

INSPECTION REPORT

**John G Plummer and
Associates**

02 September 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*

INSPECTION REPORT

John G Plummer and Associates

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. John G Plummer and Associates operates 10 dental surgeries which are located in central and east Norfolk and north Suffolk. The company is managed by five partners, all of whom are practising dental surgeons. One of the partners has responsibility for health and safety. A sixth member of the management team has responsibility for finance and is also the course director of the dental nurse training. The course director has overall responsibility for quality assurance and equality of opportunity.
2. The company has provided training in dental nursing for over 20 years. It was among the first providers to introduce the national vocational qualification (NVQ) in oral healthcare at level 3 and became an accredited centre in March 2001. Independent assessment is conducted by a national examining board for dental nurses. The training provision is funded by a contract with Norfolk Learning and Skills Council.
3. Learners are supervised in the workplace by a dental surgeon and a dental nurse, and work across different dental practices which they visit on rotation each week. A training centre is located at one of the company's dental practices. Learners attend off-the-job training for one day a week for lectures in background knowledge and preparation for assessment. Learners are required to pass the independent assessment to become registered as dental nurses. There is one full-time practice tutor who has operational responsibility for the training and supervision of learners. Seven dental nurses have trained as assessors. The course tutor has responsibility for internal verification.
4. The company is a registered firm for ISO 9000, an international quality assurance standard and has held the Investors in People award since 1997, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** The quality of training for dental nursing programmes is good. Leadership and management of the provision, including the arrangements for equality of opportunity, are also good. The organisation's arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory.
6. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process has improved since the previous inspection and now includes the views of all staff and learners. The report describes the recruitment, initial assessment, and training and assessment processes, and highlights a number of strengths and weaknesses.
7. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** The provider has introduced a number of strategies to improve the quality of the provision. In particular, a systematic and thorough approach to the collection and analysis of

JOHN G PLUMMER AND ASSOCIATES

feedback is now used. Comments on the training and suggestions for improvement are collected. Feedback is analysed and changes are made to the provision. The course tutor is very responsive to the feedback and makes many small adjustments to the programme.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR JOHN G PLUMMER AND ASSOCIATES:

- achieve consistently good assessment practice
- maintain the rates of success at independent assessment
- further improve representation of learners from under-represented groups
- maintain and improve retention rates
- further improve the quality improvement systems
- improve the recording of decisions
- continue the good use of feedback from learners

GRADES

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

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

Health, public services and care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Dental</i>			2
NVQ training for young people	19		2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. Three inspectors spent three days with the provider in August and September of 2005. Inspectors reported on and graded the training provision for health, social care and public services, specifically dental nurse training programmes.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	9
Number of learners interviewed	10
Number of staff interviewed	4
Number of employers interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits	7

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Achievement rates in an independent assessment are excellent.** All learners passed the recent examinations.

10. Achievement rates for the NVQ are satisfactory. Since 2002-03 retention rates have improved. For example, of the 14 learners who started the NVQ training programme in 2003-04, six have already achieved the NVQ and a further seven are still in learning and have passed the independent assessment.

The quality of provision

11. **John G Plummer and Associates provides a good learning environment that supports learning.** Learners are provided with a range of textbooks to support their learning. The dental practices offer a wide range of learning opportunities, including specialist clinics. Staff have a good understanding and are supportive of the learning programme. Learners with additional needs are provided with additional individual support. Learners feel very well supported and retention rates have shown improvement.

12. **Many learners benefit from good career progression.** They develop good, transferable occupational skills which increase their future employability. Most learners are promoted to senior dental nurse positions and many of the current assessors were previously learners with the organisation.

13. Formal progress reviews are satisfactory. Review meetings include discussion of NVQ units which have been completed and the work that learners are currently doing. However, the organisation relies too heavily on verbal, informal communication to identify problems with training and celebrate good performance.

14. Staff are appropriately qualified, and occupationally experienced. Assessors visit learners at least every two weeks and spend half a day with the learners carrying out observations.

15. **There is some weak assessment practice.** Not all learners are set realistic and achievable targets in their assessment plans. Learners are not always clear about the work that is expected of them and cannot review their progress against short-term targets.

Leadership and management

16. **John G Plummer and Associates has a clear strategic direction, which promotes learning.** The organisation has very clear strategic and business plans which set targets for recruitment of learners and are clearly related to the business objectives. The staff involved in supervising learners are enthusiastic and well informed about the programme.

17. **Management of resources is very effective in supporting learning.** There is a dedicated budget for training. The programme is well resourced. Visual aids for background knowledge sessions include anatomical models of teeth and gums, videos and a range of reference textbooks.

