

REINSPECTION REPORT

Training and Development Resources Limited Reinspection

25 November 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

Training and Development Resources Limited Reinspection

Contents

Summary

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

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	8
Equality of opportunity	10
Quality assurance	10
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	13

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Training and Development Resources Limited (TDR) was established in 1998 as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Its main base is on a trading estate in Gateshead. It provides training in engineering, mainly through subcontracted colleges. TDR also manages an employer training pilot (ETP) programme.
2. The company is managed by a managing director. He reports to a board of directors made up of representatives from local manufacturing and engineering companies, schools and colleges. The company is split into three separate divisions, one deals with workforce development, which manages the ETP, another deals with the main apprenticeship training programme, and the third manages the schools liaison programme.
3. There are 23 staff, including the managing director. Three of these staff are managers of the individual divisions. On the apprenticeship programme there are five training co-ordinators and a recruitment manager, whose responsibility it is to assess, support and review the learners. There is a quality assurance manager who is also responsible for personnel. The rest of the staff support the various teams with administrative, financial, marketing and schools liaison functions.
4. TDR funds its training through Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In the Tyne and Wear area, from which TDR recruits its learners, the proportion of the local population comprising minority ethnic groups is 3.2 per cent according to the 2001 census, compared with 9 per cent nationally. Unemployment in the region is at 4 per cent, compared with 2.6 per cent nationally. The rate rises to 5.4 per cent in South Tyneside, one of the areas from which learners are recruited.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

5. Since the previous inspection a significant number of learners on advanced apprenticeship programmes have been transferred to other providers. The total number of learners on work-based learning programmes has been reduced by approximately 66 per cent. There are currently 98 learners working towards advanced apprenticeships in engineering and 31 on apprenticeships. All learners attend a further education college for 30 weeks off-the-job training, to complete their national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 and the key skills elements of their programmes. Most learners are employed, or gain jobs during this initial period of training. Following completion of the initial training, learners work towards their NVQs at level 3.
6. In December 2002, TDR began some initial training for phase 3 of the ETP. TDR has recruited 409 learners to the ETP since then and all have now completed their programmes. Of these, 127 learners worked towards an NVQ at level 2, and the rest

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES LIMITED REINSPECTION

took vocationally related qualifications (VRQs) in door supervision or security guarding. All NVQ learners were employed, working for one of 11 local companies, performing a range of engineering and manufacturing operations. TDR provided off-the-job training on employers' premises in welding and fabrication and electrical engineering. Training in performing manufacturing operations and warehousing, distribution and storage, at level 2 NVQ, was delivered through a subcontracted college. ETP learners taking VRQs completed a five-day, off-the-job training course with TDR. At the time of the reinspection TDR had no learners on ETP, but the company has recently been awarded a contract for phase 4 of the programme.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	15
Number of learners interviewed	20
Number of staff interviewed	26
Number of employers interviewed	13
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	12

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. The previous inspection in September 2004 found that the provision in engineering, technology and manufacturing was unsatisfactory. TDR's leadership and management and arrangements for quality assurance were also unsatisfactory. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity were satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, the engineering, technology and manufacturing provision was found to be satisfactory, as were the company's leadership and management and its arrangements for quality assurance. The arrangements for equal opportunities were good.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
- Apprenticeships for young people	398	4
- Employer training pilot	34	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas		
- Apprenticeships for young people	129	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. **Learners achieve a very good level of additional vocational qualifications.** These qualifications are additional to the requirements of the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship frameworks. Many learners continue to higher education and a small number are on part-time degree courses. All learners achieve at least one additional qualification.

9. **Learners develop a good standard of practical engineering skills and background knowledge.** They work with confidence and competence in their jobs and use their own initiative in complex jobs.

10. Since the previous inspection, TDR has introduced apprenticeship training in engineering. Achievement and retention rates for apprentices in the one year that the programme has operated, are good. Learners' achievements on phase 3 of the ETP programme, which finished before reinspection, were also good.

11. **Retention and achievement rates are poor for advanced apprentices in engineering.**

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES LIMITED REINSPECTION

TDR identified this weakness in its self-assessment report and has made some improvements. There are indications that learners' performances are improving.

Quality of education and training

12. Support for learners is very good. Since the previous inspection, the training department has been restructured and the role of the training co-ordinators has been revised. Two additional co-ordinators have been appointed. They now have more manageable caseloads and visit learners at least every two weeks.

