

REINSPECTION REPORT

Independent Training Services Ltd Reinspection

13 December 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Independent Training Services Ltd is a registered charity which operates under the name of ITS. It has been training young people in Barnsley since 1981 and currently provides work-based learning in engineering, retail and customer service, and health and social care. ITS also has 100 learners on an entry to employment programme. A board of trustees oversees the organisation. The senior management team consists of a chief executive, an operations manager and a quality improvement manager. In addition, there are four managers for the care, engineering and foundation areas and the administrative functions.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

2. Twenty-nine learners are on motor vehicle training programmes. All the learners are employed or have work placements in the motor vehicle sector. A range of employers working with ITS includes independent garages, franchised motor dealers, specialist body repair workshops and large goods vehicle dealers, repairers and operators. Three learners are advanced apprentices, 25 are apprentices and one learner is working towards a level 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ). Learners attend a local college of further education for motor vehicle studies on a day-release basis. Body repair and paint spraying learners attend a specialist college out of the local area on day release. The colleges provide knowledge for the technical certificate and key skills aspects of the apprenticeship frameworks.

3. Assessment visits take place each month or on demand if appropriate. All assessments are carried out in the workplace. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every 10 weeks. Initial assessment is carried out when learners start their training programme and induction takes place both in the training centre and in the workplace.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learners interviewed	9
Number of staff interviewed	11
Number of employers interviewed	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	8
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. At the previous inspection in November 2004, provision in engineering, technology and manufacturing was found to be unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, it is good.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle/cycle - Apprenticeships for young people	49	4

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Apprenticeships for young people	39	3
Early years - Apprenticeships for young people	12	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Employability/employment training - Entry to Employment	93	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle/cycle - Apprenticeships for young people	29	2

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle/cycle - Apprenticeships for young people	29	2

Motor vehicle/cycle

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on apprenticeship programmes
- good acquisition of workplace skills
- very effective progress monitoring

Weaknesses

- insufficient understanding of equality and diversity by some employers

Achievement and standards

5. Retention and achievement rates on apprenticeship programmes are good. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Achievement rates have risen year-on-year, from 25 per cent for 2001-02 to 65 per cent for the 2003-04 intake, with one learner still in learning and about to complete. Retention rates have also risen, from 25 per cent for the 2001-02 intake to a still-in-learning figure of 76 per cent for the current intake. Learners make good progress while at college. They are achieving the key skills qualifications and technical certificate components of the framework more quickly, and their progress towards completing the apprenticeship framework is enhanced.

6. Learners acquire good workplace skills while working towards their qualification. The varied workplaces used by ITS provide sound skills and knowledge for the apprentices. ITS selects garages to provide good learning environments and has strong links with employers which help ensure all skill areas are covered. The company has improved its recruitment strategy. It is more selective, and chooses learners who are better able to adapt quickly to the discipline of the work environment. Learners were observed carrying out tasks well in advance of their stage in the learning programme. Skills gained in the workplace are supported by good-quality background knowledge teaching during day-release at college. Learners performed well during NVQ assessments which confirmed the competency they have gained while learning in the workplace. Learners' training programmes are individualised to take into account previous experience and knowledge and their targets are set to reflect prior knowledge. Portfolios are of a satisfactory standard and are well understood by learners.

7. ITS provides additional qualifications that learners particularly value. The additional qualifications include registered first aid, manual handling, and health and safety. Learners are able to put this additional learning to good use in the workplace.

Quality of education and training

8. ITS uses very effective progress monitoring to ensure learners are completing all aspects of their training programme in accordance with the programme requirements and their individual learning plans. The company has introduced a range of performance and strategic measures following the previous inspection's identification of insufficient progress by learners. The internal verification system has been enhanced to ensure that learners' progress is the key purpose of the process. A comprehensive monitoring system identifies the rate of progress made by each learner. This system is evaluated on a quarterly basis by the vocational sector manager and is discussed at standardisation meetings. A colour-coded chart identifies where learners are in danger of falling behind their designated schedule for completing NVQ units or other framework components. These accumulative unit summary sheets are well designed and provide a good range of information about each learner's progress to date. The assessor will then concentrate on ensuring that the individual learner is brought back on schedule by arranging extra assessment visits in conjunction with the learner and employer. Weekly meetings take place between the assessor and the internal verifier to discuss each learner's progress and to decide if any additional activity is required to help the learners' progress. Standardisation meetings take place on a quarterly basis and good practice is shared across all programme areas by assessors and internal verifiers.