18. The training programme is adequately monitored. There are monthly meetings of staff and managers where the progress of individual learners and assessment issues are discussed and good practice is shared. The management information system is adequate for the company's needs. Data is collected about NVQ unit completion, outcomes of independent assessments and attendance at off-the-job training.

19. Internal communications are satisfactory. There are regular practice meetings and the course director, practice tutor and assessors meet every month. There is also a team representative committee which meets every month and includes learner representatives elected by their peers.

20. **John G Plummer and Associates has been successful in recruiting learners from under-represented groups.** Staff and learners visit schools and careers conventions to promote dental nursing to men and people from minority ethnic groups. Fourteen per cent of current learners are male, which is higher than average for dental nursing programmes. Similarly, 14 per cent of current learners are from minority ethnic groups.

21. The organisation has an appropriate equal opportunities policy for staff and learners and the policy is reviewed regularly and updated when legislation changes or improvements are identified.

22. Monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Data is collected on ethnicity, gender and disability for all learners. The course tutor has an excellent awareness of the retention and achievement rates for all groups of learners.

23. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities topics. Learners remember the equality and diversity training they receive and are aware of their rights.

24. John G Plummer and Associates gives satisfactory support to learners with literacy and numeracy needs. Individual support is given by assessors and the course tutor and a

procedure is in place to refer learners with significant support needs to a local college.

25. The organisation has introduced a number of effective strategies to improve retention rates, including a one-month work trial following induction to allow learners to decide if dental nursing is the appropriate career for them.

26. **A systematic and thorough approach to the collection and analysis of feedback is used.** Feedback is analysed and changes are made to the provision. For example, the content of the induction for learners has been further improved since the previous inspection. Learners are now provided with textbooks and more practical experience is given at an earlier stage in the programme.

27. The quality assurance system is effective. Quality assurance procedures are regularly reviewed. Staff are fully aware of the procedures and how to properly carry out their assessment and training duties in a consistent manner.

28. The internal verification process is effective and is carried out regularly. Assessors are regularly observed carrying out assessments, and clear written feedback is given to them about their performance.

29. The self-assessment process has improved since the previous inspection and now includes the views of all staff and learners. The report is descriptive but also highlights a number of strengths and weaknesses. There are action plans to deal with weaknesses and build on strengths identified through the self-assessment process.

30. **The provider relies too heavily on informal systems to improve the quality of the provision.** The course tutor visits all learners frequently and the course tutor has a detailed knowledge of the provision as a whole and of each learner. However, there is no structure for observations. There are too few records of observations of training to reliably identify training needs or to allow the organisation to accurately identify trends in performance over time.

31. Until recently, off-the-job training has only been observed once a year. This was recognised as inadequate and the provider has recently worked with an educational consultant to improve the standard of observation and the quality of feedback.

32. Minutes of meetings are sometimes brief and do not typically identify the named person responsible for carrying out specific actions.

33. All learners have an appropriate induction which includes all the legal aspects of the programme, including health and safety and equality of opportunity, as well as explaining what an NVQ is and how it should be approached. The learner then goes on to spend a month in the surgery to determine their aptitude for the job.

34. Internal verification is sound and provides the assessor with guidance on how to assist the learner to progress. Appropriate corrective actions are carried out when problems are identified.

35. Progress and attendance are monitored adequately. Learners with full attendance receive a monthly bonus, in addition to their training allowance. Learners who do not

achieve their progress targets are interviewed by the course director.

36. Until January 2005, there was no framework for an oral healthcare apprenticeship. This has recently changed and learners are now expected to obtain key skills in communications and application of number. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for all new learners to start training at a local college for the key skills qualification in early September 2005.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategic direction to promote learning
- effective management of resources
- good recruitment of learners from under-represented groups
- good strategies to improve retention rates
- good use of feedback from learners

Weaknesses

- over-reliance on informal systems to improve the quality of training

Health, public services and care

Dental

Grade 2

Strengths

- good, supportive learning environment
- excellent pass rates at independent assessment
- good career progression

Weaknesses

- some weak assessment practice

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT JOHN G PLUMMER AND ASSOCIATES:

- gaining experience in dental surgeries
- learning at work and not in a college
- the variety of work
- being treated as an adult
- the supportive staff at John G Plummer and Associates

WHAT LEARNERS THINK JOHN G PLUMMER AND ASSOCIATES COULD IMPROVE:

- simpler language in the NVQ
- shorter lecture notes
- less external noise at lectures
- parking facilities at the Great Yarmouth practice

