

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **YH Training Services Limited**

**23 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

## YH Training Services Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. YH Training Services Limited (YH) developed from a group training association, established in 1975, to meet the training needs of the motor industry in the north of England. The organisation became a limited company in 1985 and extended the training to cover more occupational areas. The company's head office is in Scarborough and it has two training centres in Scarborough, and one each in York, Huddersfield, Hull and Bawtry.

2. YH provides work-based learning for young people in performing manufacturing operations, performing engineering operations, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing and wholesaling, warehousing and distribution, business administration, customer services, accountancy, and management. All sites offer retailing and wholesaling, and customer services. Scarborough, York and Huddersfield offer accountancy, and all sites except Bawtry offer business administration. Hull, Scarborough, Bawtry and Huddersfield offer warehousing and distribution. Training is carried out on the job and in the company's training centres.

3. The company contracts with North Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC), West Yorkshire LSC and Humberside LSC for apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and national vocational qualification (NVQ) work-based learning. North Yorkshire LSC is the lead LSC for inspection. At the time of the inspection there were 356 apprentices, 110 advanced apprentices and 34 learners on NVQ programmes, of whom 82 per cent were employed. Additionally, 51 learners, mostly following warehousing programmes, were funded through the employer training pilot.

4. YH contracts with Yorkshire and Humberside Jobcentre Plus for longer occupational training (LOT) and short job-focused training for participants aged 25 years and over. The company offers these programmes at its York and Scarborough training centres. It also provides using ICT training. YH subcontracts off-the-job training for those participants funded by Jobcentre Plus if it cannot meet their identified training needs in-house. At the time of the inspection, there were 150 participants in a wide range of occupational areas. Jobcentre Plus has recently stopped nationally the New Deal programmes that YH was offering for participants aged 18-25.

5. YH employs 63 staff, 46 of whom work full time and 17 work part time. The company has four directors, two of whom run the company and three are shareholders. The executive management team comprises the managing director, the director of training and development, the employee development manager and the personal assistant to the managing director. There is a central training and development team and an administration and personnel team at head office. Each training centre has a centre manager who reports to the managing director. The adult contracts manager manages Jobcentre Plus-funded training. The director of training and development, with a team of four training and development managers, is responsible for quality improvement, self-assessment, internal verification and training. The director of training and development has overall responsibility for self-assessment.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS****Grade 3**

6. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Leadership and management are good, as are the arrangements for quality improvement. Provision is good in business administration and law and satisfactory in retail and commercial enterprise and ICT. The arrangements for equality of opportunity are also satisfactory.

7. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The process is inclusive and uses evidence from a range of sources, including data and feedback from learners, staff and employers. The inspectors found many of the strengths identified through self-assessment, but also found weaknesses that self-assessment had not identified. The grades awarded through self-assessment are broadly in line with the inspection grades. The company shares the development plan with staff and uses it effectively to improve the quality of its provision.

8. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** YH has good strategies to promote continuous improvement. It has taken decisive action to improve retention and achievement rates on work-based learning programmes and entry to employment rates on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes. The company now carefully recruits learners to the right programmes and this has led to a decrease in the number of learners in training, which enables it to focus on quality. YH monitors the data closely to identify trends in achievement at individual and centre level. It has improved on strengths identified at the previous inspection and transformed some of the identified weaknesses into strengths. The company has satisfactorily dealt with other weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and they are no longer weaknesses. It monitors the effectiveness of actions closely.

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR YH TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED:**

- ensure current learners and participants achieve their qualifications
- continue to improve rates of retention, achievement and entry to employment
- improve the review process
- improve promotion of diversity
- improve action-planning for Jobcentre Plus participants to help them into employment
- improve access to sites

**GRADES**

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality improvement	2

<b>Information and communications technology</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>ICT for users</i></b>		<b>3</b>
New Deal for young people	1	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	31	3

  

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Retailing and wholesaling</i></b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	149	3

  

<b>Business administration and law</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Accounting and finance</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	36	2
NVQ training for young people	13	2
<b><i>Customer service</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	120	2
NVQ training for young people	6	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

9. The inspection reported on and graded ICT, retail and commercial enterprise, and business administration and law. The areas where YH has learners and participants following programmes that were not separately reported on and graded include health, public services and care, agriculture, horticulture and animal care, construction, planning and the built environment, engineering and manufacturing technologies, and preparation for life and work. Evidence was collected from these areas to support judgements in leadership and management and the key findings section of the report. Inspectors visited YH once in the three weeks leading up to the inspection.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	23
Number of learners interviewed	54
Number of staff interviewed	42
Number of employers interviewed	22
Number of subcontractors interviewed	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	32
Number of visits	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

**10. Achievement rates on LSC-funded programmes and entry into employment rates on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes have increased over the past three years.**

**11. In accountancy, achievement rates are very good.** Seventy-four per cent of apprentices who began their programmes in 2003-04 have already achieved their qualifications and 5 per cent are still in training. Fifty-nine per cent of learners who began advanced apprenticeships in 2003-04 have already achieved their qualifications and 18 per cent are still in training. Achievement rates for NVQs at level 4 are very good, with 79 per cent of learners who began programmes in 2003-04 achieving their qualifications and 7 per cent are still in learning. Achievement rates for the external accountancy tests are very good. The pass rate was 100 per cent for NVQ at level 2 learners who took examinations in June 2005.

12. Customer service achievement rates show considerable improvement for the past three years and are now satisfactory. The apprenticeship completion rate has increased from 14 per cent for learners who started training in 2001-02 to 39 per cent for learners who started training in 2003-04. Twelve per cent of learners who started training in 2003-04 are still in training. Advanced apprenticeship rates are improving, but historically they have been low.

13. Entry into employment rates have improved and are now satisfactory on most New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults programmes. Of the 220 participants who started training in 2002-03, only 18 per cent gained employment, but this increased to 35 per cent for the 252 participants who began training in 2003-04. In most areas of learning, entry into employment rates have improved and are now satisfactory. For example, in transportation entry into employment has risen from 19 per cent in 2002-03 to 47 per cent in 2003-04. Of the 23 participants who began gas-fitting programmes in 2004-05, 78 per cent entered employment.

**14. In ICT, entry into employment rates remain low.** However, they improved from 17 per cent for participants who began programmes in 2002-03 to 33 per cent for participants who began training in 2003-04.

15. Numbers of participants on programmes for people aged 18-25 are too small to make meaningful judgements by area of learning. When analysed together they show low, but improving, job entry rates. Of the 27 participants who began programmes in 2002-03 and 2003-04, 11 per cent entered employment. Of the 17 participants who began programmes in 2004-05, 24 per cent entered employment and 29 per cent are still in learning.

