

INSPECTION REPORT

Training Services 2000

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

Training Services 2000

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Training Services 2000 Ltd (TS2000) is a private training provider based in Derby. Formed in 2000, it is jointly owned by four directors who share responsibility for the management of the organisation as well as a caseload of learners. TS2000 currently delivers training to 86 learners in engineering and business administration, and has a contract with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and national vocational qualification (NVQ) training.
2. Learners on engineering programmes are employed by local companies and they attend colleges of further education to gain the technical certificate part of the framework. The NVQ and other framework components are delivered and assessed by TS2000. In business administration, all aspects of training are assessed and delivered by TS2000. All business administration learners are employed, two by the provider.
3. TS2000 delivers NVQs privately, and a number of short training courses for employers, including abrasive wheels, pneumatic training programmes, and telephone techniques/receptionist skills.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** More specifically, leadership and management are good, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. The provision in engineering, technology and manufacturing, and in business administration, management and professional are good.
5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The process of self-assessment is inclusive, and takes into account the views of staff, learners and employers. Feedback is analysed carefully, and in some cases, changes and improvements have been made. Many of the strengths in the report were also identified by inspectors. However, no weaknesses were identified by TS2000.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Since the reinspection of TS2000 in 2002, standards have been maintained and further improved. Retention and achievement rates are good in engineering and business administration, and the comprehensive annual quality checks and processes are effective in evaluating performance across all aspects of the organisation.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR TRAINING SERVICES 2000:

- increase the frequency of direct observations of performance in engineering
- better planning of individual off-the-job training in business administration
- maintain the high levels of retention and achievement

- maintain the quality of provision as TS2000 continues to grow

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		2

Engineering, technology & manufacturing			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Mechanical engineering Apprenticeships for young people	11	2	
Electrical engineering Apprenticeships for young people	2	2	
Manufacturing Apprenticeships for young people	40	2	
Other contributory areas Apprenticeships for young people	2	2	

Business administration, management & professional			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Business administration Apprenticeships for young people	26	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Inspectors reported on and graded work-based learning in engineering and business administration, the two areas of learning offered by TS2000. Evidence from taster programmes for 14-16 year olds was used to support judgements in the report. Inspection was carried out over three days.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	9
Number of learners interviewed	22
Number of staff interviewed	10
Number of employers interviewed	11
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	12

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **Retention and achievement rates for all learners in business administration are very good.** There are currently eight advanced apprentices and 19 apprentices. The retention rates are good for advanced apprentices and have been consistently very good for apprentices. There has been a slightly declining trend in achievement rates for foundation apprentices from 100 per cent in 2000-01, 86 per cent in 2001-02 and to 77 per cent for the year 2002-03, but these are still good. Of the 2003-04 apprentices, 40 per cent are still in learning and 47 per cent have completed the full framework.

9. **Business administration learners develop good practical and personal skills that they use effectively in the workplace.** They respond well to the demands of their employers and are keen to learn new skills. Learners are interested in their programmes and are enthusiastic about their jobs.

10. **The achievement rate for NVQ learners in engineering is good.** Over a five-year period, on average, 78 per cent of learners achieved all aspects of their programme. During a similar period, advanced apprentices and apprentices have satisfactory average achievement rates of 62 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Retention rates on all programmes are good.

11. **In engineering, learners' portfolios are well presented and contain a wide range of diverse information.** They enjoy their work, acquire appropriate skills in the workplace and are encouraged to adopt safe working practices.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0

12. Engineering employers are effectively involved in NVQ and apprenticeship training programmes and provide learners with good opportunities to develop their skills.

TS2000 ensures that employers are well informed of learners' progress and have good knowledge of the NVQ process. Employers are able to identify gaps in the training programme and clearly help learners to achieve their goals through challenging targets and activities.

13. Learners on engineering and business administration programmes receive particularly good learning and pastoral support to help them complete their programmes.

Learners are confident in discussing and identifying personal and work-related problems. TS2000 manages these problems confidentially and sensitively, and where appropriate involves the employers, and in some cases outside agencies, in dealing with barriers to learning. Learners speak highly of the pastoral support they receive.

