

INSPECTION REPORT

Finning (UK) Ltd

11 August 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
- **learnirect** 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*

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Finning (UK) Ltd (Finning) is the sole Caterpillar dealer within the UK and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Finning International, a Canadian company based in Vancouver. Finning's business is to sell Caterpillar construction plant and materials handling equipment and offer a parts and product support system for the entire product line. Approximately 2,500 people are employed in the UK, of whom 1,200 are service engineers. Learners work as part of the service engineering function.
2. Finning has a headquarters in Staffordshire and branches throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The apprenticeships are organised through the Finning technical training unit at Cannock. The technical training manager is supported by eight full-time training instructors and has a fully equipped training centre with access to wide range of Caterpillar products.
3. Finning acquired Lex Harvey Ltd (Lex Harvey) in 2003. This introduced a separate network of branches and a period of rationalisation has taken place. As part of this acquisition, Finning took responsibility for the learners formerly employed by Lex Harvey and funded through a contract with Hertfordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This learning provision has been subjected to external inspection on two previous occasions, although the processes of LSC contracts and external inspection are new to Finning.
4. Finning has a long history of recruiting learners and currently has approximately 90 following a separate construction plant programme organised through a college of further education and funded through the Staffordshire LSC. This provision was not included in this inspection, although a few learners were interviewed by inspectors. Finning is partway through the process of aligning the two separate apprenticeship programmes with a view to incorporating the best features of both and obtaining a single LSC contract.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Finning's leadership and management, including its arrangements for quality improvement are good. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Engineering and manufacturing technologies provision is good.
6. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The process of self-assessment and associated development planning is relatively new. The current self-assessment report is the second produced. Its identification of strengths and weaknesses and self-assessment grades reflected most of the inspectors' findings. The process has drawn on information gathered by the key staff responsible for managing the apprenticeship programme. Information is gathered through internal verification, learners' progress reviews, learners' feedback, staff appraisals, and performance data. Assessors and mentors are not formally involved in the self-assessment process.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements. Finning makes use of an established range of quality assurance arrangements. Monitoring and sharing of best practice is good. Internal communications are good and there is a strong culture of continuous improvement. Good strategic planning of the apprenticeship programme is being used to develop revised arrangements for learners. Many of the weaknesses identified in the September 2002 inspection have been resolved. However, although retention rates have been good during the recent period of uncertainty, learners' progress has been slow.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR FINNING (UK) LTD:

- further develop the analysis and use of management information data
- ensure existing good features are maintained in revised provision
- develop the relationship with the college to ensure prompt achievement for existing apprentices
- improve self-assessment and development-planning processes
- further develop the promotion of equality and diversity

GRADES

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

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Motor vehicle</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	35	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. Two inspectors spent a total of 12 days inspecting the Finning provision. This took place during three, two-day visits in June, July and August 2005. During these visits, inspectors met learners, assessors and supervisors at Finning branches in Cannock, Birmingham, Leeds, Chesterfield, Swindon, Snodland, and Livingstone. A significant proportion of time was spent at the Finning technical training centre in Cannock.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	19
Number of staff interviewed	16
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	11

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. Learners are employed as service engineers and work on real equipment from the beginning of their apprenticeships. **They are well supported by qualified and experienced engineers and work to very good standards.** Learners quickly become valuable members of their teams and make a good contribution to the business.

10. The retention rate for learners who began after 2001 is good. Over 80 per cent of these learners are still on the programme.

11. **Learners have good opportunities to take additional qualifications and to gain additional skills.** They make good use of these opportunities and have attended courses for health and safety, welding, slinging, team-building, and to gain a lift-truck operator's licence.

The quality of provision

12. **On-the-job training is good.** Learners are taught how to service and repair lift trucks by well-qualified and experienced engineers, and learn quickly how to carry out basic service and repair work. They then move on to more complex tasks.

13. All learners are given up to four hours each week to work on their national vocational qualification (NVQ) portfolios and assignments. Learners value this time and make good use of it.

14. **The assessment of learners' competence for their NVQs is particularly thorough** and includes a good combination of observation, witness testimony, work records and learners' written work. A number of engineers and team leaders have become assessors and are well supported by training staff.

15. Learners' portfolios are clear and well referenced to the requirements of the NVQ. As soon as a unit of the NVQ is completed, Finning claims the certificate from the awarding body.