**16. In retailing and wholesaling, apprenticeship achievement rates are improving but they remain low.** Seventeen per cent of learners who began programmes in 2001-02 achieved their qualifications. In 2002-03 this improved to 27 per cent, but remained static at 27 per cent in 2003-04 with 10 per cent still in learning. In the three years since 2002-03, 46 advanced apprentices have begun programmes but only 11 per cent have completed their planned learning. Forty-three per cent are still in learning.



17. **Learners on accountancy, retailing and customer service programmes are progressing well towards their learning goals.** They now achieve their key skills and technical certificates in the first three to six months of their programme while working towards their NVQ. In customer service many learners complete their NVQ at level 2 early.

18. **Accountancy learners' progress between qualification levels is good.** Most learners take the NVQ at level 2 and then progress to NVQs at levels 3 and 4.

19. **Learners on all programmes develop good practical skills and have the confidence to apply them in the workplace.** Many learners have significantly increased their level of responsibility at work since beginning their apprenticeship and have been promoted. Learners' portfolio work is good and includes a diverse range of evidence obtained in the workplace. Customer service learners develop a good standard of technical skills through projects linked to the NVQ and key skills standards. Some of the project work is of an exceptionally high standard and demonstrates good research and analysis by learners. Accountancy learners develop good professional skills. They are able to perform a range of complex accounting tasks with minimal supervision.

20. **In using ICT programmes, the development of participants' confidence and ICT skills is very good.** For many participants, their enhanced confidence has been the most significant factor in their ability to recognise their development needs and to continue and progress on their programmes. The participants develop good levels of self-esteem through participating in a wide range of optional training opportunities. They also develop very valuable ICT skills and can apply them well to complete their curriculum vitae or to write job application letters.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information and communications technology	0	2	1	0	3
Retail and commercial enterprise	0	2	1	0	3
Business administration and law	0	2	2	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>

21. **In customer service, and retailing and wholesaling, assessment planning is particularly thorough and effective.** Trainers/assessors and learners agree very detailed action plans. YH co-ordinates assessment well and integrates all aspects of the learners' overall goals. Trainers/assessors monitor the learners' progress towards their targets very effectively and frequently. They are thorough in ensuring that the learners complete their learning targets. Learners make good progress. Trainers/assessors set themselves goals on the action plans, including meeting with employers to discuss assessment opportunities. Trainers/assessors develop a thorough understanding of employers' work processes, enabling them to guide the learners' development.

22. **On Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes, YH takes great care to source placements and off-the-job training that meet the individual participants' aspirations.** It prioritises participants' development needs and uses good-quality off-the-job training courses that the

employers value. Placements provide good on-the-job training and career progression. On ICT programmes, most participants are offered a good range of work placements with very supportive employers. The participants choose the type of employer that most relates to their employment objectives or the sector that interests them. The quality of these work placements is very good, with a significant number of the participants gaining good sustainable employment with the work-placement providers.

**23. Staff on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes provide very good support for the participants who have multiple challenges and barriers to progress.** Staff successfully but sensitively and patiently work to change these participants' mindsets in relation to the value of gaining employment. A significant number of these participants have progressed well from their way of thinking or their individual circumstances.

**24. In accountancy, there is a particularly good response to learners' needs and a flexible approach to training.** Most learners attend training one day each week. The few learners who cannot attend off-the-job training during the day have the opportunity to attend evening sessions or receive individual training in the workplace. Trainers/assessors who are current practitioners teach NVQs at level 4. YH takes great care to help learners find a work placement that meets their needs and career aspirations.

25. Teaching is satisfactory or better on all programmes. Effective coaching in the workplace for LSC-funded learners deals with the learning needs identified by initial assessment. In the better sessions for Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes, YH encourages participants to contribute and build on their previous experience or apply their experience to new settings or situations. However, in jobsearch sessions, the participants are not sufficiently engaged and do not benefit from the training.

26. Induction on all programmes is satisfactory. Learners have a sound understanding of key induction topics such as equal opportunities and health and safety. However, as some work-based learners progress between NVQ levels there is insufficient reinforcement of these topics as they move into more responsible positions.

27. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners receive appropriate initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy, language and key skills. Where appropriate, trainers/assessors carry out additional planning to show learners where additional support will be given. Learners also receive an initial assessment review after six weeks to identify any further learning needs.

28. Specialist support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Learners requiring literacy or numeracy support have effective individual support in the workplace with a qualified tutor. YH offers participants adequate literacy and numeracy support. The company offers training to participants who can benefit from this support, normally once a week, by staff who are working towards appropriate qualifications to support literacy and numeracy developmental needs.

29. YH has a range of satisfactory resources to support learners. It makes good use of e-learning resources, such as online materials and sample papers.

**30. In accountancy and retailing, employers and workplace supervisors are not sufficiently involved in the review process.** The company gives copies of progress review

paperwork and action plans to the learners to pass on to employers. Their workplace supervisor is rarely present during the progress review, although trainers/assessors and workplace supervisors do meet separately. In customer service, trainers/assessors do not make full use of learners' progress reviews to promote the learners' personal development and welfare. Some reviews are too short and the company carries them out in unsuitable surroundings. Learners sometimes have little input to the review.

**31. During progress review meetings for ICT participants, there is insufficient focus on employment issues.** Participants are not set clear, detailed and time-bound tasks to carry out before their next meetings. YH places little or no emphasis on the participants' individual learning plans during the meetings. The plans do not always indicate the findings of the initial assessment process, and they do not always provide a clear set of actions for the review process.

## Leadership and management

**32. Staff development is very good.** Through the staff development programme, staff become very well qualified. Learners benefit from their good knowledge, understanding of portfolio-building and commitment to self-improvement. An allocated mentor supports all new staff. The company monitors staff training plans closely and amends them as appropriate at monthly reviews. It is company policy that all staff should hold an NVQ at level 3. In addition to these mandatory qualifications, they can also work for other qualifications at all levels, including higher education, short accredited courses such as mentoring awards, and short training programmes such as drug awareness and dyslexia awareness. The training and development team deliver in-house training for groups and individuals to share new ideas and good practice, particularly on areas of weakness, for example key skills.

**33. Performance management is very effective.** There is good use of target-setting and monitoring of targets for achievement rates on LSC-funded programmes and entry to employment rates on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes. Trainers/assessors are very clear about their targets, which they monitor carefully. YH sets targets for the recruitment, retention and achievement rates of individual learners, training centres and the company as a whole. Retention and achievement rates are a standard agenda item at meetings of senior managers, managers and trainers/assessors. Centre managers and the managing director closely monitor trainers'/assessors' performance. The company quickly identifies trainers/assessors not achieving targets, provides them with support and monitors their progress.

**34. Staff have a good understanding of the company's strategic direction and business performance.** They understand the role that they play in contributing to its success. The company has clear aims that all staff understand. Centre managers produce the business plans for their own training centres, which gives them a sense of ownership of the targets that they have to deliver. Individual training centre business plans contribute to the overall business plan and influence the company's strategic direction. Communication is good within the company and management is open and consultative.