14. **In business administration, there is good monitoring of the training that takes place at work.** There are six-weekly visits to all learners by the assessors where action-planning, observations and assessments take place. There is a 12-weekly welfare review, which involves the employer and the learner in reviewing and planning progress. Assessor visits have been arranged more frequently when the learner needs additional support. Assessors carry out regular observations in the workplace and these are planned well. However, feedback is not always given to the learner directly after the observation takes place.

15. **There are particularly good work placements for learners on business administration programmes.** Learners experience a wide range of work activities which are relevant to their NVQ programme. TS2000 training staff provide high levels of support to the employer and the learner which enables them to quickly develop a productive working relationship. Employers are committed to providing a variety of opportunities in the workplace where learners can develop their skills and confidence. They are very supportive towards the learners' progress.

16. Learners in business administration receive good learning and pastoral support.

Training staff have very good working relationships with learners and have a thorough knowledge of their programme and personal needs. Assessors visit learners regularly in the workplace and meet with them each week for off-the-job training sessions. Learners find staff accessible and communicate with them regularly by e-mail, telephone and in person. Assessors are sensitive to learners' personal needs and provide extra support whenever it is needed. Assessors provide learners with ongoing information, guidance and advice about their personal development and career progression.

17. Assessment on engineering programmes is satisfactory. However, the frequency of direct observation of learners' performance is insufficient. Little observation takes place to verify the working practices of learners performing manufacturing activities in the workplace.

18. Employers have satisfactory workshop resources. Good attention is given to health and safety in workshops and learners are provided with, and use, appropriate personal protective equipment. They have a good knowledge of safe working practices.

19. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Few learners need support, but when such support is required, it is given readily.

20. **Off-the-job training is poorly planned in business administration.** Learners attend off-the-job training for one day each week at the centre to develop computer-based skills. These sessions are poorly planned. No learning session plans are used and there is little formal teaching. Learners are not set individual challenges or learning goals, but work through a series of tasks leading to their chosen examination. Other off-the-job training involves learners working with an assessor to complete work for their NVQ and for key skills where appropriate. Learners work individually and often have to wait for help from the assessor.

Leadership and management

21. **TS2000 has very good links with employers.** Staff visit employers regularly to carry out progress and welfare reviews with learners, and employers play an active role in this process. They are kept well informed of all aspects of learners' training, including copies of attendance reports for off-the-job training, as well as detailed six-monthly reports on the learner's progress. Employers are very supportive and provide good work placements to develop the learners' skills, confidence and knowledge.

22. **Learners' progress is monitored well.** Regular reviews are thorough, and measure achievement of learning goals, as well as providing effective welfare support. Concerns are promptly dealt with. Management information is used successfully to monitor performance, at individual and group level, and accurate monthly reports are produced. Progress records for each learner are well maintained and regularly updated.

23. **Priorities in development plans focus on improving the service, and a number of improvements have been made in facilities and services.** Challenging targets are set for recruitment, retention and achievement, and management information is used well to monitor performance.

24. **TS2000 has carried out a number of positive actions to widen participation.** In engineering, there are taster events held at local colleges for 14-16 year olds. These events are held to introduce schoolchildren to the engineering sector, with a member of staff from TS2000 acting as a workshop facilitator. Many of the participants are women and also a significant number are from minority ethnic groups. TS2000 also regularly attends school careers events to promote apprenticeships in administration and engineering to a diverse range of learners.

25. **The management of subcontractors is good.** Technical certificates for the engineering provision are delivered by a number of colleges. Agreements are in place for each college, and the performance of each college is closely monitored by one of the directors. Training sessions in colleges are observed and TS2000 ensures that they receive timely information

on punctuality and attendance. Comprehensive data is held on the achievement of technical certificates at each college, and this allows comparisons to be made. The achievement of technical certificates is consistently good.

26. **The self-assessment process is good**, with involvement from staff, learners and employers. Improvements have been made through effective self-assessment and development planning. However, the report contains no weaknesses and is mostly descriptive.