16. All learners receive an effective workplace induction and a detailed induction into their training programmes. They are well informed about their training programme and what they have to achieve.

17. Progress reviews include all relevant parties and cover all aspects of the apprenticeship. Individual learning plans are comprehensive and used effectively. The plans are updated regularly and, combined with the records of progress reviews, give a clear picture of how each learner is progressing with their apprenticeship.

18. Learners' standards of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory, and some learners' written work is good. Arrangements to identify and support learners' literacy and numeracy development needs are satisfactory.

19. There has not been enough off-the-job training since September 2004. **During this period some learners have made slow progress towards their technical certificates, and in acquiring key skills.**

Leadership and management

20. **Strategic planning of the apprenticeship programme is good.** Careful efforts are made to ensure that recruitment is in line with business plans, that learners have every chance of succeeding in the workplace, and that good levels of supervision are in place. Thorough evaluations ensure that good-quality apprenticeship provision is maintained.

21. **Finning ensures very good development opportunities for assessors and mentors.** All learners have access to appropriately qualified staff. More assessors are being trained on a regular basis. Good additional technical training for staff helps them to maintain currency and ensures that they have the relevant skills to support learners.

22. **The provider does not use performance indicators sufficiently.** Managers have not established a reporting structure which allows them to analyse the performance and relative progress of learners and assessors.

23. **Recruitment processes are open and fair and promote equality of opportunity well.** Human resources staff ensure that potential learners are recruited according to arrangements which observe best practice. Unsuccessful applicants are given good feedback.

24. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. Induction provides them with a good range of useful information on matters such as religious tolerance, sexual and personal harassment, and how to deal with stress.

25. Local branch managers take a keen interest in the learners and ensure that they are exposed to a good range of learning opportunities.

26. Equality of opportunity is monitored and promoted satisfactorily. The focus is on ensuring that learners are involved in a range of learning opportunities. Sometimes issues

which affect equal opportunities, such as the display of inappropriate materials in workshops, are not dealt with effectively.

27. **Insufficient equal opportunities data is collected by Finning.** Managers do not use the information that is available sufficiently to monitor the progress of individual learners and similar groups.

28. The provider has a useful range of established quality assurance systems and procedures which are being updated.

29. **Good practice in training is shared and monitored well.** This process is well linked to the assessment and internal verification procedures where regular meetings and observations are used to identify and share information. This process is used to help managers identify staff training needs.

30. Satisfactory arrangements exist to collect learners' feedback, although this is not evaluated by managers. Regular, informal verbal feedback is collected from learners and used by managers in the self-assessment process.

31. **Finning has an open style of communication and a strong company training ethos which maintains a commitment to continuous improvement.** Managers are self-critical and quickly introduce improvements in response to identified weaknesses.

32. Arrangements for dealing with additional learning needs are satisfactory. The provision is being contracted out to a local college as part of a major review of the apprenticeship programme.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- open and fair recruitment process
- good strategic planning of apprenticeship
- very good development of assessors and mentors
- good monitoring and sharing of good practice
- strong culture of continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficient collection and analysis of equal opportunities data
- insufficient use of performance indicators

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Motor vehicle

Grade 2

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work and skills

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- particularly thorough assessments
- good on-the-job training
- good opportunities to acquire additional skills

Weaknesses

- delayed achievement of key skills qualifications and technical certificates

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT FINNING (UK) LTD:

- the work with materials handling equipment
- the number of assessors in the workplace
- the help they receive from the people they work with

WHAT LEARNERS THINK FINNING (UK) LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- communications about changes to the apprenticeship programme
- the return of assignments - needs to be done more quickly
- the amount of paperwork needs to be reduced
- the access to computers at work

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- open and fair recruitment process
- good strategic planning of apprenticeship
- very good development of assessors and mentors
- good monitoring and sharing of good practice
- strong culture of continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficient collection and analysis of equal opportunities data
- insufficient use of performance indicators

33. Finning's strategic planning of the apprenticeship programme is good. It is linked well with the company's business plans and is designed to ensure that learners are offered a sustainable learning programme which has been properly budgeted. On an annual basis, each Finning branch considers its staffing requirements and the provision of apprenticeship places. Directors agree a budget which takes into account the costs of accommodating a learner, given their low productivity during the first year. Human resource and technical training managers ensure there are sufficient supervisors and team leaders to provide an appropriate level of support for learners, before committing company resources. This is designed to ensure that learners have every chance of success when placed at one of Finning's branch operations. There were no significant regional and local variations in the provision. Inspectors found good levels of consistency throughout the Finning branches.