13. Employers' involvement in the training is very good. Learners are allocated to well-qualified and experienced technician engineers, or craftspeople, who act as mentors. Learners are given a wide range of tasks in different departments to help them develop and achieve competence. Support is good from senior managers, who take an active interest in learners' progress.

14. At the previous inspection, progress reviews were not thorough enough. Progress reviews are now satisfactory, and they are completed frequently. Clear targets are agreed and these are closely monitored. All employers are involved in the review process. All learners have a clear understanding of the apprenticeship framework and the progress they are making towards completion. Since the previous inspection, the approach to equality of opportunity during progress reviews has improved significantly.

15. The planning of the learning process was inadequate at the previous inspection. The planning of on- and off-the-job training is now satisfactory. All learners are employed and attend off-the-job training for 30 weeks with a local subcontractor. Previously, key skills training had been delivered towards the end of the apprenticeship programme. All key skills units are now completed within the initial 30 weeks off-the-job training.

16. Resources in the workplace are good. Learners work on specialist equipment which includes computer-controlled machine tools, and the use of co-ordinate measuring machines to check component accuracy. Resources at college are satisfactory. Investments have been made recently in machine tools and in computers for key skills activities. College engineering workshops are satisfactory and classrooms for background knowledge are modern and well equipped.

Leadership and management

17. The good external partnerships identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. A wide range of external links and partnerships is effective in raising awareness of, and promoting progression into, engineering. TDR has links with 18 schools, and staff at all levels are actively involved in networks and external groups. The TDR management board comprises representatives from many leading engineering businesses, as well as local schools and colleges.

18. TDR has developed good links to support a smooth transition for learners from

school to the apprenticeship programmes. This was recognised at the previous inspection and there have been further developments. TDR's active involvement in high-profile school initiatives for young apprentices and in the student apprentice programmes supports pupils in making informed career choices, and promotes commitment to the apprenticeship programme at an early stage. A significant proportion of pupils progress to apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. In 2005-06, 16 of the advanced apprentices were recruited from student engineer programmes. Expressions of interest for 2006-07 starts indicate similar potential.

19. Initial assessment and arrangements for literacy and numeracy support remain satisfactory. Appropriate arrangements exist with the main subcontracting college to provide learners' with literacy or numeracy support. Sensitive support is provided, at work and at college, for learners with disclosed medical conditions.

20. Communications are satisfactory. Regular meetings are held throughout the year at each level of the company. Staff understand the company's strategic direction. Progress towards targets, equality of opportunity and health and safety are standard agenda items at each meeting. Board minutes include matters arising, but actions are written in the text and not identified separately. In one instance this had significant implications. The systems did not highlight the need to follow up a new area of legislation.

21. Staff appraisals, training and development are satisfactory, as they were at the previous inspection. Staff are involved in a wide range of development initiatives and TDR has completed a training needs analysis since the previous inspection. However, it is not clear how the training needs analysis and staff development targets relate to corporate objectives. The overall management of staffing and other physical resources is satisfactory.

22. Performance management was inadequate, and target-setting was weak at the previous inspection. These elements have improved and are now satisfactory. Operational imperatives set clear and measurable targets for the current year. The board monitors the company's progress towards these targets at each meeting. Each manager and member of staff has individual targets, based on operational imperatives, and these are monitored each month.

23. **Management systems are not co-ordinated sufficiently.** The links between targets at corporate, team and individual level are not clear and progress towards targets is not collated systematically. There is no overview or analysis of how many learners are on target, ahead of target, or behind target. Statistical trends are not monitored sufficiently over time. TDR is not using data to compare the achievements of different groups, such as those recruited through schools programmes. The monitoring of action points from meetings is weak.

24. **TDR has introduced very effective improvements to reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity.** Learners' induction provides a sound overview of equality and diversity that is reinforced systematically at progress reviews. Review records now clearly document the specific topics discussed at each progress review and

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES LIMITED REINSPECTION

learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues.

25. At the previous inspection there was no strategy to develop equality and diversity, and the monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace was inadequate. These areas are now satisfactory. The company has raised the strategic profile of equality and diversity by the appointing an equality and diversity 'champion' to the board, early in 2005. TDR now systematically monitors equality of opportunity in the workplace and takes prompt action where inappropriate or offensive comments or materials are seen.