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- clear strategic direction to promote learning
- effective management of resources
- good recruitment of learners from under-represented groups
- good strategies to improve retention rates
- good use of feedback from learners

Weaknesses

- over-reliance on informal systems to improve the quality of training

37. John G Plummer and Associates has a clear strategic direction which promotes learning. There are very clear strategic and business plans which set targets for recruitment of learners and are clearly related to the business objectives. Training is a standard agenda item at the monthly meetings of partners, where the course director provides a review and update. Minutes of these meetings are made available at each surgery. Staff have a very good understanding of the organisation's commitment to learning and demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are effective in giving learners assistance with aspects of background knowledge training. Their involvement ensures that the link between background knowledge sessions and practical work is strong. The NVQ unit specifications are made available in each surgery. Lines of accountability are clear, job descriptions are regularly reviewed and annual staff appraisals lead to the appropriate identification of staff development needs. The course tutor regularly attends networking meetings with other training providers and the independent assessment body to learn about examples of good practice and maintain a good awareness of developments in the sector.

38. Management of resources is very effective in supporting learning. There is a dedicated budget for training, including funds for staff development and the replacement of resources. The programme is well resourced. The company has recently acquired new premises for a dedicated training centre which will improve accommodation for the off-the-job training, as well as allowing access for people with restricted mobility. Visual aids for background knowledge sessions include anatomical models of teeth and gums, videos and a range of reference textbooks. The ratio of trained assessors to learners is good. Staff are allocated time to carry out assessment and study for their own qualifications. Staff involved in the programme are well supported in their continuing professional development. In recent years, the company has supported staff in achieving assessor awards.

39. The training programme is adequately monitored. The assessment team meets with the practice tutor and course director every month to discuss the progress of individual learners and assessment issues, and share good practice. The management information system is adequate for the organisation's needs. Data is collected about NVQ unit completion, outcomes of independent assessments and attendance at off-the-job training. Senior managers have a detailed knowledge of the progress of each learner. Learners'

achievements are celebrated at annual presentation evenings and in the staff newsletter, which is published every three months.

40. Internal communications are satisfactory. The partners of the practice meet every month. In addition, there are practice meetings, which are open to all dental surgeons, and these are held every four to six weeks. The course director, course tutor and assessors meet every month. There is a team representative committee which meets every month and includes learner representatives who are elected by their peers.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

41. John G Plummer and Associates has been successful in recruiting learners from under-represented groups. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report. Staff and learners visit schools and careers conventions to promote dental nursing, and directly target men and people from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of the local population who come from minority ethnic groups is less than 2 per cent, while 14 per cent of John G Plummer and Associates' learners are from minority ethnic groups. Promotional materials used at careers events and information on the organisation's website contain positive statements about the organisation's commitment to diversity, and images of men, women and people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds working in dental care. The company recruits some learners from rural areas and provides transport for some of them to attend work and off-the-job training, or meet the costs of public transport. Fourteen per cent of current learners are men, which is higher than average for dental nursing programmes. There are no learners with declared disabilities.

42. The company has an appropriate equal opportunities policy for staff and learners and the policy is reviewed regularly and updated when legislation changes or improvements are identified. There are also policies for dealing with grievance and disciplinary issues. All staff and learners are given information on equality of opportunity and copies of the organisation's policies during induction. Some staff have recently received equal opportunities training to update their knowledge and six receptionist staff have recently received training in British Sign Language to meet the identified needs of some patients.

43. Monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Data is collected on ethnicity, gender and disability for all learners and the course tutor has an excellent awareness of the achievement and retention rates for male learners and those from minority ethnic groups. Until recently, progress reviews have focused on how learners are being treated in the workplace. The procedure for formal progress reviews has been reviewed and a series of questions have now been included, which are intended to test the learners' understanding of equal opportunities topics. However, this is very recent and not all learners have benefited from the new arrangements. In compliance with recent legislative requirements, an audit has been carried out of all the organisation's premises to measure accessibility for people with restricted mobility.

44. Learners' success is celebrated at presentation events which are publicised in the surgeries, the internal newsletter and local newspapers.

45. John G Plummer and Associates' recruitment and selection procedures are satisfactory, as are the procedures for appeals and complaints. They are well understood by learners and staff. Learners benefit from the flexible work arrangements available to all of the organisation's staff.

46. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities topics. Learners remember the equality and diversity training they received during their induction to the company and are aware of their rights and responsibilities in these areas. Some resources used for equal opportunities training are outdated.

