

INSPECTION REPORT

Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited

11 November 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

Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited (Temp Dent) is a private limited company, based in Whetstone, North London. It was originally founded to supply temporary and permanent dental nurses to dentists in and around Greater London. It has provided training for dental nurses since 1999, and began offering publicly funded training in September 2000. Its learners follow a level 3 national vocational qualification (NVQ) in oral health care. They are employed in dental practices across London and receive weekly off-the-job training at the company's offices. Temp Dent's managing director is supported by a full-time training administrator and a training team. The training staff consists of three full-time tutor-assessors, one of whom has just completed her internal verification qualification, two full-time assessors, two part-time internal verifiers and a further seven part-time staff who work as tutors or assessors. The area of London where Temp Dent is based is culturally diverse with a constantly changing population, particularly East European economic migrants. Learners at Temp Dent reflect the local population well, with 37 per cent being from minority ethnic groups and 20 per cent from East European countries.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

2. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Temp Dent's leadership and management, and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are good. Provision in health, public services and care is also good.

3. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Temp Dent has a well-established annual self-assessment process that takes account of the views of staff, learners and employers. The resultant development plan is regularly reviewed and actioned and the self-assessment process is taken seriously by staff. The report accurately reflects the provision and is positively affecting the ability of Temp Dent continuously to improve its provision.

4. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** An upward trend exists in rates of retention and achievement. The company and its staff are very keen to make improvements that positively affect the experience of learners and a great deal of teamwork is focused on the delivery of training.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED:

- continue improving retention and achievement rates
- maintain the focus of the company on quality improvement
- fully implement the key skills strategy
- formalise target-setting for recruitment from different learner groups
- complete the company's move into new accommodation

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		2

Health, public services and care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Dental</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	111	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

5. A team of two inspectors spent a total of eight days at Temp Dent's training centre and visiting dental surgeries. Two of the days were spent earlier in the inspection week observing off-the-job training. All aspects of the dental nursing provision were reported on and graded.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	30
Number of staff interviewed	10
Number of employers interviewed	5
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	5

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

6. The retention rate at Temp Dent has been improving and, at 80 per cent for the 2004-05 intake of learners, is good. Learners display good work skills working alongside dentists, demonstrating particularly good safety practices and having sterilised equipment ready when needed. Those learners who complete courses progress well to other dental courses.

7. Learners are now making good progress. Progress through the NVQ has been slow and achievement rates have been low in the past, but progress has been improving with each

new intake of learners. Comparisons of data for September 2003 starters and July 2004 starters 14 months into their programmes show dramatic improvements in the number of units gained, with 25 per cent and 62 per cent of learners respectively having six or more units. All leavers who have qualified leave Temp Dent in employment. Several learners have gained promotions to more senior posts such as practice managers before completing their qualification.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Health, public services and care	0	3	2	0	5
Total	0	3	2	0	5

8. **Off-the-job training is good and managed well.** The pattern of delivery is tailored to meet the needs of learners. For example, classes take place in the day, evenings and on Saturdays. All sessions are planned well and tutors make effective use of teaching resources such as dental models and products. The sessions hold the interest of learners, who enjoy them. Tutors demonstrate good questioning techniques and learners are fully engaged in the learning process. Tutors link sessions well to learners' practical activities at work. There is very clear improvement in the knowledge and understanding of learners.

9. **Assessment opportunities are planned well and flexible.** Assessment plans suit the needs of learners and employers, with some assessments taking place at weekends. Detailed assessment plans are developed for each learner, enabling learners easily to identify what they are expected to achieve by the time of the next assessment. Suitable simulations take place at the training centre for emergency procedures. Feedback provided at assessment is thorough and supportive, promoting effective learning. Assessors offer effective support to learners to help them complete their qualification. If assessment opportunities are limited at a particular dental practice, assessors ensure that learners can carry out work in alternative practices. Additional assessments are provided to support those learners making slow progress. Weekly meetings of assessors are used to share good practice to improve the assessment process.

10. Very effective support is given to learners who have no previous dental experience. Learners undergo foundation training for two months so that they become more 'job-ready', and are generally employed within their first three months of training. Tutor-assessors handle learners' personal problems sensitively, helping them complete their assessments after a break if necessary. Some learners have been 'fast-tracked' to complete early.