**35. The internal verifier team leads the management of work-based learning programmes well and co-ordinates it effectively across the company, despite the wide geographical area.** Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes are led and managed effectively. Staff have a close working relationship and work well to support each other and develop

their skills to support the participants.

36. The strategy for literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Staff supporting learners literacy and numeracy are themselves supported by a staff member who has a relevant level 4 qualification. YH allocates those learners identified as having additional learning needs twice as much time with trainers/assessors as other learners. The company refers those learners identified as dyslexic to the Dyslexia Institute for diagnostic assessment and further support. Each training centre has a satisfactory library of resources to support literacy and numeracy.

37. YH's staff have a good understanding of harassment issues. They receive detailed training on how to eliminate harassment and oppressive behaviour. Staff working with Jobcentre Plus-funded participants are particularly sensitive to their individual needs and circumstances. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity.

38. **YH has good strategies to promote continuous improvement.** Achievement rates on work-based learning programmes and entry to employment rates on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes have improved over the past three years. The company carefully ensures that it recruits learners to the right programmes. It monitors data closely to identify trends in achievement at individual and centre level. Its quality assurance procedures are effective. The company has improved upon the strengths identified at the previous inspection. It has transformed some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection into strengths. The company has dealt with the others and they are now satisfactory.

39. Internal verification is good. It is effective and well planned to include all trainers/assessors and learners. It incorporates observation of trainers/assessors, occupational trainers'/assessors' surgeries and formative and summative verification of learners' work across all aspects of their framework. The company carries out standardisation activities with the team, led by the internal verifier. Internal verifiers accompany trainers/assessors in a highly effective support role, to watch and coach them and to offer them advice and guidance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- very good staff development
- very effective performance management
- clear and well-shared strategic direction
- good strategies to promote continuous improvement

### **Weaknesses**

- limited access for people with restricted mobility

## **Information and communications technology**

### ***ICT for users***

**Grade 3**

#### *Strengths*

- very effective development of participants' confidence and ICT skills
- good work-placement arrangements
- very effective approach to remove individual participants' barriers to progress
- good monitoring and management of participants' progress

#### *Weaknesses*

- low retention and progression rates to employment
- insufficient action-planning for employment

## **Retail and commercial enterprise**

### ***Retailing and wholesaling***

**Grade 3**

#### *Strengths*

- good development of learners' practical skills
- good progression at work
- particularly good use of assessment to monitor and encourage learners' progress

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor apprenticeship achievement rates

**Business administration and law**

***Accounting and finance***

**Grade 2**

*Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good progression
- good development of professional skills
- particularly good response to learners' needs

*Weaknesses*

- insufficiently thorough review process

***Customer service***

**Grade 2**

*Strengths*

- very thorough assessment planning and monitoring
- good progress by learners
- good development of the learners' technical skills

*Weaknesses*

- some ineffective use of reviews for personal development

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT YH TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED:**

- friendly, helpful and supportive staff - 'staff are always there, they always care'
- its flexible approach to learning
- their improved confidence - 'they helped me know I'm not stupid'
- the opportunity to gain a qualification - 'I can move on now'
- 'trainers/assessors get to know company systems and help us to improve them'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK YH TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- 'I'd like my employer to be told more'

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

#### Strengths

- very good staff development
- very effective performance management
- clear and well-shared strategic direction
- good strategies to promote continuous improvement

#### Weaknesses

- limited access for people with restricted mobility

40. Staff development is very good. Through the staff development programme, staff become very well qualified. Learners benefit from their good knowledge, understanding of portfolio-building and commitment to self-improvement. There is a thorough induction process for new staff, which takes place at head office and at the local training centre. An allocated mentor supports all new staff. There is a six- to 12-month individual learning plan for new non-training staff and a 12- to 24-month learning plan for trainers/assessors. The length and content of the learning plan is linked to the new staff's existing skills and experience. The company monitors the learning plan closely and amends it as appropriate at monthly reviews. The company has a thorough and comprehensive employee handbook. It clearly covers employees' rights and responsibilities, information about career structure and clear information about salary scales and progression routes through them. Staff appreciate the transparency and fairness of the system.

41. It is company policy that all staff should hold an NVQ at level 3. Staff under 25 are registered on the relevant apprenticeship framework. Training staff have up to 18 months to achieve learning and development at level 3. In addition to these mandatory qualifications, they can also work for other qualifications at all levels, including higher education, short accredited courses such as mentoring awards, and short training programmes, such as for drug awareness and dyslexia awareness. The training and development team deliver in-house training for groups and individuals to share new ideas and good practice, particularly on areas of weakness, such as key skills. Learners identify their own training needs or managers and internal verifiers identify them. An effective system exists for staff to identify and record continuing professional development gained on the job and through formal training. The company identifies staff development needs and discusses them at annual personal review and development meetings. Quarterly progress meetings take place to monitor staff performance.

42. YH evaluates the quality of its in-house and external training effectively. For example, following an in-house workshop for retail staff, the company sent out a test a month afterwards to check what they had learnt. The internal verifier who ran the training marked the test and returned it with detailed feedback.

43. The company's performance management is very effective. It makes good use of target-setting and monitoring of targets for achievement rates on LSC-funded programmes



and entry to employment rates on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes. Trainers/assessors are very clear about their targets, which they monitored carefully. YH sets targets for the recruitment, retention and achievement rates of individual learners, training centres and the company as a whole. It raises targets annually by 5 per cent to improve framework achievement rates. This year, the target for achievement on LSC-funded programmes is 50 per cent. Retention and achievement rates are a standard agenda item at meetings of senior managers, managers and trainers/assessors. Centre managers closely monitor trainers'/assessors' performance fortnightly. The managing director has monthly meetings with centre managers to discuss the programme of individual training centre and individual staff performance against their targets. The employee development manager also takes part to discuss any employee issues. The minutes are documented and an action plan produced, which is discussed at executive management team meetings. The company quickly identifies trainers/assessors who are not achieving their targets and provides them with support. The centre manager, training and development team and executive management team monitor their programme.

44. Staff have a good understanding of the company's strategic direction and business performance and they understand the role that they play in contributing to the company's success. The company has clear aims that all of its staff understand. Centre managers produce the business plans for their own training centres, which gives them a sense of ownership of the targets they have to deliver. Individual training centre business plans contribute to the overall business plan and influence the company's strategic direction. The three-year development plan is shared with staff. Communication is good within the company, and management is open and consultative. It uses a wide range of meetings effectively to communicate information to centre managers and centre staff, and to pass information upwards from trainers/assessors to managers and directors.

45. The management of work-based learning programmes is well led by the internal verifier team and is effectively co-ordinated across the company despite the wide geographical area. Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes are effectively led and managed. Staff have a close working relationship and work well to support each other and develop their skills to support the participants.

