and equipped workshop with a good range of tools, equipment, machinery and materials. The workshop has a wide range of rigs which incorporate straight pipework, bends, offsets, reducers, flanges, valves, vessels and ductwork and provide realistic simulations of insulation work on site. Classrooms are furnished and decorated well, and provide an effective environment for learning. Resources for key skills training are good and include a classroom and a suite of computers. A good range of well-produced learning materials is on offer. These are effectively used to develop learners' skills and understanding, and also provide a good source of reference when learners are on site. Staff have extensive industrial experience and good vocational qualifications, but no staff are qualified to support learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

51. Learners receive particularly effective pastoral and learning support. During induction, all learners receive a diagnostic assessment which accurately ascertains their support needs. The results of these assessments, as well as the level of support that is required and that is being provided, are clearly recorded on individual learning plans. Currently, 16 learners are identified as requiring additional learning support. Support for these learners is provided in the training centre on an individual or very small group basis. Detailed records of support sessions identify the learning carried out, the support provided, how the learner has been assessed and the progress made. These learners are all making good progress.

52. All learners are very well supported by trainers while they are in the training centre. Learners are given extra tuition and instruction in skills they are unable to develop on site. Training officers support learners on site and carry out reviews which set good short-term targets. These ensure learners continue to make good progress. Learners appreciate these reviews. Employers see them as the valuable cornerstone to keep them informed of learners' progress and what needs to be done in the workplace. Learners are well supported in the workplace by site supervisors. One case of bullying at the training centre was reported to an employer who passed this on to the training officer. He dealt with it promptly and correctly.

53. The training programme effectively meets the needs of learners and employers. A good, wide range of additional training is available. However, no progression opportunities are available beyond level 2. IETA recognises this and is in the process of developing a level 3 qualification with the awarding body.

54. Although learners are collecting evidence of the work they complete on site, insufficient assessment takes place by direct observation in the workplace. Assessors make too few visits to observe learners at work. Learners are not always assessed when the opportunity arises, and their progress is slowed. Most on-site assessment is carried out by witness testimony and use of photographs. This evidence is authenticated by the site supervisor and subsequently assessed remotely by assessors in the training centre. Employers and supervisors are acting as work-based recorders, but few have had training or guidance to carry out this role. Many employers are unaware of the requirements or importance of evidence from the workplace. Arrangements for checking the reliability of evidence brought in from the workplace are insufficiently developed.

55. On- and off-the-job training are not sufficiently co-ordinated. Although training in the workplace and at the training centre is good, there are too few linkages between the two. There is no plan for the off-the-job training which identifies what is to be delivered in each training block. Employers are unable to plan or structure activities on site to complement off-the-job training. Learners do not see the training as a coherent whole. The end-of-block report sent to employers does not sufficiently detail what learners have completed in the training centre or the activities which are outstanding. It only gives a percentage figure of progress against each unit. The information is insufficient for the training officer to review the learners' progress, and agree what actions need to be taken by the employer to ensure good progress continues on site.

### **Leadership and management**

56. Management of construction training is satisfactory. Training staff hold regular, effectively recorded meetings at which actions are identified. Very good working relations with employers exist through TICA. Staff development is satisfactory. All training staff have achieved or are working towards a level 3 NVQ in learning and development. Internal verification is satisfactory. An appropriate sampling plan is in use which ensures assessments are checked and that assessors are observed. Internal verification meetings take place regularly, but standardisation is not sufficiently developed. Action-planning is good and many improvements have been made to the learning process. However, a number of procedures are insufficiently detailed and do not give enough clear guidance to staff. Learning session observations have only just started. All staff were involved in the self-assessment process, but IETA's arrangements to incorporate the views of learners and employers are inadequate. Most of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection are included in the self-assessment report. Equality of opportunity is covered well at induction. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is good, but this understanding is insufficiently developed during progress reviews and in other parts of the programme.