27. The monitoring and use of data on the recruitment of learners is satisfactory. Monthly reports are produced for directors which include statistics on the number of learners from minority ethnic groups. These are checked to ensure compliance with LSC contractual requirements. Overall, managers give sufficient priority to the promotion of equal opportunities across all aspects of the organisation.

28. The staff training and development is satisfactory. The training and development policy promotes continuous learning for all staff. The staff appraisal system is used to encourage staff to take further training and development to meet the needs of the business. However, staff do not take part in industrial updating activities as part of a continuous professional development agenda.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very good links with employers
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- good management of training
- effective management of subcontractors
- positive action to widen participation

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Strengths

- good achievement on NVQ programmes
- good retention rates
- very effective employer involvement
- particularly good learning and pastoral support

Weaknesses

- insufficient direct observation of learners' performance

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Grade 2

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good development of skills
- good learning and pastoral support
- particularly good work placements

Weaknesses

- poorly planned off-the-job training

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TRAINING SERVICES 2000:

- 'they helped me gain qualifications - I never gained anything at school - I am very proud'
- 'I like the independence and being treated like an adult'
- assessors get to know you as a person
- 'I have got loads of certificates - I can't believe it!'
- staff really motivate you
- the company is small and everyone gets to know one another

WHAT LEARNERS THINK TRAINING SERVICES 2000 COULD IMPROVE:

- more help in group sessions at the training centre
- more contact with the assessor on training centre days
- more help at the start of the NVQ, particularly with evidence collection
- the college sessions - they are too long

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- very good links with employers
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- good management of training
- effective management of subcontractors
- positive action to widen participation

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

29. TS2000 has very good links with employers. Staff visit employers regularly to carry out progress and welfare reviews with learners, and employers play an active role in this process. They are kept well informed of all aspects of the learner's training and receive a copy of attendance reports for off-the-job training, as well as detailed six-monthly reports on the learner's progress. Employers are very supportive and provide good work placements to develop learners' skills, confidence and knowledge. For example, a learner on an advanced apprenticeship in business administration, was given the opportunity to go on site visits with the building surveyors to gain a greater understanding of other job roles within the organisation. Another spent time working on the customer helpline, dealing directly with members of the public to assist them with repairs and maintenance.

30. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Regular reviews are thorough, and measure the achievement of learning goals, as well as providing effective welfare support. Concerns are promptly dealt with. Management information is used to monitor performance, at individual and group level, and accurate monthly reports are produced. Progress records for each learner are well maintained and regularly updated.

31. Strategically, the business development plan sets out key objectives which focus on improving the service for learners. For example, plans to upgrade the centre's information technology (IT) facilities have recently been completed, and future plans include additional space in the centre. Premises are well maintained. However, there are insufficient relevant journals or a range of newspapers available for business administration. Regular meetings between directors and staff include information on the performance of individual learners. These meetings are recorded and actions and responsibility are stated. Target-setting is good, and is challenging in terms of recruitment, retention and achievement. Staff are made aware of these targets and the effective use of management information ensures that areas of under performance are quickly identified and dealt with, particularly where under recruitment is identified. Administration of all aspects of the organisation is good. Communication is good, internally and with employers and the colleges. A regular newsletter is produced and distributed to all external partners. TS2000 celebrates learner success and holds an annual award ceremony to distribute certificates of achievement.

32. The training and development for staff is satisfactory. The training and development

policy promotes continuous learning for all staff, and the appraisal system encourages them to attend further training and development to meet the needs of the business. TS000 has a training and development plan which identifies the range of training and updates staff will attend. It does not however identify the need for staff to update their industrial knowledge, even though most staff have not worked in their respective vocational areas for a number of years.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

33. TS2000 has carried out a number of actions to widen participation. In engineering, there are taster events at local colleges for 14-16 year olds. These events are held to introduce schoolchildren to the engineering sector. A member of staff from TS2000 acts as a workshop facilitator in these events. Many of the participants are women and also a significant number are from minority ethnic groups. TS2000 regularly attends schools' careers events to promote apprenticeships in administration and engineering to a diverse range of learners. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups on apprenticeship programmes is 8 per cent, and this reflects the profile of the local community. These learners are mostly on administration apprenticeships. There are currently no women on engineering programmes.