11. Employers give learners effective support and have a good understanding of the NVQ. Many learners are part of their employer's appraisal system and are encouraged to attend additional training sessions as well as the on-the-job NVQ training. Many employers have particularly good dental surgeries, with up-to-date equipment. Temp Dent meets the needs of employers and learners, offering progression opportunities.

12. Learning resources are satisfactory, with tutors making effective use of good models and posters. Temp Dent has developed some very good learning materials to support off-the-job training. Learners currently have restricted access to information and

communications technology (ICT).

13. Progress reviews are satisfactory and take place quarterly. Specific targets are set, and previous targets are checked. Employers are actively involved in the review process and their comments are recorded. Individual learning plans are amended.

14. Support for learners with additional learning needs is adequate. Temp Dent gives learners a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and refers them to specialist providers if necessary. Results of initial assessment are recorded on individual learning plans and tutor-assessors give additional support, usually on an individual basis. **However, the extensive support given to learners is poorly recorded.**

Leadership and management

15. The apprenticeship training programme at Temp Dent is well managed. Teamwork and communication are particularly good among the tutor-assessors. **Development and support for staff is good.** Communication with staff is regular and effective. A monthly staff meeting covers a variety of matters directly affecting learners, such as rates of achievement, retention, progress, possible withdrawals and learners' feedback. Actions arising are clearly identified and are routinely followed through. Staff use e-mail and company-supplied mobile phones effectively to maintain contact. All staff have one day a week where they undertake professional development activities. Induction for staff is good, with a detailed timetable for each new employee.

16. **Temp Dent uses data particularly effectively to improve performance**, forming the basis for routine monitoring and management of learners. A weekly meeting between the managing director and staff looks at learners' progress in terms of NVQ unit achievement, and checks aspects of the support offered through assessment visits and reviews. The reasons why learners leave programmes are continually analysed and actions are taken to counter identified problems. The managing director carries out routine performance monitoring by ethnic background or by tutor groups, taking appropriate action where necessary.

17. Temp Dent's strategic planning is satisfactory. It has a clear three-year development plan linked with an annual business plan, which uses a good mix of previous data, detailed targets and more aspirational aims. The main objectives of the business plan, and the strengths and weaknesses from the self-assessment report, are then translated into actions in a single development action plan.

18. Day-to-day management of Temp Dent is carried out well. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and an appropriate degree of autonomy. The managing director plays a key role in the monitoring and quality improvement activities, and understands all elements of the business well. All processes linked with learners are very clearly laid out in an extensive series of procedures, which are maintained on an ICT system that all staff can access.

19. The strategy for literacy, numeracy and language skills support is satisfactory. A significant number of learners are now recent arrivals in England and speak English as an additional language. Temp Dent's staff assess their potential needs through the literacy test, interview and the results of a dental knowledge test. Learners are generally pleased with the literacy, numeracy and language help that they are given.

20. Staff resources are appropriate and Temp Dent makes good use of part-time staff and external consultants to meet training and assessment needs. **Temp Dent's current accommodation is too cramped**, however. It is too crowded for some larger groups, and does not provide accommodation which can be used flexibly for the various types of teaching. There is very little space for learners to relax or work outside of the classroom or for private interviews. A new plan to relocate to much larger and more modern premises is close to completion.

21. **Equality of opportunity is well promoted by Temp Dent.** Staff and learners have a good awareness of equality of opportunity, developed at induction and reinforced by additional training. A detailed equal opportunities policy and disability statement are prominently displayed in training rooms. A well-thought-out strategy and procedures document for staff outlines Temp Dent's approach to promoting equality. Effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints are regularly reinforced with learners. Learners complete an induction checklist in the workplace that covers their employer's equal opportunities policy and grievance procedures. All learners take an NVQ unit on equality of opportunity early in their programme. Staff have received annual training in equality of opportunity for several years. Promotional materials and press advertisements include an equal opportunities strapline. Equality of opportunity is regularly discussed at staff meetings.

22. Temp Dent's monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. It collects data on the age, gender, ethnicity and disability status of learners, together with their prior educational attainment. Comparisons are made between each intake to look for trends in early leavers and achievers. Progress reviews are used to monitor the implementation of equal opportunities policies and to reinforce learners' awareness of the complaints and appeals procedures. The training premises are not fully accessible to wheelchair users. Temp Dent has arrangements for learners not able to access the training centre and is close to securing new accommodation.