26. Recruitment targets for the various under-represented groups are set, monitored and achieved. Records of recruitment to school-based programmes show an increasing number of girls and young people from minority ethnic groups. Managers are aware that they do not make enough use of data in comparing the performances of these different groups. TDR has not yet responded to the Children's Act 2004. This was identified as a need at board level in July 2005, but no policy documents have been produced.

27. Since the previous inspection, a significant amount of work has taken place to review and update the quality assurance systems. A quality improvement manager, supported by a quality improvement team, takes overall responsibility for systematic improvements. TDR now has comprehensive and well-written policy and procedural documents to support quality assurance. A systematic internal audit process reviews all aspects of training on a regular cycle and ensures that action points are followed up.

28. The company's monitoring of subcontractors has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Service-level agreements exist, and systems have been introduced to improve the monitoring of their performance. TDR now has access to information from the colleges' quality assurance systems, but these arrangements are not fully established. Contract review meetings have agendas, and action minutes are formally recorded, but neither is cross-referenced to the service-level agreement and the agendas are not detailed enough. There is no plan to show how the different aspects of the agreement will be monitored over the contract year.

29. The management of assessment and internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verification is thorough, assessors are given feedback, and follow up is prompt. Regular standardisation meetings have been effective in supporting consistency in assessment practice. However records of meetings are not sufficiently detailed.

30. The collection and use of feedback is satisfactory. Two surveys for learners and employers have taken place and the results have been analysed in detail. Action points for improvement have been implemented. Learners and employers were notified about actions resulting from their feedback. TDR is aware that there are weaknesses in the design of the survey. Some questions are closed and do not allow further information to be submitted that might contribute to improvements.

31. The self-assessment process is now satisfactory. Staff at all levels of the company are involved in the process. Feedback from other stakeholders, collected through surveys, contributes to the report. The board does not assess its own activities, but moderates

and validates the report. The self-assessment grades are the same as those given by inspectors. However the report is still descriptive, rather than evaluative.

32. Some aspects of quality assurance are not sufficiently established. Some documents are still being developed. An annual internal audit schedule takes place, but there is no clearly planned, published schedule of quality assurance activities. It is not clear how the different aspects of quality improvement activity are linked in a coherent way. TDR now observes all key learning processes, but some aspects of this system are weak. The monitoring of service-level agreements has improved and is generally satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses in the thoroughness of the process. The colleges' six-weekly reports about learners are not sufficiently detailed. Action points from meetings frequently do not have agreed timescales.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good external partnerships
- good links to support smooth transition to apprenticeship programmes
- very effective reinforcement of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- insufficiently co-ordinated management systems
- insufficiently established aspects of quality improvement

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good achievement of additional qualifications
- good development of practical skills
- very good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor retention and completion of frameworks by advanced apprentices

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good external partnerships
- good links to support smooth transition to apprenticeship programmes
- very effective reinforcement of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- insufficiently co-ordinated management systems
- insufficiently established aspects of quality improvement

33. The good external partnerships identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. A wide range of external links and partnerships is effective in raising awareness of, and promoting progression into, engineering. For example, TDR has links with 18 schools. Staff at all levels are actively involved in networks and external groups. These links influence TDR's strategies at company, regional and, in the case of schools work, national level. The managing director views the development and maintenance of these partnerships as a key part of his role. He supports wider staff links and is active in many groups. TDR's management board comprises representatives from many leading engineering businesses, as well as local schools and colleges.

34. TDR has developed good links to support a smooth transition from school to apprenticeship programmes. This was recognised at the previous inspection and the links have been developed further since then. TDR's active involvement in high-profile school initiatives for young apprentices and in the student apprentice programmes supports pupils in making informed career choices, and promotes their commitment to the apprenticeship programme at an early stage. Employers' networks are used well to establish high-quality and appropriate work placements. These offer realistic and challenging work-based projects. Pupils take pride in their work and develop good, transferable skills. They achieve relevant qualifications, and those who progress into vocational training begin their apprenticeships with some framework components already completed. A significant proportion of pupils progress to apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. In 2005-06, 16 of the advanced apprentices were recruited from student engineer programmes. Expressions of interest for 2006-07 starts are encouraging.

35. Initial assessments and arrangements for literacy and numeracy support remain satisfactory. Appropriate arrangements exist with the main subcontracting college to provide literacy or numeracy support for learners. Sensitive support is provided, at work and at college, for learners with disclosed medical conditions.