34. There are satisfactory policies covering equal opportunities and respect for diversity and disability, and these are prominently displayed in the centre. Employers and subcontractors sign up to these when entering into agreements with TS2000. They are prominently displayed in the centre. Some publicity and marketing materials are produced in several languages to reflect the local community. Staff keep up to date with developments in equal opportunities and have attended many events on legislative requirements, as well as cultural visits and seminars on working in minority ethnic groups. Staff development records show that all permanent staff have attended many events on equality and diversity in the past three years.

35. Learners know who to speak to if they are being harassed or discriminated against, and the welfare reviews are very effective in ensuring that learners are treated well at work. Learners value welfare reviews and they have in some cases been successful in retaining learners who were at risk of leaving early.

36. Training in equality is part of the learner's induction and is satisfactory. Understanding is checked satisfactorily throughout the programme at progress and welfare reviews.

37. Data on recruitment is monitored and used well. Monthly reports are produced for directors and these include statistics concerning the number of learners from minority ethnic groups. The figures are then checked to ensure compliance with LSC contractual requirements. Overall, managers give sufficient priority to the promotion of equal opportunities across all aspects of the organisation.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

38. TS2000 has a formal quality assurance policy which identifies the key arrangements for ensuring quality across all areas of its business. A thorough annual cycle of events is planned and recorded and includes policy reviews, self-assessment and development planning, distribution and analysis of learner and employer questionnaires. Monthly checks and six-monthly full checks are also carried out on learners' files to ensure that they are up to date and contain all necessary information.

39. Feedback is constantly sought through questionnaires, and during progress and welfare reviews. Improvements and changes have been made after feedback. For example, learners highlighted problems with some aspects of college provision and TS2000 worked with the college to rectify them.

40. The management of subcontractors is good. Technical certificates for the engineering provision are delivered by a number of colleges. Agreements are in place for each college, and their performance is closely monitored by one of the directors. Training sessions in colleges are observed and TS2000 ensures that they receive timely information on punctuality and attendance. Comprehensive data is held on the achievement of technical certificates at each college and this allows comparisons to be made. The achievement of technical certificates is consistently good.

41. The observation of teaching in business administration was introduced in January 2005. The documents contain satisfactory criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, but those observing have received no training to carry out observations, nor do they give feedback to the teacher immediately after the observation. It is too early to measure whether the introduction of the system is having an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in business administration.

42. Self-assessment is an established part of the annual quality process, and involves all staff, learners and employers. Staff meetings are held before drafting the report, and the feedback is analysed to highlight trends in responses. The feedback is then used for development planning and improvements. The process by which self-assessment is carried out is good. The report contains many strengths which were also identified by inspectors, although the weaknesses were not recognised in the report. The supporting text describes how the areas for improvement have been dealt with. However, it is mostly descriptive.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Mechanical engineering Apprenticeships for young people	11	2
Electrical engineering Apprenticeships for young people	2	2
Manufacturing Apprenticeships for young people	40	2
Other contributory areas Apprenticeships for young people	2	2

43. Fifty-five learners are following engineering programmes. Of these, 24 are advanced apprentices, 26 are apprentices and five are working towards engineering NVQs. Learners work towards programmes in mechanical engineering, engineering design, engineering maintenance, fabrication and welding, or electrical installation and commissioning. They are employed at one of 33 employers who are based in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire. Occupations include mechanical engineering, electronics, aerospace, rail transport and power generation. Apprentices attend a further education college for one day each week and work towards a technical certificate. TS2000 subcontracts to six colleges. All apprentices have the opportunity to complete an information and communications technology qualification at TS2000's IT centre. TS2000's staff provide assessment and verification on employers' premises through three full-time staff.

Strengths

- good achievement on NVQ programmes
- good retention rates
- very effective employer involvement
- particularly good learning and pastoral support

Weaknesses

- insufficient direct observation of learners' performance

Achievement and standards

44. The achievement rate for NVQ programmes is good. On average, between 1997 and 2002, 78 per cent of learners achieved all aspects of their programme. Over a similar period, advanced apprentices and apprentices have average achievement rates of 62 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Over the past three years, the progress of all learners is satisfactory.