23. Recruitment of learners is satisfactory overall. The profile of learners from minority ethnic groups is similar to that of the local population. Temp Dent advertises widely in trade magazines, London-wide newspapers and through the internet. It maintains regular contact with the careers service and also recruits through recommendation by friends or dental practices. Although Temp Dent continues to promote men as dental nurses to the industry very few men have applied for training. **The company has informal targets but has not set formal targets for recruitment that would further focus efforts on attracting under-represented groups, particularly men.**

24. **Temp Dent has a particularly effective focus on quality improvement.** The self-assessment report and development action plan provide a formal structure for improvements. Performance monitoring and improvements are a key part of routine work. Meetings with individual staff and quarterly reviews concentrate on the achievement of challenging targets linked with learners' performance. A regular, helpful observation scheme for tutors has been in operation for some time and staff believe they benefit from the experience. Assessors' workloads have been reduced to allow them to spend more time with individual learners to meet their concerns. Actions taken have had an immediate positive effect on retention rates and entry into employment.

25. Temp Dent regularly collects and analyses learners' feedback. These views have a significant effect on Temp Dent's development activity. Weekly assessor meetings are held and standardisation is a key area of discussion. Internal verification is well planned and a range of evidence is internally verified. Feedback on observations is constructive and aimed at further improving the quality of assessments.

26. The self-assessment process is good. The self-assessment report is based on useful data, including learners' and employers' feedback, and has involved all staff in its development. It is largely accurate and the development plan gives clear targets for improvement that are understood by staff and are being dealt with. All the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been dealt with.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good development and support of staff
- very good use of data to improve provision
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- particularly effective focus on quality improvement

Weaknesses

- cramped accommodation
- limited formal target-setting for recruitment of groups of learners

Health, public services and care

Dental

Grade 2

Strengths

- well-managed and delivered off-the-job training
- flexible assessment opportunities for learners
- good partnerships with employers

Weaknesses

- poor recording of support given to learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED:

- the supportive assessors
- revision for written exams
- the team of staff
- gaining qualifications in the workplace
- 'they know what they are talking about!'
- 'they help me out when I have trouble understanding questions because of my limited English'
- 'my assessor is always on time, in fact she is usually here before me'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the space in teaching room when classes are big
- 'the vending machine needs sorting!'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good development and support of staff
- very good use of data to improve provision
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- particularly effective focus on quality improvement

Weaknesses

- cramped accommodation
- limited formal target-setting for recruitment of groups of learners

27. Development and support for staff is good at Temp Dent. Communication with full-time and part-time staff is regular and effective. A monthly staff meeting covers a variety of matters directly affecting learners, such as rates of achievement, retention, progress, possible withdrawals and learners' feedback. Actions arising from these meetings are clearly identified and are routinely followed through. Assessors and part-time staff are often away from the main office and use e-mail and company-supplied mobile phones effectively to maintain contact. All staff have one day a week where they take part in professional development activities. These activities range from very effective and regular standardisation and good practice meetings for assessors, to formal training on such things as equality of opportunity. During this day staff also have a formal meeting with the managing director. The meeting properly focuses on learners' progress, but staff also discuss a range of professional or personal learner-related matters. Induction for staff is good, with a formal framework that is translated into a detailed timetable for each new employee. Staff have very good support from colleagues. This is formalised during their first month, when they work as a pair, but continues informally thereafter. A satisfactory annual appraisal system helps staff review their strengths and weaknesses and agree action points with the managing director. These action points are then routinely reviewed. The appraisal and other discussions also lead to formal training needs being identified and met.

28. Data is used particularly effectively to improve performance. A significant amount of information is fed into spreadsheets and other records. This data is used to provide prompt, detailed responses to virtually any concerns raised by staff or other interested parties. The data also forms the basis for routine monitoring and management of learners. The weekly meeting between the managing director and staff looks particularly at learners' NVQ unit achievement, and checks aspects of the support offered through assessment visits and reviews. This information is examined in more detail at monthly meetings and formal quarterly reviews which consider staff members' and learners' activity against set targets. Reasons why learners leave programmes are continually analysed, and action is taken to counter identified problems. Performance is also monitored by ethnic background and by tutor groups as a matter of routine by the managing director, with appropriate action taken where necessary.

29. All the processes linked with learners and training at Temp Dent are very clearly laid

out in an extensive and detailed series of procedures and associated forms. These are maintained on an ICT system that is available to all staff. The managing director has a very good understanding of the whole system. Staff are aware of the main procedures that affect them.