34. In the period since Finning acquired the apprenticeship programme formerly operated by Lex Harvey, a period of evaluation has taken place. There are plans to integrate the best features of a separately funded Finning apprenticeship programme in construction plant with the motor vehicle apprenticeship programme. Managers have identified the provision of on-the-job training and workplace assessment in this programme as a key feature that they want to extend to the construction plant apprenticeship. At the same time, the introduction of college-based off-the-job training for the technical certificate, key skills qualifications, and additional learning support is viewed as an important feature in improving the quality of the motor vehicle apprenticeship. Finning is in the latter stages of agreeing a contract with the LSC and a local college, which will provide a correlation between the two apprenticeship programmes. This is a positive strategy which has been carefully designed to improve quality and efficiency at the same time as maintaining an appropriate programme for both groups.

35. The development of assessors and mentors is very good. Finning is increasing the number of staff qualified as assessors. Ten members of staff are in the process of gaining assessors' awards. All learners have access to a workplace mentor. Mentors are very clear as to the purpose of their role in supporting learners to develop the skills necessary for the NVQ. Mentors work alongside the learners. Many of the mentors are working towards assessors' awards. The more experienced of them make positive efforts to manage

on-the-job training by rotating learners in different job roles. Mentors set targets, monitor general progress and monitor learners' progress after they have attended specialist product training at the Finning training centre. Learners feel well supported and develop a good rapport with their mentors. In one northern location, the mentor co-ordinates training and assessment for a number of learners at various remote branches. Where necessary, he will organise for learners to carry out work elsewhere if the required activity is not routinely available. However, not all learners are based at depots and it is sometimes difficult to ensure that they have regular access to a workplace assessor.

36. Managers conduct regular staff appraisals and training needs analyses to identify learning and development requirements. Staff at all levels have good access to additional training. This includes product-specific technical training, as well as coaching, equal opportunities, health and safety, and assessor training.

37. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Individual learning plans are used effectively to record progress towards NVQ units. Certificates of unit accreditation are awarded frequently. Learners and supervisors understand the purpose of the individual learning plans, and progress reviews include all relevant parties. There are useful records of learners' attendance on training courses. Finning maintains accurate records of learners' progress and updates individual learning plans routinely, but performance indicators are not used sufficiently and overview information is not used enough to allow managers to make business decisions, target resources and report on overall progress. Insufficient formal opportunities are provided for all staff involved to review progress, identify trends, and monitor changes. Finning has recently begun to remedy this weakness.

38. For some learners, there has been a period of uncertainty since Finning acquired the materials handling business. Although NVQ progress has been maintained at a good rate, progress with the technical certificate and key skills qualifications training has been delayed. Some learners are anxious that this work is being loaded towards the end of their programmes. Managers have made good attempts to communicate the changes during the past year, including face to face meetings around the country. A period of branch rationalisation and staff redundancies has taken place, although few learners have left during this period. Assessors and trainers have experienced some difficulties in maintaining a consistent level of service to learners, particularly since a key member of staff has left the company and newly appointed mentors and assessors are not yet functioning at full capacity.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

39. Finning ensures an open and fair recruitment process with good promotion of equal opportunities. Recruitment is handled centrally. A corporate brochure circulated to schools and careers advisers uses positive images to portray careers in engineering and technology. Advertisements are targeted as appropriate and particularly where the company experiences recruitment difficulties, such as London and the Southeast. During the initial stages of recruitment, efforts are made to avoid discrimination. Applications are scored against criteria set by human resource managers. Initial screening is used to identify those young people to be invited to interview and initial assessment. Psychometric tests are used to assess mechanical and technical aptitude and spatial awareness. Interviews take place at local branches with a core team of human resources and technical training staff in attendance to ensure consistency. Throughout the process, Finning is keen to ensure that potential learners are treated with respect and given the opportunity for

constructive feedback and advice if they are unsuccessful. Where appropriate, candidates are given the opportunity to try out work in the environment of materials handling machinery before committing themselves to the apprenticeship programme.

40. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities. During induction, they receive a useful range of information about Finning's procedures in respect of equal opportunities. This is in line with current employment legislation and includes arrangements for pensions, annual leave, company benefits, discipline and grievances, respect for others, and acceptable behaviours. This information is provided by human resource managers and is designed to make sure that learners are clear as to their obligations and the various support arrangements available. An information pack contains useful leaflets and policy statements about issues such as religious tolerance, sexual and personal harassment, and how to recognise and deal with stress. Learners are treated with the same respect as any member of staff employed by Finning. The learners interviewed acknowledged that they are working for a reputable and caring company. Responsibility for ongoing reinforcement and monitoring of equal opportunities is given to the training section. A half-day session about equal opportunities takes place during the first year of the programme and acts as a useful re-emphasis of key issues.

41. The monitoring and promotion of equal opportunities during progress reviews is satisfactory. These processes focus on ensuring that learners are receiving sufficient on-the-job training and assessment opportunities, and that they are being treated with respect by their colleagues. Branch managers take a keen interest in learners and work hard to ensure that they receive a good range of experiences and work alongside those staff who will organise good opportunities for the learners to develop new skills. Workplace progress reviews have not identified those workplaces where inappropriate materials are displayed. Although it is against Finning's rules for such materials to be displayed in the workplace, there are occasions when learners are located in other companies' premises on a semi-permanent basis. Insufficient effort has been made to ensure that these workplaces meet Finning's high standards.

42. Finning collects and analyses only minimal data regarding equal opportunities. Trends in gender recruitment are analysed, currently showing a 7 per cent recruitment rate for women. The provider does not consider the performance of different groups of learners, or make any judgements about regional variations in performance. Recurring issues in relation to equal opportunities are not logged and analysed to see if any remedial actions are possible.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

43. Finning gained a range of established quality assurance systems when it acquired the Lex Harvey learners and training staff. Over the past two years, systems have been further refined and aligned with Finning's own quality assurance arrangements. The staff involved in managing quality improvements are the technical training manager, the motor vehicle apprenticeship training instructor, and the apprenticeship programme administrator. These personnel meet regularly to monitor programme performance and review the progress of individual assessors and learners. As part of the strategy to merge the best features of the motor vehicle apprenticeship with the construction plant apprenticeship, operating procedures and associated documents such as those for progress reviews are being redrafted. These documents form a useful overview of procedures for the delivery of all apprenticeships, but have not been fully implemented. Assessors are given a very

comprehensive handbook as part of their initial training. Levels of consistency in programme delivery around the country are good.

44. Good practice is shared and monitored well. All assessors, mentors and managers meet every six months with interim meetings of subgroups where needed. Meetings give assessors the opportunity to discuss assessment methodologies, receive awarding body and document updates, adjust individual caseloads, and agree the reallocation of learners to allow them better opportunities to gain new skills. Meetings are well recorded, although follow-up actions and individual responsibilities are not always clear. Regular assessor returns are used by the apprenticeship training instructor to check for consistency in assessment standards, to identify assessors' individual training needs, and to complement internal verification. Assessors are observed every six months. These observations include time for feedback, the sharing of good practice and the further identification of learning and development needs.

45. Feedback is gained from learners through a well-established annual quality survey. However, the format of the questionnaire has made analysis difficult and the evaluation has been of little value to managers during recent years. Finning is reviewing arrangements for collecting learners' feedback and is beginning to adopt a system of learners' meetings and discussion groups to discuss perceptions and agree improvements. These meetings will take place following induction, at various stages during the programme, and as part of an annual course review. For off-the-job training sessions at college or in the Finning training centre, managers use learners' feedback as a key quality measure. As the apprenticeship moves towards a greater level of college involvement, Finning has agreed to observe training at college as part of its improved quality assurance systems. Finning enjoys a productive working relationship with the local college. College staff join product-specific technical training courses and Finning's managers regularly meet staff to review progress.

46. Finning's open style of communication and strong company training ethos help to maintain a commitment to continuous improvement. The merger of the two programmes of training has been a difficult period. Learners' rates of progress in achieving their full apprenticeship framework have been slow. Finning's response has been to analyse the current provision and at the same time establish value for money as a feature of any future provision. Managers are self-critical. When inspectors identified a weakness in the measurement and reporting of learners' progress, managers quickly developed a new management information reporting system. This gives them much clearer information about individual learners' performances, the relative performance of assessors, and whether off-the-job training, assessments and progress reviews are taking place as planned. Colour coding is used to highlight particularly good or poor performances. Managers have appreciated the potential of this system to help them to manage the programme more effectively and improve achievement rates.