45. Retention rates are good on all programmes. For the advanced apprentices, there have been no early leavers in the past three years, and there are good rates of retention for apprentices and NVQ learners over the same period.

46. Learners' portfolios are well presented and contain a range of diverse information including detailed and thorough descriptions of work completed, photographs of jobs produced, witness statements, job cards and company procedures. Learners enjoy their work, acquire appropriate skills in the workplace and are encouraged to adopt safe working practices.

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		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		5		5		5		13	100						
Retained*	0		0		0		2		7	54						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		1		6	46						
Still in learning	13		5		5		1		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		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	20		11		14		4	100	8	100						
Retained*	0		2		8		3	75	2	25						
Successfully completed	0		2		6		3	75	2	25						
Still in learning	19		6		1		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	3		7		8	100	2	100								
Retained*	0		5		5	62	1	50								
Successfully completed	0		4		5	62	1	50								
Still in learning	3		2		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. Employers are very effectively involved in the NVQ and apprenticeship training programmes. They provide learners with good opportunities to develop their skills on a wide range of industry-standard equipment. TS2000 ensures that employers are well informed of learners' progress and are fully aware and have knowledge of the NVQ process. Employers are able to identify gaps in the training programme and clearly help learners to achieve their goals through challenging targets and activities. The training

programmes clearly meet the needs of the learners and employers. For example, in the first year of the training programme one learner designed, sourced and built a high-specification portable test rig which is used by the employer to check a range of customer equipment. The learner benefited by developing a range of skills in designing, locating, ordering and modifying components and building the complex piece of equipment. The employer also arranged for the learner to attend a short course in pneumatics to provide background information to assist in the development of the equipment. Key skills were fully integrated into the project. Another employer uses a well-presented computer planning and monitoring system and keeps accurate records of the progress made by apprentices. These include details of progress made in key skills and elements of the programme by each individual learner.

48. Learners receive particularly good learning and pastoral support to help them complete their programmes. During the regular 12-weekly welfare reviews, employers are asked for their opinion of their learners' performance. Learners are also encouraged to comment on their training programme. Learners are confident enough to discuss and identify personal and work-related problems. TS2000 manages these confidentially and sensitively, and where appropriate, involves employers and in some cases outside agencies. Learners speak highly of the pastoral support they receive. One learner who experienced significant personal difficulties was given sensitive advice and guidance to apply for accommodation with a housing association. The learner was well supported and continued to make good progress with his work. Another learner explained that by working in one department of a company his opportunities to complete the planned competences were reduced. Staff spoke to the company and the learner was moved through a range of departments. TS2000 encourages and supports learners to progress on to other training programmes. In the past four years, an average of 80 per cent of apprentices have progressed to the advanced apprenticeship. Also, 50 per cent of those who achieve the NVQ at level 2, progress to the level 3. Learners work towards an additional IT qualification, taught by TS2000 staff, which clearly prepares them for their IT key skills unit. However, two learners on electronic programmes cannot locate colleges that provide appropriate technical certificates. These learners are unable to complete a full apprenticeship framework.

49. Resources are satisfactory. In employer workshops, learners develop a wide range of skills through the use of hand and power tools, and machine tools. Good attention is given to health and safety in the workshop and learners have a good knowledge of safe working practices. They are provided with, and use, appropriate personal protective equipment.

50. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Most learners do not need this support, but when it is required it is given readily. For example, one learner who found report writing difficult, was supported through his apprenticeship and is making good progress towards the framework.

51. The frequency of direct observation of learners' performance is insufficient. Little observation takes place of learners performing manufacturing activities in the workplace. TS2000 relies on the development of skills through on-the-job training. Assessment visits are carried out every four to six weeks and learners are well informed of the progress they make. However, much of this assessment is of the learners' progress in completing portfolio work. Learners are given clear and measurable targets to achieve before the next visit, progress is monitored and new targets are set at subsequent visits.