46. The company now analyses the reasons for staff leaving the company. Staff turnover has reduced significantly in the past two years. Learners benefit from having continuity with experienced and well-trained staff.

47. Business development managers and centre managers maintain close links with employers. New learners and employers receive professionally presented programme information. YH's staff meet regularly with representatives from a large employer to monitor the contract's progress.

48. The strategy for literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Initial assessment effectively identifies learners' literacy and numeracy support needs. Staff supporting learners' literacy and numeracy needs are themselves supported by a staff member who has a relevant level 4 qualification. The company is piloting structured literacy and numeracy sessions in Scarborough. Participation is voluntary and the sessions are proving popular, with learners' attendance having increased from three to eight. The company allocates those learners identified as having additional learning needs twice as much time with trainers/assessors as other learners. YH refers learners identified as dyslexic to the

Dyslexia Institute for diagnostic assessment and further support. Each training centre has a library of resources to support literacy and numeracy.

49. The company deploys staff effectively and efficiently. Its facilities and resources at all sites are satisfactory. However, the lack of networked computers causes staff some duplication of effort as, for example, they have to input the same data several times on different learner forms.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

50. The company has an equality and diversity policy that it reviews annually and a disability statement. The disability statement is made available to potential learners. An equality of opportunity working group that has representatives from all of the training centres meets regularly to ensure that there are effective systems to monitor equality and diversity practices. A member of the equality of opportunity working group sits on West Yorkshire LSC's equality and diversity group, which helps to share good practice. YH shares information from these meetings with its staff through the established meeting structure.

51. Support for participants on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes is particularly good. The company takes great care to source work placements and off-the-job training that meet the individual learners' aspirations. The Jobcentre Plus manager prioritises participants' development needs and purchases off-the-job training courses that are expensive but good quality and valued by employers. Work placements provide good on-the-job training and career progression. Participants follow off-the-job training in a wide range of areas of learning.

52. Staff have a good understanding of harassment issues and, during their induction, they receive detailed training on how to eliminate harassment and oppressive behaviour. There are examples of staff responding swiftly and effectively to problems that learners have had in the workplace. Staff working with Jobcentre Plus-funded participants are particularly sensitive to their individual needs and circumstances.

53. Learners following retailing and wholesaling programmes have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. Other learners' understanding is satisfactory but basic. Learners receive information on equality and diversity as part of their induction. However, as some work-based learners progress between NVQ levels there is insufficient reinforcement of the topic as they move into more responsible positions. All learners have an appropriately modified version of the equality of opportunity policy and the complaints and appeals procedures in their portfolio. Learners know how to make a complaint in their workplace and in relation to their training. They all understand the appeals procedure. Systems for monitoring and dealing with complaints are satisfactory. Complaints are discussed at the executive management team meetings.

54. YH sets targets and monitors them for performance. It collects data on learner and employee applications, starts, retention and progression for ethnicity, gender, age and disability, and analyses it to highlight trends and imbalances. Occupancy on training programmes reasonably mirrors the geographical areas in which the company works.

55. The company checks that employers and work placements have equality of opportunity policies and offers to share its own with the employers. There is insufficient

monitoring and reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality of opportunity during reviews. Some trainers/assessors ask learners leading or closed questions about their understanding.

56. Access for learners with limited mobility is restricted in three training centres, which are located in listed buildings. The company has identified this problem and is looking for other premises.

### Quality improvement

### Contributory grade 2

57. YH has good strategies to promote continuous improvement. It has taken decisive action to improve retention and achievement rates on work-based learning programmes and entry to employment rates on Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes. The company is taking greater care to ensure that it recruits learners carefully to the right programmes. This has led to a decrease in the number of learners in training, which is allowing the company to focus on quality. Staff caseloads have decreased. The company monitors data closely to identify trends in achievement at individual and centre level. It has further refined and tightened its quality assurance procedures. The company has improved upon strengths identified at the previous inspection, such as staff development and achievement rates on accountancy programmes. It has transformed some weaknesses identified at the previous inspection into strengths, such as performance management and assessment planning. YH has dealt with other weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and these are now satisfactory. For example, the induction process, promotion of equality of opportunity and formal monitoring of staff turnover. The company closely monitors the effectiveness of actions.

58. Internal verification is good. It is effective and well planned to include all trainers/assessors and learners. It incorporates observations of trainers/assessors, learners' interviews, occupational trainers'/assessors' surgeries, and formative and summative verification of learners' work across all aspects of their framework. Standardisation activities are carried out with the team led by the internal verifier. Internal verifiers are all members of the training and development team. They accompany trainers/assessors in a highly effective support role to watch and coach them and to offer them advice and guidance. This helps trainers/assessors to improve their understanding of the occupational standards and improve their own delivery techniques.

59. Quality assurance is consistently good across the different centres offering LSC-funded provision. Training centre managers observe training staff at least every six months. This system has effectively identified staff who need further support and training. YH has comprehensive and well-understood quality assurance policies and procedures. Training centre managers carry out internal audits and sample at least 10 per cent of all visit records, including action plans and assessments to ensure compliance with procedures. To ensure standardisation across the training centres there are regular area of learning meetings and internal verifier support days. The teams share good practice through meetings, including good practice that the training and development team find on the ALI's and the Learning and Skills Development Agency's websites.

60. The company has a good system for gathering employers' feedback. The two business development advisers telephone all employers every six months to ask for their views on the standards of training and service that the company provides. A telephone survey of a sample of employers is also carried out as part of the self-assessment process. The system

for collecting learners' feedback is satisfactory. The company makes good use of evaluations of the questionnaires that learners complete at different stages of their programmes to improve its provision.

61. Quality assurance of Jobcentre Plus programmes is satisfactory. Monitoring of the quality of the off-the-job training for participants is satisfactory. Where YH identifies problems with subcontractors, it takes action to deal with them and, if necessary, finds other subcontractors. The company has a new system to evaluate the quality of off-the-job training. It takes into account the views of participants who have attended the training, if they completed it successfully and if they found jobs. However, the system does not analyse training courses which have only been used once.

62. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of learners' progress reviews. While some of them are completed well, and most procedures are clear, the procedure relating to reviews is vague about the required level of employer involvement.