47. For Finning, the process of self-assessment and associated development planning is relatively new. The current self-assessment report is the second produced by senior managers. It identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. The report draws on information gathered by the key staff responsible for managing the apprenticeship programme. Information is gathered through internal verification, learners' progress reviews, learners' feedback, staff appraisals, and performance data. Assessors and mentors are not formally involved in the self-assessment process, and the self-assessment is not widely shared among the team involved in training and assessment. The current

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development plan is brief, focusing only on those aspects identified as weak. There is no reference as to how Finning will maintain its strengths and improve those aspects assessed as satisfactory. Some of the targets are vague and often too generalised. Most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been resolved.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle		2
Apprenticeships for young people	35	2

48. Finning has 35 engineering learners, all of whom are advanced apprentices. All learners are employed by Finning and are training to service and maintain lift trucks. Learners are working towards an NVQ in vehicle maintenance and repair, key skills, and a technical certificate in motor vehicle maintenance. Technical product training is delivered at the Finning training centre in Cannock.

49. Learners are attached to Finning's depots throughout the UK. Some learners are based permanently in Finning's workshops, others work on customers' sites in dedicated work areas, and some work in mobile teams operating from vans. Learners are permanently attached to a team, but can be seconded to other teams to enable them to gain a full range of skills.

50. On-the-job training is provided by qualified and experienced engineers on site. Finning is currently changing arrangements for off-the-job technical certificate and key skills training. Until September 2004, full-time training officers provided off-the-job training at learners' normal places of work. From September 2005, all learners will attend a college of further education for off-the-job training, arranged as a series of three-week residential blocks. This brings arrangements in line with the Finning apprenticeship in construction plant.

Motor vehicle

Grade 2

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work and skills
- particularly thorough assessments
- good on-the-job training
- good opportunities to acquire additional skills

Weaknesses

- delayed achievement of key skills qualifications and technical certificates

Achievement and standards

51. Learners work to very good standards and demonstrate good skills in the workplace. Learners are employed as service engineers and work on real equipment from the beginning of their apprenticeships. They are well supported by qualified and experienced engineers, and service and repair equipment to high standards. There is a strong emphasis on health and safety and learners demonstrate good, safe working practices. Learners quickly develop good skills in servicing and then progress to more advanced maintenance

and repairs including rebuilding engines and transmission systems. They are able to work independently on a range of activities, although they are always supervised. Learners quickly become valuable members of their teams and make good contributions to the business.

52. The retention rate is good for learners who began training after 2001. Over 80 per cent of these learners are still on the programme. However, in the previous two years, retention rates were low. Historically, achievement rates are low. Of those learners who began in 2000-01, 61 per cent completed all aspects of their apprenticeships, and of those who began in 2001-02, less than 50 per cent completed the framework. For those learners recruited since 2001, retention rates are good.

53. Learners have good opportunities to take additional qualifications and to gain additional skills. They make good use of these opportunities and have attended courses in health and safety, welding, slinging and team-building. All learners, when they are old enough, attain a lift-truck operator's licence, and all learners attend a residential team-building course as part of their induction. In addition, they are able to attend technical updating courses on the latest products and equipment supplied by Finning. Learners also have opportunities to develop their non-technical skills. For example, one fourth-year apprentice organised part of the induction for the latest intake of learners. She was coached by training staff in training techniques and wrote comprehensive lesson plans and support materials.

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	9		15		17		11		13	100						
Retained*	0		0		0		0		8	62						
Successfully completed	0		0		1		5		8	62						
Still in learning	9		12		13		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

The quality of provision

54. On-the-job training is good. Learners are taught how to service and repair lift trucks by well-qualified and experienced engineers. Each learner is allocated a mentor who is a practising engineer. Mentors take time to show learners how to repair and service equipment and to explain the engineering principles. Learners learn quickly how to carry out basic service and repair work and then move on to more complex tasks. Learners spend time in different areas of the workshops in order to gain experience and learn a wide range of skills. Managers take time to find out what learners have achieved and to plan new training activities. All learners are given up to four hours each week to work on their NVQ portfolios and assignments. They value this time and make good use of it. Those learners working in Finning's workshops have good access to computers to work on their portfolios, but those who work on customers' sites or in mobile teams do not have regular access to computers. All learners are provided with a comprehensive toolset during their training.