36. Communications are satisfactory. Regular meetings are held throughout the year at each level of the company. Staff understand the company's strategic direction. Progress towards targets in general, and in equality of opportunity, and health and safety are standard agenda items at each meeting. Records of meetings are generally satisfactory, and action points are identified in most cases, but they frequently do not have target dates and it is not always clear that they are followed up. Board minutes include matters arising, but actions are written in the text and not identified separately. In one instance this had significant implications. The system did not highlight the need to follow up a new area of legislation.

37. Staff appraisals, training and development are satisfactory, as they were at the previous inspection. The appraisal and review processes are clearly documented. Staff are involved in a wide range of staff development which includes mentoring, work shadowing, and a range of formal training up to level 5. TDR has completed a training needs analysis since the previous inspection, but does not explain clearly how the training needs analysis and staff development targets relate to corporate objectives. The overall management of staffing and other physical resources is satisfactory.

38. Strategic direction is satisfactory. TDR has a clearly written strategic and business plan to cover the next three years. The plan includes an explicit statement of TDR's mission and values. It covers all aspects of company activities in detail.

39. Performance management was inadequate, and target-setting was weak at the previous inspection. These areas have improved and are now satisfactory. Operational objectives set clear and measurable targets for the current year. The board monitors progress made towards these targets at each meeting. Each manager and member of staff has individual targets based on the operational objectives which are monitored each month. Individual learners' progress is monitored closely, and their achievement of the various framework components is clearly recorded and displayed.

40. Management systems are not co-ordinated sufficiently. The links between targets at corporate, team and individual level are not clear and progress towards targets is not collated systematically. There is no overview or analysis of how many learners are on target, ahead of target, or behind target. Information was readily available for inspectors to show that the number of learners completing their frameworks after their planned end dates is being reduced, but TDR has not used a similar approach to monitor the effectiveness of actions, or support in improving completion rates. Discussions about progress towards retention and achievement targets take place in meetings, but are not recorded in sufficient detail and the information is often unclear. There is not enough monitoring of statistical trends over time. TDR is not using data to compare the achievements of different groups, such as those recruited through schools programmes. The links between staff development, the training needs analysis, and corporate objectives, are not explicit. The monitoring of action points produced from meetings is weak. Actions are identified and responsibilities are delegated, but dates for completion or progress monitoring are rarely stated.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

41. TDR has introduced very effective improvements to reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Learner induction provides a sound overview of equality and diversity that is reinforced systematically during progress reviews. Learners select an equality and diversity topic at each review, which they research before the next visit, at which point their chosen topic is thoroughly discussed. The range of topics includes many aspects of current legislation. Good use is made of the LSC's equality and diversity booklet. Progress review records now clearly document the specific topic discussed at each review. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. One advanced apprentice was sufficiently knowledgeable about legislation to challenge some inappropriate comments made at work.

42. At the previous inspection, there was no strategy to develop equality and diversity, and the monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace was inadequate. These areas are now satisfactory. The company has raised the strategic profile of equality and diversity by appointing an equality and diversity 'champion' for the board, early in 2005. A detailed equality and diversity action plan is reviewed at each board meeting and updated regularly. Good progress has been made in the development of staff and board members. TDR now monitors equality of opportunity in the workplace systematically and takes prompt action where inappropriate or offensive comments or materials are seen. All employers have been audited at least once.

43. Recruitment targets for under-represented groups are set, monitored and achieved. Records of recruitment to school-based programmes show increasing numbers of girls and young people from minority ethnic groups. Two of the three current female advanced apprentices were recruited from 'student engineer' programmes. Girls and young people from minority ethnic groups are represented in almost every strand of school programmes. Minority ethnic group representation grew from 3 per cent last year to 10 per cent this year. Recruitment for the next intake is not complete, but so far, 33 per cent are girls. Managers are aware that they do not make enough use of data in comparing performances at interviews, progress through programmes and achievements by these different groups.

44. TDR has not responded to the Children's Act 2004. This was identified as a need at board level in July 2005, but no policy documents have been produced.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

45. Since the previous inspection TDR has carried out significant work to review and update the quality assurance systems. A quality improvement manager, supported by a quality improvement team, takes overall responsibility for systematic improvements. TDR now has a comprehensive and well-written policy and procedural documents to support quality assurance. A great number of standardised documents have been developed. A systematic internal audit process reviews all aspects of training on a regular cycle, and ensures that action points are followed up.