63. The self-assessment process is good and takes account of the views of staff, employers and learners. All staff complete a questionnaire based on the Common Inspection Framework questions, identifying strengths and areas for development. The questionnaire does not ask respondents to identify the evidence for their judgements. The company seeks feedback from employers through a useful telephone evaluation system. It uses learners' evaluations in the self-assessment process and analyses data for trends in achievements. The director of training and development collates the results and drafts the self-assessment report. Staff discuss the draft and suggest changes at staff meetings. Inspectors found most of the same strengths that the company identified in its most recent self-assessment report, but also found weaknesses that self-assessment had not identified. The self-assessment report was produced in October 2004, 11 months before the inspection, and did not reflect all of the improvements made to the provision in that time. The report is written against the old 14 areas of learning and it is not always clear how judgements relate to the 15 areas of learning. Jobcentre Plus programmes are all analysed together and work-based ICT programmes are not included. The grades awarded through self-assessment were the same as those awarded by inspectors, apart from the grades awarded by inspectors for Jobcentre Plus-funded ICT programmes, and retailing and wholesaling, which were lower than those in the self-assessment report. The company shares its development plan with staff and uses it effectively to improve the quality of its provision. It is incorporated into the three-year development plan and understood by all staff.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information and communications technology

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ICT for users</b>		<b>3</b>
New Deal for young people	1	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	31	3

64. Thirty-one participants on the 26-week LOT programme and one participant completing a New Deal for young people programme are working towards an examination-based qualification in information technology. YH offers some participants additional ICT-accredited courses and other non-accredited courses. It provides work placements for the participants who will benefit from them. The participants who gain employment within the 26 weeks can continue to work towards their qualifications.

65. YH considers participants' suitability through the assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills, and their previous ICT experience, during an initial meeting. Before starting their training programme, the company offers participants an induction at its training centre. It reviews participants' progress every four weeks. Five staff are involved in the participants' training, of whom one is responsible for the overall management of the programme, two are ICT trainers/assessors, one provides interpersonal and employability skills training, one offers jobsearch training and one is the internal verifier.

#### **ICT for users**

**Grade 3**

##### *Strengths*

- very effective development of participants' confidence and ICT skills
- good work-placement arrangements
- very effective approach to remove individual participants' barriers to progress
- good monitoring and management of participants' progress

##### *Weaknesses*

- low retention and progression rates to employment
- insufficient action-planning for employment

#### **Achievement and standards**

66. Participants join their programmes with little or no knowledge of ICT and generally plan to gain employment as administrators or within wider roles in private or public sector employers. A significant number of the participants have low-esteem, have had long-term health problems and have received incapacity support for some time. Some participants are lone parents and have not had employment within recent years. The participants develop good levels of self-esteem through participating in a wide range of optional training opportunities. For example, the participants have attended a number of accredited and non-accredited courses and are attending a well-structured interpersonal training

programme. Participants have contributed to charity events, taken part in outdoor adventure team-building activities and have been offered motivational discussion sessions by external organisations. For many participants, their enhanced confidence has been the most significant factor in their ability to recognise their development needs and to continue and progress on their programmes. The participants also develop very valuable ICT skills and can apply them well to complete their curriculum vitae or write job application letters. Forty-four per cent of the participants have completed an examination-based qualification in information technology and another 32 per cent have completed parts of this qualification. Some participants are also working well towards more advanced qualifications in IT.

67. Retention and entry into employment rates of the New Deal 25+ participants are low, but improving. From 196 participants who started programmes between 2002 to 2005, only 48 per cent were retained and only 17 per cent gained employment. However, entry into employment improved from 17 per cent for participants who began programmes in 2002-03 to 33 per cent for participants who began training in 2003-04. Some participants gained employment a few months after completing their training programme. Retention and achievement rates of the participants with New Deal for young people are low. Of the 21 participants who started between 2002 and 2005, only 48 per cent were retained and only 10 per cent gained employment. Jobcentre Plus has recently stopped this programme nationally.

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

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	88		60	100	48	100	5	100									
Retained*	23		41	68	30	62	5	100									
Planned learning completed	2		7	12	5	10	1	20									
Gained job	6		20	33	8	17	4	80									
Still in training	31		0	0	0	0	0	0									

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal for Young People	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	6		9	100	6	100											
Retained*	3		4	44	3	50											
Planned learning completed	1		1	11	0	0											
Gained job	2		0	0	0	0											
Still in training	1		0	0	0	0											

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## The quality of provision

68. YH offers participants a good range of work placements, most of which are with very supportive employers. The participants choose the type of the employer that most relates to their employment objectives or the sector in which they are interested. These include work placements in offices, employment agencies, medical practices and schools. Before the participants start their work experience, the company formally agrees with each work-placement provider the type of experience that the participants require. Most work placements provide realistic and very valuable work experience and also employment references for the participants. The quality of these placements is very good, with a significant number of the participants gaining good sustainable employment with the work-placement providers. Fifty-five per cent of the participants with work placements have been offered employment there. The participants who are not offered employment gain a very good range of employability and personal skills.

69. Staff provide very good support for the participants, many of whom have multiple challenges and barriers to progress. These barriers include an over-reliance on social benefits, experience of long periods of drug dependency, emotional breakdown, alcohol and substance abuse, or criminal behaviour. Staff work sensitively and patiently to change these participants' mindsets towards the value of employment. A significant number of these participants have progressed well from their way of thinking or their individual circumstances. For example, some of these participants are progressing well towards an examination-based qualification in information technology or have secured employment. The participants have developed a very strong mutual trust and respect for the staff and often seek advice for the challenges that they face. Some participants who have progressed and completed their training maintain contact with the company and provide good role models and advocates for the current participants. Many participants value highly the support that they have received and write to the staff to express their appreciation. Recently, the company has developed training to help the participants to enhance their personal and employability skills. The material is well developed, but it is too early to judge its full effect.

70. Participants are provided with adequate support for literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. The company identifies participants' additional needs effectively during the initial assessment or the training sessions. It offers training to the participants who can benefit from this support, normally once each week by staff who are working towards appropriate qualifications to support literacy and numeracy developmental needs. The company promotes these optional sessions well and encourages those participants who are more confident with their literacy and numeracy skills to support other participants.

71. Resources are generally satisfactory, with the staff having satisfactory occupational experience to support the participants. Computing resources are good, with the participants and staff having easy access to up-to-date computer facilities. Induction is satisfactory.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better sessions, the trainers/assessors encourage participants to contribute and build on their previous experience or apply their experience to new settings or situations. For example, in interpersonal skills training sessions, trainers/assessors encourage participants to use their

dealings with staff in different situations to identify the typical features of an assertive individual. However, in jobsearch sessions, the participants are not sufficiently engaged and do not benefit from the training. In some sessions the spelling and grammar on printed handouts is poor.

73. Progress reviews take place every four weeks, but during the progress review meetings there is insufficient focus on employment issues. The participants are not set clear, detailed and time-bound tasks to carry out before their next meetings. They are not set clear expectations about how many employment opportunities they need to explore. The company places little or no emphasis on the participants' individual learning plans during the meetings. The plans do not always thoroughly indicate the findings of the initial assessment process, and they do not always provide a clear set of actions for the review process.