47. The organisation gives satisfactory support to learners with additional support needs, including literacy and numeracy needs. Individual learners' needs are assessed through an initial assessment and the results are recorded on the individual learning plan. Individual support is provided by assessors and the course tutor. The organisation has a procedure to refer learners with significant support needs to a local college.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

48. John G Plummer and Associates has introduced a number of effective strategies to improve retention rates. In 2002-03, 50 per cent of those learners who started the training programme left without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan. The organisation has since introduced a one-month work trial period following induction to allow learners to experience working in a clinical setting and decide if dental nursing is the appropriate career for them. A staff incentive system has also been introduced for staff where they are rewarded for supporting learners to make good progress towards achieving their qualification.

49. A systematic and thorough approach to the collection and analysis of feedback is used. Learners complete questionnaires on the quality of their training at the end of their induction and after three, 12 and 24 months of training. Suggestions for improvement are sought. Feedback is analysed and changes are made to the provision. For example, the content of the induction programme for learners has been improved since the previous inspection. Learners now shadow a senior dental nurse at work during induction to see the application of some procedures in the workplace. Other improvements have included the company providing more textbooks and enabling learners to have more practical experience at an earlier stage in the programme. Learners also complete evaluations of each off-the-job training session. The course tutor is very responsive to comments and adapts the following sessions to better meet the needs of learners. One learner is elected to act as a representative in the organisation's team meetings, where training issues are discussed.

50. The quality assurance system is effective. Quality assurance procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with the quality assurance system and their correct operation. Staff are fully aware of the procedures and how to properly carry out their assessment and training duties consistently.

51. The internal verification process is effective and is carried out regularly. Assessors are regularly observed carrying out assessments, and clear written feedback is given to them about their performance. Regular meetings are held with assessors to discuss assessments and performance criteria, and carry out standardisation exercises. The meetings are held every four to six weeks and have written minutes with agreed actions. However, there is no specified procedure to ensure that these actions are carried out in a defined timespan. The process depends on the good practice of the internal verifier. There is some variation in assessment practice.

52. The organisation's self-assessment report was first compiled in October 2001 and was most recently updated in April 2005. The self-assessment process has improved since the previous inspection and now includes the views of all staff and learners. The report describes the recruitment, initial assessment, and training and assessment processes, and highlights a number of strengths and weaknesses. There are action plans to deal with weaknesses and to build on strengths identified through the self-assessment process. However, some of the strengths identified in the report are no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified some additional strengths and weaknesses. Lower grades were given by inspectors than those in the self-assessment report for leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality improvement. However, inspectors gave the same grade as that in the report for the dental nurse programme.

53. John G Plummer and Associates relies too heavily on informal systems to improve the quality of the provision. The course tutor visits all learners and dental surgeries frequently to discuss rates of progress, and carry out internal verification and observations of training and coaching. These functions are well supported by lots of purposeful, verbal communication. The course tutor has a detailed knowledge of the provision as a whole and each learner. However, staff are not aware of any separation of these functions. They do not understand the purpose of each visit and receive insufficient written feedback on their performance following observation. There is no structure for observations to ensure that all staff are observed sufficiently. There are too few records of observations of some key aspects of training to reliably identify training needs, refer to during staff appraisals, or to allow the organisation to accurately review the development of the provision over time.

54. Until recently, off-the-job training has only been observed once a year by a dental surgeon and some brief feedback is provided to the course tutor. This was recognised as inadequate and John G Plummer and Associates has recently worked with an educational consultant to improve the standard of observation and quality of feedback. At the time of this inspection one observation had been completed. Dental surgeons still comment on the technical content of lessons.

55. Minutes of meetings are sometimes brief and do not typically identify the named person responsible for carrying out specific actions and do not record, at subsequent meetings, whether the actions have been completed.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Dental NVQ training for young people	19	2 2

56. All learners are employed by John G Plummer and Associates and work in Norfolk and north Suffolk. At the time of inspection there were 19 learners in oral healthcare training, working towards the NVQ at level 3. Of these learners, seven have already passed the independent assessment. This qualification is required for registration as a qualified dental nurse. Off-the-job training is provided at the dedicated training centre at Caister-on-Sea. John G Plummer and Associates employs one full-time assessor and six part-time assessors who carry out assessment in the workplace at least once every two weeks. Formal progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks by the course tutor.

57. John G Plummer and Associates recruits learners through schools, by advertising on its website and recommendations from previous learners.