30. Strategic planning, which was a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. A clear three-year development plan was issued to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Temp Dent has taken limited action on this, as the concept of three-year funding is no longer a key feature of the discussions with the LSC. However, the main targets have been linked with a more relevant annual business plan that Temp Dent has recently produced. This uses a good mix of previous data, detailed targets and more aspirational aims. The plan's main objectives and the strengths and weaknesses from the self-assessment report are then translated into actions in a single development action plan. This is clear, with precise targets and responsibilities. Staff are well aware of the development plan and their responsibilities. They are not quite so clear about the detail of the recently issued business plan but have been involved in its development and understand the main aims.

31. Day-to-day management of Temp Dent is carried out well. The management structure is very simple. Staff have clear understanding of their roles and an appropriate degree of autonomy. The managing director plays a key role in the monitoring and quality improvement activities, and has a very good understanding of all elements of the business. In her absence there are clear instructions and responsibilities for most routine activities, although it is not clear who would take ultimate responsibility for dealing with significant, unexpected problems.

32. The strategy for literacy, numeracy and language skills support is satisfactory. Learners sit appropriate literacy and numeracy tests at induction. Those who do not reach minimum standards are now referred to other training providers and encouraged to return for re-selection when they believe their skills have improved. A small number do return with a slightly improved ability and have been taken onto courses. Learners with relatively poor skills have their needs highlighted and receive some appropriate additional support from tutors, sometimes using training materials more relevant to their needs. A significant number of learners are recent arrivals in England and speak English as an additional language. They sit no specific tests to determine their proficiency in English. Temp Dent's staff assess these learners' potential needs through the literacy test, interview and the results of a dental knowledge test. Again, some are referred to specialist training providers, while those with reasonable skills are taken on and are given additional support. Learners are generally pleased with the literacy, numeracy and language support that they are given.

33. Staffing resources are appropriate. At times there are short-term demands, for such things as additional training, revision classes, examination invigilation or assistance with business planning or key skills work. Temp Dent makes good use of part-time staff and external consultants to meet these needs.

34. Temp Dent's current accommodation is too cramped. The main training room is adequate for some classes but is crowded for a few groups, and does not provide flexible accommodation for the various types of teaching. Learners have very little space to relax or work outside of the classroom. The tutors and assessors often use the empty classroom, or a spare desk for their work. There is very little storage space and insufficient space for

displays of learning or management material. Learners and staff have insufficient access to computers. The main site has inadequate space for private interviews, although space is now available in a nearby office block. Temp Dent hires external venues to conduct external examinations in appropriate conditions. The company has recognised the accommodation problem and has made several abortive attempts to move to improved premises. A new plan to relocate to much larger and more modern premises is close to completion.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

35. Equality of opportunity is promoted well by Temp Dent. Staff and learners have a good awareness of equality of opportunity, which is developed at induction and reinforced by additional training. The company has a detailed equal opportunities policy and a disability statement that it displays prominently in training rooms. The policy is issued to all staff and learners during induction. A well-thought-out, comprehensive strategy and procedures document for staff outlines the company's approach to promoting equality through its advertising, learners' induction, reviews, and training for staff and learners. Policies are reviewed annually and are updated where necessary to reflect current legislation. Temp Dent has effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints that are regularly reinforced with learners. The company's agreement with the dental practices requires each practice to have an equal opportunities policy, or to use Temp Dent's policy. Following induction learners complete a questionnaire that covers their understanding of equal opportunities. They also complete an induction checklist in the workplace that checks their employer's equal opportunities policy and grievance procedures. All learners take an NVQ unit on equal opportunities early in their programme. This helps to encourage a good learner awareness of equal opportunities and of the complaints and appeals procedures.

36. Staff training in equality of opportunity has been carried out annually for several years. It usually runs for a full day and the most recent session, in the month before inspection, covered legislation and the development of good practice. Staff quickly adapt the materials and exercises from their training to use as learning materials with their learners. Promotional materials and press advertisements produced by Temp Dent emphasise the importance of equality of opportunity within the company and include an equal opportunities strapline. Recruitment procedures for staff clearly refer to the importance that Temp Dent places on equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is regularly discussed at staff meetings.