### **Leadership and management**

74. The arrangements for the monitoring of the individuals' progress are good. The company records information in relation to the individuals' progress during their programme in good detail, monitors it carefully and takes good action if there are any concerns regarding the participants' progress. For example, the participants who stay too long in training without work experience are prioritised to gain work placements. While some aspects of the training are optional for the participants, there is good monitoring of the participants' attendance pattern. The company analyses information about the participants very effectively to establish any trends or patterns. For example, a significant number of the participants who leave the programmes are either lone parents or participants who have been on long-term incapacity social support. Staff are using this information well to develop approaches that further enhance the support of these participants.

75. The participants' programmes are effectively led and managed. The manager has an open and consultative management style and promotes continuous improvement well. Staff have a close working relationship and work well to support each other and develop their skills to support the participants. Each tutor takes responsibility for all aspects of their allocated participants' progress.

76. The participants' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Staff are particularly sensitive to individual participants' needs and circumstances.

77. Internal verification arrangements are adequate. The company verifies a satisfactory sample of participants' work at regular intervals. However, the standardisation meetings do not always focus on improving the assessment practices.

78. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but the quality of the provision on its own was not self-assessed.



**Retail and commercial enterprise****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Retailing and wholesaling</i></b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	149	3

79. There are 149 apprentices in retailing, of whom 19 are advanced apprentices and 130 are apprentices. Two learners are on NVQ-only programmes. Most learners are already employed when they start their training programme. Learners are employed in food and non-food retailing in large high-street retailers and small privately owned companies. Learners can join the programme at any time. The trainer/assessor who will work with the learners throughout their training programme inducts them to the programme. The company carries out an occupational skill scan to identify existing knowledge and skills and to enable the tutor to identify the most appropriate optional units. Trainers/assessors visit learners in the workplace every four weeks to carry out individual training and assessment, and they carry out bi-monthly progress reviews. Learners requiring support with literacy and numeracy have tailor-made, individual sessions with a qualified basic skills tutor. Employers provide on-the-job training. Staff have carried out a cross-referencing exercise to ensure that employers' in-house training programmes are clearly linked to the apprenticeship frameworks and to avoid duplication. Trainers/assessors take laptop computers to learners' workplaces to provide individual training sessions that prepare learners for their technical certificate and key skill tests.

***Retailing and wholesaling*****Grade 3***Strengths*

- good development of learners' practical skills
- good progression at work
- particularly good use of assessment to monitor and encourage learners' progress

*Weaknesses*

- poor apprenticeship achievement rates

**Achievement and standards**

80. Learners develop good practical skills in retailing that are relevant to their work roles. They are competent in the core activities required to be effective within a busy retail store. These include till operations, merchandising, goods handling and teamwork. Many learners have significantly increased their level of responsibility at work since starting their apprenticeship. Learners take great pride in completing their written work. Portfolios are well organised, clearly cross-referenced and contain a wide variety of learners' work. Learners can explain how understanding the retail sector has helped them become more effective at work. The skills and knowledge learners acquire are transferable across the retail sector.

81. Learners currently in training are progressing well towards their learning goals.

Trainers/assessors plan carefully to ensure assessment of key skills, technical certificates and the NVQ are integrated. Learners are now achieving their key skills and technical certificates in the first six months of their programme while working towards their NVQ. Centre managers monitor learners' progress carefully each month. The company has introduced a percentage system linked to the number of assessments to monitor achievement of NVQ units. Trainers/assessors have clear targets for each learner that they review each quarter. They investigate slow progress quickly and discuss it with the learners. Despite regular visits from trainers/assessors, some learners are beyond their projected funding end date. Learners confirm their desire to complete and achieve their qualifications.

82. In retailing, apprenticeship achievement rates are improving but they remain low. Seventeen per cent of learners who began apprenticeship programmes in 2001-02 achieved their qualification. This improved in 2002-03 to 27 per cent, but remained static at 27 per cent in 2003-04 with 10 per cent still in learning. Retention rates have improved and are 69 per cent for learners who began apprenticeships in 2003-04. Achievement rates are low on advanced apprenticeship programmes, but retention is improving.

83. Senior managers identified a breach of organisational practice that affected learners recruited to programmes in 2003-04. This involved the recruitment of 64 apprentices to inappropriate retailing programmes at two sites. After an in-depth investigation and consultation with the learners, the company took them off the programme. This has affected retention and achievement figures for 2003-04. The company has now decided to restrict the recruitment of learners to retailing programmes to enable trainers/assessors to focus on the existing learners.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		16		44		94	100								
Retained*	0		0		9		19	20								
Successfully completed	0		0		1		4	4								
Still in learning	8		8		3		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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	149		269		283		500	100								
Retained*	7		107		118		163	33								
Successfully completed	7		73		76		83	17								
Still in learning	103		26		1		0	0								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																	
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	3		0	0	4	100	5	100									
Retained*	0		0	0	3	75	2	40									
Successfully completed	0		0	0	3	75	2	40									
Still in learning	2		0	0	0	0	0	0									

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

### The quality of provision

84. Assessment is particularly well planned, with incredibly detailed action-planning linked to all aspects of the framework. Targets are set for a four-week period and learners achieve them. Learners respond well to their targets. One apprentice regularly telephones her tutor to request additional work. Assessment records are comprehensive and thorough. Trainers/assessors use a wide variety of assessment methods to suit individual learners' needs. The company makes good use of awarding body records to monitor achievement of the NVQ. All learners have individual learning plans, but they often do not have short-term targets and are not used to monitoring their progress during the training programme. YH has developed a series of documents to monitor learners' progress. Centre managers monitor these closely and use the information when monitoring trainers'/assessors' performance against their quarterly targets.

85. Trainers/assessors are particularly well qualified. YH provides good ongoing personal development designed to broaden trainers'/assessors' knowledge of learning and development. Trainers/assessors are excellent role models for learners. Three of them did their own apprenticeships with YH. When they join the company, new trainers/assessors carry out a well-planned development programme to achieve qualifications relevant to their role, such as trainers'/assessors' qualifications, the key skills practitioner award at level 3 and the learning and development award at level 3.

86. There are good opportunities for the learners to progress at work. Many of them are on part-time contracts at the start of their programme, but due to increased interest in their work and through more in-depth knowledge of retailing, most learners are offered increased hours, which gives them enhanced working conditions and benefits. Several learners have been given more responsibility at work since beginning their programmes. For example, one learner has been appointed assistant store manager, another has been given responsibility to train casual and new staff in the use of tills. Another learner had been accepted onto the company's management development programme. Having trainers/assessors who began their careers as apprentices inspires the learners to progress their own careers.

87. Specialist support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Initial assessment accurately identifies the learners' additional support needs. Learners requiring support have individual training in the workplace with a qualified tutor. One learner whose workplace is unsuitable for this activity attends the centre.