46. The monitoring of subcontractors has improved significantly since the previous

inspection and is now satisfactory. Service-level agreements exist, and systems have been introduced to improve the monitoring of their performance. For example, formal contract reviews now take place three times each year with the main subcontracted college. TDR is working with another training provider, which also uses the college as a subcontractor, on the joint observation of teaching. TDR now has access to information from the college's quality assurance system, but these arrangements are not fully established. For example, although the college regularly collects the views of its learners, the service-level agreement does not specify that summaries of this feedback will be shared with TDR. The company informs the college of feedback collected through its own learner surveys, and college managers have written a quality improvement plan to resolve issues raised. Progress in implementing the plan is monitored at contract review meetings. However, the arrangements for TDR sharing learners' feedback, and the college producing a quality improvement plan, are not clearly stated in the service-level agreement. Review meetings have agendas, and actions are minuted, but neither is cross-referenced to the service-level agreement and the agendas are not sufficiently detailed. There is no plan to show how the different aspects of the agreement will be monitored over the contract year.

47. The management of assessment and internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verification is thorough, assessors are given feedback, and follow-up is prompt. Regular standardisation meetings have been effective in supporting consistency in assessment practice. For instance, standardised verbal and written questions are now used. However, although the agenda for standardisation meetings is well structured and clear, the records of meetings are not sufficiently detailed. The complaints process is satisfactory and learners understand how to raise concerns. There are no examples of formal complaints being made.

48. The collection and use of feedback is satisfactory. Two surveys of learners and employers have taken place and the results have been analysed in detail. Sample response rates were at least satisfactory. For some groups, responses were excellent at 100 per cent. Action points for improvement have been implemented. Learners and employers were notified about actions resulting from their feedback. TDR is aware that there are weaknesses in the survey design. Some questions are closed and do not allow further information to be submitted that might contribute to improvements. For example, a significant number of learners indicated 'yes' to a question about whether they had considered leaving the programme, but there are no further questions to investigate their reasons, or how this situation could be avoided.

49. Self-assessment is now satisfactory. Staff at all levels of the company are involved in the process. Feedback from other stakeholders, collected through surveys, contributes to the report. The board does not assess its own activities, but moderates and validates the report. The self-assessment report was revised shortly before inspection and is detailed and informative. It draws on a wide range of evidence, and identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. Self-assessment grades are the same as those given by inspectors. However the report is still descriptive, rather than evaluative. Most action points in the recently produced quality improvement plan are measurable, but the links between the actions identified and the self-assessment report

are not clear enough.

50. Some aspects of quality assurance are not sufficiently established. Some documents are still being developed. For example, there are some very detailed documents with process flow charts and clear timescales, but in other documents the flow charts are not developed and timescales are not clear. There is an annual internal audit schedule, but no clearly planned, published schedules of quality assurance activities. It is not clear that the different aspects of quality improvement activities are linked together in a coherent way. TDR now observes all key learning processes, but some aspects of this are weak. Effective action was taken to improve the one inadequate teaching grade, but there is no indication of planning to improve the many satisfactory grades. Lesson observation grades are not moderated to ensure consistency. TDR has recognised the need for more objective criteria, and is making good progress in the development of a set of grading criteria. The monitoring of service-level agreements has improved and is generally satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses in the thoroughness of the process. It is not clear how the three review meetings monitor each aspect of the service-level agreement over the course of the year. The colleges' six-weekly reports about learners are not detailed enough. Action points from meetings frequently do not have agreed timescales. Many other actions are noted in individual memos, rather than as action plans for systematic follow up. By contrast, actions arising from internal audits are clearly recorded and identified by shading when complete. It is possible to see progress at a glance.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Apprenticeships for young people	129	3

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good achievement of additional qualifications
- good development of practical skills
- very good support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor retention and completion of frameworks by advanced apprentices

Achievement and standards

51. There is a very good achievement of additional qualifications. These qualifications include higher national certificates, welding and abrasive wheels regulations, 16th edition wiring regulations, portable appliance testing, lift-truck driving, construction site safety certificates, computer-aided design, and a number of specialist manufacturers' courses. All of these qualifications are additional to the requirements of the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship frameworks. Where appropriate, many learners progress to higher education and a small number are on part-time degree courses. All learners achieve at least one additional qualification.