55. The assessment of learners' competence for their NVQ is particularly thorough. Most learners are assessed by a work-based assessor. Finning continues to recruit practising engineers and team leaders to take on the role of assessor in the workplace. A good number of engineers and team leaders are working towards their assessor qualifications with effective support from training staff. Workplace assessors are given adequate time to carry out assessment activities. Assessment is thorough, using a good combination of observation, witness testimony, work records and learners' written work. However, some witness testimonies are not detailed enough. They are simple, generic statements with little information about the actual tasks performed. Assessors are on hand to observe learners at work. A good range of assignments is used to assess learners' background knowledge. Detailed action plans are regularly agreed and updated with each learner, showing what they are to be assessed on next and what evidence they should collect. Learners' portfolios are clear and well-referenced to the requirements of the NVQ. As soon as a unit of the NVQ is completed, Finning claims the certificate from the awarding body.

56. Assessors from all over the country meet twice each year to discuss changes to the programme and share information. The internal verifier checks assessors' and learners' work in the workplace on a regular basis. Assessors are observed carrying out assessments and are given constructive and useful feedback about their performances. These visits are used effectively to share good practice in assessment among the widely dispersed sites.

57. All learners receive a satisfactory induction in their workplace which covers safe working practices and local controls. They also attend a detailed induction into their training programme, which includes a session on equal opportunities. Learners are well informed about their training programmes and what they have to achieve.

58. Each learner's progress is reviewed formally every 10 weeks. Progress reviews are comprehensive and cover all aspects of the apprenticeship. The views of learners and their mentors and team leaders are collected and used appropriately in judging learners' progress. Learners and their supervisors are actively involved in reviewing previous performances and planning new targets.

59. Individual learning plans are comprehensive and used effectively. Targets are agreed for each unit of the NVQ and for key skills qualifications. Targets for completing units are phased throughout the programme and are used to measure progress. Learning plans are updated regularly and, combined with the records of progress reviews, give a clear picture of how each learner is progressing.

60. Learners' written and number work is satisfactory, and some learners' written work is good. All learners have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed at the beginning of their programmes. Where appropriate, the results of these are used to identify additional development activities. Until September 2004, learners who required it received training in literacy and numeracy as part of their planned off-the-job training. From September 2005, the assessment and provision of literacy and numeracy will be subcontracted to Stafford College of Further Education. Those learners who began in September 2004 have had their needs assessed and, if necessary, have received additional support.

61. Finning is in the process of changing the arrangements for off-the-job training in relation to the key skills and technical certificate components of the apprenticeship. Until

September 2004, learners attended a series of one-day training sessions taught on site by full-time training officers. From September 2005, all learners will attend Stafford College of Further Education for blocks of three weeks for their technical certificate and key skills training. In the transition period there has been little off-the-job training. Throughout this period, NVQ progress has been maintained at a good rate. Learners who began their apprenticeships in September 2004 have not begun their technical certificates or key skills training yet. Those who began before this date have achieved some aspects of the required qualifications. Although Finning has worked hard to organise off-the-job training to recommence in September 2005, many learners have experienced delayed progress in their work towards key skills qualification and the technical certificate during the interim period.

Leadership and management

62. The programme is well managed. Staff are well qualified and provide learners with good support and effective teaching and assessment. There is a strong commitment throughout the Finning organisation to provide good training. The provider has a good number of work-based assessors and mentors, who are given sufficient time to carry out these duties. Training and assessment are well planned and closely monitored. Attendance and punctuality are monitored carefully.

63. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities and their rights and responsibilities, and this understanding is reinforced during progress review meetings. Learners have attended training on equal opportunities and value the opportunity to explore issues such as indirect discrimination and bullying. In a few work areas, inappropriate images are displayed.

64. Finning has satisfactory arrangements to quality assure and improve the quality of training and assessment. Internal verification is effective in monitoring the quality of assessments and in sharing good practice. The views of learners and supervisors are sought regularly and effectively in the self-assessment process. Inspectors' findings matched all of the key strengths, weaknesses and grades identified in the self-assessment report.