88. The company has a range of satisfactory resources to support the learners.

Trainers/assessors make effective use of support material developed by the Sector Skills Council for retail to ensure learners have the necessary knowledge for the technical certificate. The company has produced booklets to support learning that enable learners to carry out self-directed study at a time and pace to suit their individual needs.

89. Trainers/assessors visit the workplace every four weeks. At each visit they agree a comprehensive action plan with the learner. Action plans are developed across the framework components to produce relevant evidence. At these visits the assessor reviews progress against previous actions given to the learner. Staff have developed case studies contextualised to the retail sector that contribute to the learning required for all aspects of the framework. Employers are involved in reviewing the learners' work and act as witnesses to confirm the accuracy of their work.

90. Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. Although they are sometimes carried out without the employer present, once completed the trainers/assessors discuss the content with the employer. Reviews focus mainly on framework achievement, but trainers/assessors do check the learners' personal welfare and understanding of health and safety and equality of opportunity. Learners are asked about their absences from work and attendance at employers' training events.

### **Leadership and management**

91. The programme is well managed. YH has regular meetings to review the retailing programme. Senior managers and centre staff ensure that trainers/assessors and learners receive relevant support and guidance. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity issues. Information they receive at induction is reinforced as part of the monthly progress review. A member of the retail team represents the company at the West Yorkshire LSC equality of opportunity and diversity forum. The company shares information from these meetings with all staff through the meeting structure.

92. The company's internal verification is effective, well planned and carried out monthly. The internal verifier samples all tutors' and learners' work. The internal verifier leads team standardisation activities. Trainers work with the internal verifier to produce training manuals to support the induction for apprentices.

93. Staff are involved well in the self-assessment process. Inspectors broadly agreed with the company's most recent self-assessment report. The self-assessment report did not identify the weakness that the inspectors found.

**Business administration and law****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Accounting and finance</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	36	2
NVQ training for young people	13	2
<b>Customer service</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	120	2
NVQ training for young people	6	2

94. There are 126 learners on customer service programmes, of whom 74 are apprentices following NVQs at level 2 and 46 advanced apprentices are following NVQs at level 3. Six learners are on NVQ-only programmes. Customer service programmes are available to learners at all of the YH training centres. Most learners are employed. They work in a diverse range of settings in large and small companies, including offices, shops, and other service companies. All training and assessment takes place in the workplace. Trainers/assessors take laptop computers to learners' workplaces to provide individual training sessions that prepare them for their technical certificate and key skill tests. Trainers/assessors visit the learners every three to four weeks and review the learners' progress every eight weeks. Learners take tests for key skills and technical certificates online at the provider's premises. All sites offer customer service training.

95. YH offers NVQ accounting training at level 2, 3 and 4 at Huddersfield, York, and Scarborough. There are 49 learners, of whom 14 are advanced apprentices, 22 are apprentices and 13 are working towards an NVQ at level 4. Learners work towards key skills qualifications as part of their apprenticeship programmes, although many are exempt because of prior achievements. Most learners are employed. They work in accounting practices as accounts clerks or in accounting offices in local industries. Most learners attend weekly off-the-job training at the training centres. Learners can attend during the day or in the evening. Reviews of learners' progress take place every four to six weeks. The company carries out most of them in the workplace, with a few taking place in the training centre.

**Accounting and finance****Grade 2***Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good progression
- good development of professional skills
- particularly good response to learners' needs

*Weaknesses*

- insufficiently thorough review process

## Achievement and standards

96. The company has sustained very good achievement and retention rates over a number of years. Of the 19 apprentices who began programmes in 2003-04, 74 per cent have achieved their planned learning and 5 per cent are still in training. Of the 22 learners who began advanced apprenticeships in 2003-04, 59 per cent have achieved their planned learning and 18 per cent are still in training. Achievement rates for level 4 NVQ training are very good. Of the 14 learners who began programmes in 2003-04, 79 per cent have achieved their qualification and 7 per cent are still in learning. Achievement rates for the external tests are very good. The 100 per cent pass rate for level 2 learners in the June 2005 examinations is excellent. Retention rates are also very good and have averaged over 75 per cent in the past three years across all levels of the accountancy programmes.

97. Learners develop good professional skills. The training programme is carefully structured to provide an integrated approach to background knowledge and accounting practice. Regular simulation tests usefully establish competence and identify areas where further support is needed. External tests confirm understanding and standards achieved. Learners gain a wide range of skills and have the confidence to apply them in the workplace. They are able to perform a range of complex accounting tasks with minimal supervision. The standard of evidence in the learners' portfolios is good. Good work-based evidence is included, which demonstrates the learners' ability to apply skills to a wide range of applications.

98. Learners' progress in training and between qualification levels is good. The internal verifier closely monitors learners' progress through their qualifications. Most learners take the NVQ at level 2 and then progress to NVQs at levels 3 and 4. A few have started on Jobcentre Plus programmes and carried on through to level 4. YH encourages learners to take appropriate higher-level professional qualifications.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	26		22		16	100	12	100								
Retained*	12		15		14	88	8	67								
Successfully completed	12		13		14	88	7	58								
Still in learning	10		4		0	0	0	0								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	25		19		36	100	23	100								
Retained*	1		14		24	67	14	61								
Successfully completed	1		14		22	61	13	57								
Still in learning	21		1		0	0	0	0								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		14		22		19	100								
Retained*	3		12		15		16	84								
Successfully completed	3		11		12		16	84								
Still in learning	9		1		3		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

99. There is a particularly good response to learners' needs. YH provides a flexible approach to training to suit the learners. Most learners attend off-the-job training one day each week. The few learners who cannot attend during the day have the opportunity to either attend an evening session or to receive individual training in the workplace. Trainers/assessors who are current specialist practitioners teach specialist subjects to NVQ at level 4. Most learners are unemployed at the start of the training programme. The company's staff help learners to produce a curriculum vitae, which staff send to appropriate employers to find a work placement. They take great care to find employers with job vacancies that suit the learners' needs and career aspirations. After six weeks, trainers/assessors carry out an initial assessment review and skills scan to check the work placement's suitability. Most learners are offered a permanent position within three to six months of starting a work placement. Learners are highly motivated and appreciate the high level of support they receive from YH.

100. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All training applicants have an initial assessment that includes an interview and appropriate tests for literacy and numeracy and key skills. Prior learning and achievement is examined to determine the right level of training for the learner. A few of the learners have previously completed NVQs at level 2 in administration and have moved to accountancy training. The company uses the results of initial assessment and discussions with employers well to decide if NVQs at level 2 or 3 are the most appropriate level of accountancy training for that individual.

101. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Training sessions are well planned and there is a structured timetable. Learners receive good individual tuition and a background knowledge guidance on examination techniques. Resources are satisfactory. Learners receive detailed handouts and are provided with a range of exercises to develop their skills.

Staff are well qualified. YH develops them well for their role.

102. Individual learning plans are satisfactory. Any learners identified as having a literacy, numeracy or language support need are satisfactorily managed on an individual basis.