52. Learners develop a good standard of practical engineering skills and background knowledge. They work with confidence and competence in their work roles and use their own initiative in complex jobs. For example, one learner successfully redesigned their employer's welding bays to allow access for lift trucks and lifting gear.

53. Since the previous inspection, TDR has introduced apprenticeship training in engineering. Achievement and retention rates for apprentices, in the one year that the programme has operated, are good. Of the 38 learners recruited in 2004-05, 24 have successfully completed their apprenticeship frameworks and seven are near to completion. Learners' performances on phase 3 of the ETP programme, which ended before the reinspection, were good. Of the 409 learners who began ETP, 84 per cent have successfully completed their programmes.

54. Retention and achievement rates are poor for engineering advanced apprentices.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES LIMITED REINSPECTION

Of the 711 learners who began advanced apprenticeships between 1999 and 2003, only 169 have completed the full framework, 57 are still in training, and 485 have left without completing their frameworks. TDR identified this weakness in its self-assessment report and has made some improvements. There are indications that learners' performances are improving. In the year before the previous inspection, 14 learners completed their advanced apprenticeship frameworks and only one of these completed by their expected end date. In the year up to reinspection, 25 learners completed their frameworks and 18 of these were early completions.

Quality of education and training

55. Support for learners is very good. Since the previous inspection, the training department has been restructured and the role of the training co-ordinators has been revised. Two additional co-ordinators have been appointed. Co-ordinators now have more manageable caseloads and they visit learners at least every two weeks. Many companies are visited every week, and employers confirm that the support received from TDR has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

56. Employers' involvement in the training is very good. Learners are allocated to well-qualified and experienced technician engineers, or craftspeople, who act as mentors. Learners are given a wide range of tasks in different departments to help them develop and achieve competence. They are allowed time to complete their evidence files, and some learners keep a daily log of tasks they have completed. There is good support from senior managers who take an active interest in learners' progress. Many employers are involved in the young apprenticeship programme, and many pupils involved in the scheme progress to the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes.

57. Resources in the workplace are good. Learners work on specialist equipment which includes computer-controlled machine tools, and the use of co-ordinate measuring machines to check component accuracy. Resources at college are satisfactory. Recently, investments have been made in machine tools and in computers for key skills activities. College engineering workshops are satisfactory and classrooms for background knowledge are modern and well equipped.

58. At the previous inspection, progress reviews were not thorough enough. The reviews are now satisfactory, and are carried out frequently. Clear targets are agreed which are closely monitored. All employers are involved in the review process, but some do not join the learner and the training adviser during the review meeting. Instead, they are interviewed separately by the training adviser, and complete their section of the review document after the meeting. Where reviews have identified learners who are having difficulty with a topic, additional training sessions have been provided by TDR. All learners have a clear understanding of the apprenticeship framework and the progress they are making towards completion. Since the previous inspection, the approach to equality of opportunity during progress reviews has improved significantly. Using a booklet developed by the local LSC, learners choose an aspect of equality and diversity for discussion at their next review meeting. They research the topic and then discuss the

associated issues with their training adviser. In addition to progress reviews, learners are visited, and their progress is monitored, every two weeks. The actions agreed at these visits are recorded in the learner's portfolios. In a few cases, progress reviews do not take place as planned, but are completed at a later date.

59. At the previous inspection, the planning of the learning process was inadequate. The planning of on- and off-the-job training is now satisfactory. All learners are employed and attend off-the-job training for 30 weeks with a local subcontractor. During this time they complete their key skills qualifications, their NVQ at level 2 in performing engineering operations, and the technical certificate. In addition to the standard NVQ units, many learners achieve additional multiskills units which reflect their employers' requirements. Previously, key skills training had been delivered towards the end of the apprenticeship programmes. All key skills units are now completed within the initial 30 week off-the-job training.

Leadership and management

60. There are regular meetings with formal minute-taking, and action plans are produced to review progress. All training co-ordinators are well qualified, and four staff have qualified as internal verifiers. Internal verification is satisfactory. The sampling plan targets four internal verification assessments for each assessor over the two years of the advanced apprenticeship programme, and this plan is on target. Awareness of equality of opportunity is good. Learners work for companies which have comprehensive health and safety procedures in operation. The reinforcement of equality of opportunity and health and safety at progress reviews is good. Development activities for self-assessment have taken place and all staff contributed to the self-assessment report which is an accurate reflection of the current position in the engineering provision.