Leadership and management

52. TS2000's staff communicate well with employers and inform them of their learners' progress. They promote the wellbeing of learners through good pastoral support, education and training. Learners are monitored closely and are encouraged to succeed in all aspects of their programmes. TS2000's staff have close and regular links with colleges and ensure that the views of their learners are clearly promoted to college managers. Programmes are planned satisfactorily. The training programme clearly extends and builds on the learners' development and meets their individual needs. For example, learners who need help to complete their IT key skills are provided with an IT course in TS2000's training centre. TS2000's staff are appropriately qualified.

53. The internal verification process is satisfactory and clear records are kept of the sampling of assessment practices. However, there are few records of the sampling of direct observations carried out by assessors.

54. The self-assessment report identified the same strengths as those identified by inspectors. However, the report was insufficiently critical and did not identify any weaknesses. The report does not contain clear judgements on the provision.

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		2
Apprenticeships for young people	26	2

55. There are 26 learners on business administration apprenticeship programmes. Nineteen are working towards a level 2 in administration and eight are working towards a level 3 in administration. All learners complete an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners receive an induction during which they receive information about their qualification, health and safety, and equal opportunities. Learners are employed in a variety of organisations covering a range of private and public-sector business environments. These include the local authority, manufacturing companies, sales and marketing organisations and the TS2000 administration support office. Learners receive off-the-job training at the TS2000 training centre. Learners attend weekly training sessions to support the development of occupational and employability skills. They attend one-day sessions with an assessor to complete their NVQ portfolio. They also receive training in key skills, the technical certificate, and attend an enhancement workshop where a broad range of computer-based qualifications is offered. This includes a basic IT qualification, an examination-based IT qualification, word processing, text processing or audio transcription. Assessors from TS2000 visit learners regularly to carry out assessments in the workplace. TS2000 trainers also carry out the internal verification. Learners' progress is reviewed regularly in the workplace.

Business administration

Grade 2

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good development of skills
- good learning and pastoral support
- particularly good work placements

Weaknesses

- poorly planned off-the-job training

Achievement and standards

56. Retention and achievement rates are very good. The retention rates are good for advanced apprentices and have been consistently very good for apprentices. There has been a slightly declining trend in achievement rates for apprentices from 100 per cent in 2000-01, 86 per cent in 2001-02 to 77 per cent for 2002-03, but these are still generally very good. Of the 2003-04 apprentices, 40 per cent are still in learning and 47 per cent have completed the full framework. A small proportion of learners have progressed from the apprenticeship to the advanced apprenticeship.

57. Business administration learners are developing good practical and personal skills

which they use effectively in the workplace. They respond well to the demands of their employers and are keen to learn new skills. They have increased their knowledge and practical skill levels and demonstrate a high level of competence in their tasks. Some learners are gaining experience in industry-specific practices. One learner has been trained to deal with internet sales enquiries, online credit card payments and to process and despatch orders. Others have gained enhanced telephone techniques and improved keyboarding skills. All learners have increased their confidence and are valued team members in their companies. In some cases, learners have increased their responsibilities as they have progressed within their programme. Learners' portfolios are well organised and work is good. The technical certificate and key skills are taught by TS2000's training staff. Key skills are an integral part of the learners' NVQ and portfolio work.

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		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		2		3		1	100	3	100						
Retained*	0		0		2		1	100	2	67						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		1	100	2	67						
Still in learning	2		2		2		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	14		15	100	13	100	7	100								
Retained*	0		14	93	11	85	6	86								
Successfully completed	0		7	47	10	77	6	86								
Still in learning	14		6	40	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

58. On-the-job training is monitored thoroughly. There are six-weekly visits to all learners by the assessors where action-planning, observations and assessments take place. There is a 12-weekly welfare review, which involves the employer and the learner in reviewing and planning progress. Assessor visits are arranged more frequently if learners need additional support. For example, one learner was visited every two weeks to enable her to achieve the NVQ at level 3 before taking maternity leave. All employers receive a progression update every six months, which highlights key achievements such as examination results and unit completion. Assessment processes are satisfactory. Learners collect a satisfactory range of evidence for their portfolios.

59. Assessors carry out regular observations in the workplace and these are well planned. However, feedback is not given to the learner directly after the observation. The feedback

is word processed by the assessor and fed back to the learner for discussion at a later date. Target-setting is generally satisfactory. However, some targets are unchallenging for the more able learner. Learners receive a satisfactory initial assessment which identifies support needs.