103. Reviews of learners' progress are insufficiently thorough. Employers are involved at the start of training and receive detailed syllabuses of the learner's programme, but they are insufficiently involved in the progress reviews. Learners sometimes have little input to the review as the tutor answers the questions they put to the learner. Reviews are not always carried out individually. If two learners are with the same employer, they can be reviewed together. Some learners are reviewed while still working at their desks and with other colleagues present. Action plans are produced, based on recently assessed work or progress made. Some short-term objectives are set, but many of the objectives are insufficiently detailed. The company gives copies of progress review paperwork and action plans to learners to pass on to employers. The learners' workplace supervisor is rarely present during the progress review, although trainers/assessors and workplace supervisors do meet separately to discuss the learners' progress. Not all workplace supervisors are fully informed of their learners' progress.

### **Leadership and management**

104. Accounting programmes are well managed. The good quality of provision and the high standards of learners' achievements are the same at all three training centres that offer accounting. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the success of learners and that of the company. Staff care well for their learners and ensure they receive good education and training. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities which is covered at induction and reinforced during off-the-job training. Staff have good training and development opportunities. Internal verification is thorough and supportive. The company monitors trainers'/assessors' and learners' achievements closely and takes swift action to rectify slow progress.

105. Staff are involved well in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report reflects most of the positive findings inspectors found, but does not identify the weakness.

### **Customer service**

**Grade 2**

#### *Strengths*

- very thorough assessment planning and monitoring
- good progress by learners
- good development of the learners' technical skills

#### *Weaknesses*

- some ineffective use of reviews for personal development

### **Achievement and standards**

106. Retention and achievement are satisfactory. Apprenticeship achievement has improved considerably over the past three years, from 14 per cent for learners who began programmes in 2001-02, to 23 per cent for learners who began programmes in 2002-03, and again to 39 per cent for learners who began programmes in 2003-04. Twelve per cent



of learners who began apprenticeships in 2003-04 are still in training. Advanced apprenticeship achievement increased to 25 per cent for learners who began programmes in 2002-03 from 7 per cent for learners who began programmes in 2001-02. Fifteen per cent of learners who began advanced apprenticeships in 2003-04 have achieved and 36 per cent are still in learning.

107. Current learners' progress is good, with many examples of learners completing their NVQs at level 2 early. Most learners achieve their key skills and technical certificate components within three months of starting. Pass rates are very high. Learners' attainment of key skills is good. Additional support for learners is detailed in learning plans. Learners' portfolio work is good and includes a diverse range of evidence obtained in the workplace.

108. Learners develop a good standard of technical skills through projects linked to the NVQ and key skill standards. Some of the project work is of an exceptionally high standard and demonstrates good research and analysis by learners. Examples include the collection and analysis of retail customers' views about their experience of a store and the monitoring of computerised sales records to identify losses to the company. In these cases, and in many others, the projects have led to business improvements. There are many examples of learners' progression and promotion at work and of employers having the confidence to entrust them with responsibility. In one case, a learner is now carrying out store management tasks to match his progression to the NVQ at level 3 and in another a learner is receiving training in selling.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	27		59		56		57	100									
Retained*	0		12		21		15	26									
Successfully completed	0		9		14		4	7									
Still in learning	23		21		2		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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	89		85		108		184	100									
Retained*	10		43		54		77	42									
Successfully completed	7		33		26		26	14									
Still in learning	64		10		0		0	0									

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		2													
Retained*	5		0													
Successfully completed	3		0													
Still in learning	5		1													

\*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

109. Assessment planning is thorough and effective. Trainers/assessors agree detailed action plans with learners, which promotes good progress. They monitor learners' progress towards their targets very effectively and frequently. They are thorough in ensuring that learners complete their learning targets. Targets include responsibilities for learners to reference their evidence. This encourages independent learning. Trainers/assessors set themselves goals on the action plans, such as meeting with employers to discuss assessment opportunities.

110. The company co-ordinates assessment well so that all aspects of learners' overall goals are integrated. Trainers/assessors make good use of observation reports to capture evidence of learners' performance at work. Learners have a clear understanding of the requirements of key skills, technical certificates and NVQs and how they link together. On-line facilities for key skills and technical certificates gives learners quick access to tests so that they receive results quickly and rapidly build up their achievements. Trainers/assessors develop a thorough understanding of employers' work processes, enabling them to guide the development of learners. There is effective coaching in the workplace which deals with the learning needs identified during initial assessment.

111. Induction is satisfactory. Learners have a sound understanding of key induction topics such as equal opportunities and health and safety. There is insufficient involvement of employers in induction. As learners progress from level 2 to level 3 there is insufficient reinforcement of these topics as learners move into more responsible positions.

112. Initial assessment is satisfactory and is currently subject to further improvement. All learners receive appropriate initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy, language and key skills. Where appropriate, trainers/assessors carry out additional planning to show learners where additional support will be given. Learners now receive an initial assessment review after six weeks to identify any further emerging learning needs.

113. Resources are satisfactory. Trainers/assessors develop them mostly for their own use, although they have shared some materials effectively with other staff. The company makes good use of e-learning resources such as online materials and sample papers. Some coaching in the workplace lacks thorough planning, particularly in relation to the use of resources to enliven sessions.

114. Learners are employed with good, supportive companies. Most offer good training and opportunities for progression. One company provides extensive training for a learner

on placement. Employers are involved in the learning to a satisfactory standard overall. There are variations, however, with some employers more engaged with projects and others only having a rudimentary understanding of the learning.

115. Learners working towards NVQs at level 2 receive an appropriately high level of workplace observation from trainers/assessors. For those working towards NVQs at level 3, the trainers/assessors make more use of professional discussions and project work.

116. Trainers/assessors do not make full use of progress reviews to promote the learners' personal development and welfare. Some reviews are too short and are carried out in unsuitable surroundings. There are examples of the company paying insufficient attention to a learners' employment prospects after a considerable time on placement, and insufficient progression planning with a learner completing a framework.

### **Leadership and management**

117. The management of customer service programmes is well led by the internal verifier team and co-ordinated effectively across the company despite the wide geographical area. There are regular team meetings at which good practice is shared. In one example, an experienced assessor led on good practice in promoting high achievement which led to changes in initial assessment. Feedback to trainers/assessors from the internal verifiers is detailed and comprehensive. There is evidence of well-established continuous improvement, including more thorough monitoring of progress and highly focused support for trainers'/assessors' learning and development. Learners have an adequate understanding of equal opportunities and how it is relevant to them and to their colleagues and customers. They know essential information such as how to appeal against assessment decisions and make complaints. Learners know how to treat people fairly and how they should be treated in the workplace. Staff are involved well in the self-assessment process. Inspectors broadly agreed with the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report did not identify the weakness that the inspectors found.