9. Assessment is available on demand by learners. Learners are made aware of the type of job activity required for assessment purposes and can contact the assessor, who will try to visit to capture the assessment opportunity. Learners value the flexibility of this system, which enables them to demonstrate their competence through real work activity. Some garages have staff who were previously apprentices and who are able to mentor and support the current learners and assist them with their evidence collection. Retention and achievement rates have improved since the introduction of this system. Assessments observed by inspectors were carried out satisfactorily, although some were not consistent in the attention paid to health and safety.

10. Progress reviews are carried out satisfactorily and learners welcome and value the opportunity to share their experiences with staff from ITS. Employers are not always available to take an active part in the review process. Induction is also satisfactory, with learners having a good recall of all aspects of the induction programme. Initial assessment is carried out and used to guide the planning of training and the level of programme most suitable to the learner. Individual learning plans are updated regularly. The resources within the ITS training centre and the colleges are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with inspectors observing some good teaching sessions provided by very experienced tutors. A range of learning aids was used and good question-and-answer techniques kept learners involved.

11. Learners' literacy and numeracy support needs are met through the subcontracting college. All learners attend college for one day each week and work towards their key skills qualifications and background knowledge for their NVQ. ITS provides the college with a copy of the learners' initial assessment results and individual learning plans to ensure that the teaching staff can provide appropriate support. Regular meetings between ITS and the college ensure that learners are making at least the expected progress towards their qualifications and that they have sufficient support to fulfil their potential.

Leadership and management

12. ITS has introduced successful strategies to improve retention and achievement rates since the previous inspection. It has carried out regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of all the key training processes and activities and has an increased awareness of the strengths and weaknesses within the provision. The company has effectively analysed the information collected through quality monitoring and audit, and has made effective use of management information to ensure that improvement activities are focused on areas of weakness.

13. Internal verification is planned well. Assessment practice is regularly sampled and reports from the awarding body show that all requirements are being complied with. The internal verifier observes the assessor in the workplace every quarter on a planned basis and also carries out unannounced spot-check observations. Feedback to assessors is comprehensive and highly positive, but it does not give any indication as to how assessment performance could be further improved. Clear appropriate criteria are used to make judgements on assessors' performance. The internal verifier holds a discussion with learners during each observation visit to the workplace to check satisfaction levels with the assessment process and that access to assessment is fair.

14. Improving retention and achievement rates has been a key priority since the previous inspection. Regular meetings between staff have focused on ensuring that learners at risk of leaving their programmes early are given appropriate support to ensure that they are on target and progressing. ITS has improved its management of the subcontractor, with a revised service level agreement that ensures that timely deadlines are set for activities such as awarding body registration and certification.

15. Internal and external communication has improved. Meetings take place at all levels and regular reporting to senior staff makes good use of performance data. Staff performance is closely monitored to ensure that visits to workplaces for assessment and reviews are carried out in a timely manner.

16. The self-assessment report is regularly reviewed and was updated in November 2005, mainly with regard to the presentation. A quarterly management report effectively reviews the progress made in the self-assessment report and the development plan. It gives a clear, honest view of the current position of the provision. The self-assessment report is critical, but does not reflect some of the progress made since the previous

INDEPENDENT TRAINING SERVICES LTD REINSPECTION

inspection. Inspectors gave the provision a higher grade than that in the self-assessment report. They agreed with the weakness relating to employers' insufficient awareness of equality of opportunity and found additional strengths.

17. ITS has been successful in improving learners' understanding of equality of opportunity since the previous inspection, when it was found to be a weakness. Learners are now aware of their rights and the procedures that are in place to protect them from harassment and bullying. Some employers have a poor understanding of equality and diversity issues. Although ITS has implemented a range of initiatives to raise the employers' understanding of equality and diversity, in many cases the initiatives have had little effect. Employers are not sufficiently engaged on the topic of equality of opportunity during progress reviews. A seminar provided by ITS, aimed at raising employers' awareness, was poorly attended. Some employers have an archaic, inappropriate attitude to attracting under-represented groups into the industry and the strategies that ITS has used to deal with this have had insufficient effect.