60. The off-the-job training is poorly planned. Learners attend off-the-job training for one day each week at the TS2000 centre to develop computer skills. However, learning plans are not used to structure the session and there is insufficient formal teaching. Learners are not set individual challenges or learning goals. They work methodically through a series of past examination tasks leading to their chosen examination. A tutor is present for learners to ask for help. The session is uninspiring and there is little use of pair or group work to further develop knowledge and understanding or to discuss and share ideas. There is a wide range of computer courses available to learners to gain additional qualifications. Other off-the-job training involves learners working individually in an NVQ support session at the TS2000 centre. Learners arrive at the session with a previously agreed action plan to guide their NVQ unit completion. However, the session is not sufficiently structured to meet the different needs of learners and does not always include activities that encourage them to work independently. Many are unable to proceed without the help of the assessor and often have to wait for guidance to progress.

61. There is a broad range of textbooks, manuals and CD-ROMs to support the achievement of NVQ units, the technical certificate and computer examinations. However, tutors make insufficient use or reference to these. Most learners are unaware of the different resources available to support their learning. There are insufficient additional learning materials such as professional journals, newspapers, reference books and industry-produced posters and booklets to encourage learners to explore and discuss current business issues. There is little use or reference to relevant websites where learners could access up-to-date information and research different organisations and business practices. The off-the-job training accommodation is good and recently installed computer hardware and software is to a high specification. However, learners do not have access to other industry-standard technology to identify how training and presentations take place in the workplace. Training staff are appropriately qualified and attend training courses to update their subject knowledge, however they do not have recent vocational work experience in industry.

62. Learners work in particularly good workplaces where they experience a wide range of activities which are relevant to their NVQ programme. TS2000's training staff provide good support to the employer and the learner and this allows them to develop a productive working relationship. Employers are committed to providing a variety of opportunities in the workplace where learners can develop their skills and confidence. Some learners have been given roles with increased responsibility since they started their programme. Other employers have arranged for learners to work in different departments within the organisation to gain a full understanding of the company. Employers take a very keen interest in their learners' progress and are fully involved in welfare reviews. Most are knowledgeable about all elements of the framework and are fully involved in planning on-the-job training. Some employers have devised in-house training and monitoring programmes where they can monitor learners' progress within specific business functions and evaluate their performance. Most employers match learners' work tasks to NVQ programme requirements. They receive copies of all documents relating to their attendance and achievements. Employers use this information when planning on-the-job

training for the learner.

63. Learners receive good learning and pastoral support. Training staff have very good working relationships with learners and have a thorough knowledge of their programme and personal needs. Assessors motivate and encourage learners and are keen to recognise and celebrate their achievements throughout their course. Employers and parents are invited to an annual event where learners receive awards and certificates for qualifications gained. Assessors visit learners regularly in the workplace and meet with them each week for off-the-job training sessions. Learners find staff very accessible and communicate with them regularly by e-mail, telephone or face to face. Assessors are particularly sensitive to learners' personal problems and provide extra support whenever it is needed. One learner who was de-motivated and disinterested in learning at school became an enthusiastic and keen learner at the training centre. He progressed to a successful work placement as part of the apprenticeship programme with support from the training staff. The learner is now considering studying to advanced level. Assessors meet formally every two weeks and interact informally on a daily basis to discuss individual learners. Assessors provide learners with ongoing information, guidance and advice about their personal development and career progression.

Leadership and management

64. The business administration provision is effectively managed and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff at all levels have a clear agenda for improvement. They promote the wellbeing of learners through a commitment to good care, education and training. Equal opportunities are promoted at initial assessment and at all progress and welfare reviews. TS2000 provides appropriate training and development opportunities for their training staff. However, these do not include vocational updating opportunities through industry-placement activities. They have productive links with a wide range of employers and work particularly well with local schools to provide support for pupils who are at risk of under achieving.

65. The self-assessment report reflects most of the findings from the inspection process and highlights areas for improvement. However, it does not provide enough critical review to enable weaknesses to be identified.