Dental

Grade 2

Strengths

- good, supportive learning environment
- excellent pass rates at independent assessment
- good career progression

Weaknesses

- some weak assessment practice

Achievement and standards

58. Achievement rates for an independent assessment are excellent. In the May 2005 examination, all learners passed.

59. Achievement rates for the NVQ are satisfactory. Since 2002-03 retention rates have improved. For example, of the 14 learners who started the NVQ training programme in 2003-04, six have already achieved the NVQ and a further seven are still in learning and have passed the independent assessment. Learners progress to study for post-qualification awards in such areas as radiology and oral health education.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		14	100	12	100	16	100	11	100						
Retained*	0		5	36	6	50	10	62	9	82						
Successfully completed	0		6	43	6	50	10	62	9	82						
Still in learning	11		7	50	0	0	1	6	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

60. John G Plummer and Associates provides a good work environment that supports learning. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners benefit from working in well-resourced dental practices and are provided with a range of textbooks, free of charge, to support their learning. The dental practices are able to offer a wide range of learning opportunities, including orthodontic clinics and minor oral surgery. Staff have a good understanding and are supportive of the training programme. Dentists know and understand the NVQ requirements and regularly discuss clinical procedures with learners, which reinforces the off-the-job training. Learners who are identified as having additional needs are given individual support by assessors and the course tutor. Learners feel very well supported. Retention rates have improved. In addition, learners are included in the regular professional development programme that is available to all of the organisation's staff. Learners who do not meet targets have an interview with the course director. Learners are provided with additional support to keep them in employment and training. A small number of learners have exceeded the planned duration of the programme, but are receiving very good additional support for personal and health issues.

61. Many learners benefit from good career progression. This strength was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners develop good transferable occupational skills and increase their future employability. As learners progress through the training programme they develop confidence and dexterity in carrying out clinical procedures. They also develop useful skills in using information technology to maintain patients' records. Learners are aware that they are able to progress their career with John G Plummer and Associates. Many learners are promoted to senior dental nurse positions when they achieve the qualification and many of the current assessors were previously learners. A number of learners have subsequently progressed to further education and have gained qualifications in radiology and oral health education.

62. Progress reviews are carried out satisfactorily. Review meetings include discussion of NVQ units which have been completed and the work that learners are currently doing. Targets for the completion of further NVQ units are agreed and recorded. However, it is unusual for a workplace supervisor to attend these interviews. In the first year of training, dentists are requested to provide written feedback before each interview. In the second year there is a reliance on informal, verbal communication to identify issues about training and celebrate good performance.

63. Arrangements for induction are satisfactory. All learners attend a two-week induction

which includes all the legal aspects, including health and safety and equality of opportunity as well as explaining the NVQ requirements. Learners then spend one month in the surgery to determine their aptitude for a career in care.

64. Initial assessment is satisfactory. An assessment of the standard of learners' written work and a brief arithmetic test are carried out during the recruitment and selection processes. Where a significant support need is identified there is a procedure to refer learners to a local college for diagnostic tests and additional support. To date, no learners have been referred for this support. Arrangements are being made for key skills assessments to be carried out for learners who start from September 2005.

65. Staff are appropriately qualified, and occupationally experienced. Assessors visit learners at least every two weeks and spend half a day with them carrying out observations or working with them on their portfolio.

66. There is some weak assessment practice. Not all learners are set realistic and achievable targets in assessment plans. Assessors rely on verbal communication and the learners' recollection of agreed targets. Learners are not always clear about the work that is expected of them and cannot review their progress against short-term targets. Some written feedback for learners is inadequate, particularly that provided about their written work. Learners are not always given feedback about how to improve the quality of their work.

Leadership and management

67. Operational management of the programme is satisfactory. Learning is clearly planned and co-ordinated. The programme is planned to closely meet the needs of employers. Learners begin by attending an interview which includes an initial assessment in the dental surgery. All learners have a two-week induction period, which covers all the legal aspects of the programme, including health and safety and equality of opportunity, as well as explaining what an NVQ is and how it should be approached. The learner then goes on to spend a month in the surgery in order to determine his/her aptitude for the job.

68. Internal verification is sound and provides the assessor with guidance on how to assist the learner to progress. Appropriate corrective actions are carried out when issues are identified.

69. Progress and attendance are monitored adequately. Learners with full attendance receive a monthly bonus, in addition to their training allowance. Learners who do not achieve their targets are interviewed by the course director.

70. Internal communications are effective. Staff meetings are held regularly and include a learner representative.

71. Until January 2005, there was no framework for an oral healthcare apprenticeship. This has recently changed and learners are now expected to obtain key skills qualifications in communications and application of number. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for all new learners to begin training for the key skills qualifications in early September 2005 at a local college. This was judged to be a weakness in the self-assessment report.