37. Temp Dent monitors equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Data is collected on the age, gender, ethnicity and disability status of learners, together with their prior educational attainment. Comparisons are made between each intake to look for trends in early leavers and achievers. Temp Dent is aware of the increasing number of learners who come from Eastern Europe and who speak English as an additional language, and includes them as a group whose performance is analysed. A fifth of current learners are from Eastern Europe. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying reasons and trends for those who leave without achieving their qualification. Assessors check that employers have an equal opportunities policy and that equality of opportunity is included in workplace inductions. Progress reviews are used to monitor the implementation of equal opportunities policies and to re-emphasise learners' awareness of the complaints and appeals procedures. Sometimes this monitoring is too cursory, particularly where assessors know the dental practice involved is a good employer. Learners can contact assessors by phone and are also aware

of an industry website where they can seek independent, anonymous advice. The training premises are not fully accessible to wheelchair users. Temp Dent has arrangements in place for learners who are not able to access the training centre. The company is close to securing alternative accommodation after the new premises it was due to move into just before the inspection were flooded.

38. Recruitment of learners is satisfactory overall. At 37 per cent, the proportion of learners who are from minority ethnic groups is similar to that in the local population. Temp Dent works hard to attract learners from across London. It advertises widely in trade magazines, London-wide newspapers and through the internet. It maintains regular contact with the careers service and attends careers events in schools. Recruitment is also through recommendation by friends or dental practices. Although Temp Dent continues to promote men as dental nurses to the industry, and half of employers surveyed said they would employ men, the take-up has been limited and very few men have applied for training. Dentists say that they want a female chaperone when working on female clients. One current learner is a man. Temp Dent has been successful in placing overseas dentists who are men as dental nurses through its employment agency arm. Temp Dent's staff know that they are trying to recruit a profile of learners to match the local population. They are fully aware of the profile of each starting group of learners, and those being accepted onto the next intake. These informal targets have not been set as formal recruitment targets that would further focus efforts on attracting under-represented groups, particularly men.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

39. Temp Dent has a particularly effective focus on quality improvement. The self-assessment report, and more particularly the development action plan, give a good formal structure for improvements. Even more importantly, performance monitoring and improvements are a key part of routine work. The weekly and monthly meetings with individual staff members and three-monthly reviews concentrate on the achievement of challenging targets linked with learners' performance. A regular, constructively helpful observation scheme for tutors has been in operation for some time and is appreciated by staff, who believe they benefit from the experience. A salary bonus scheme encourages staff to improve their performance and the quality of their learners' experience. Assessors' workloads have been reduced to allow them to spend more time with each learner to meet concerns over achievement and progress. Analysis of early leavers identified problems with withdrawals in their first three months by learners new to the dental nurse profession. After reviewing this problem, Temp Dent introduced a 'foundation course' for two hours a week for eight weeks for these learners before the main training programme. There has been an immediate positive effect on rates of retention, and improved entry into employment. Temp Dent has been very active in working with its local LSC and the Sector Skills Council to deal with problems with a temporary framework for the advanced apprenticeship. Despite insufficient information, or sometimes conflicting advice, Temp Dent has started detailed work to introduce key skills qualifications in as supportive a way as possible. That work has only recently started and it is too early to determine whether it will be effective, or timely enough.

40. Temp Dent collects learners' feedback through questionnaires at regular intervals, with almost a 100 per cent return rate. The results are carefully analysed and are discussed with staff, either individually if appropriate or in team meetings if the findings are of a general nature. These views have a significant effect on Temp Dent's development activity. This procedure was seen as a weakness at the previous inspection. At that time Temp Dent had

subcontracted the procedure, but has now taken it back in-house.

41. Internal verification is satisfactory at Temp Dent. Two internal verifiers work for the company part time to ensure that the full-time assessor, who is just qualifying as an internal verifier, does not compromise her own work as an assessor. Weekly assessors' meetings are held and standardisation is a key area of discussion. Internal verification is planned well and Temp Dent has overcome previous problems when a member of staff left. A range of evidence is internally verified and feedback on observations is constructive and aimed at further improving the quality of assessments.

42. The self-assessment report is based on useful data, including learners' and employers' feedback, and has involved all staff in its development. It reviews the current provision against the requirements of the new Common Inspection Framework. While it does identify a range of positive aspects to be maintained, it also properly highlights several areas for improvement. Many of these have either been dealt with, or are not seen by the inspectors as key weaknesses. Although the report does not list many weaknesses in simple bullet form, the associated development action plan highlights the key problems identified in the report, along with concerns that were raised at the previous inspection. The plan then gives clear targets for improvement that are understood by staff and are being dealt with.

43. At the previous inspection Temp Dent was judged to be satisfactory in all aspects, apart from equality of opportunity where it was judged to be good. At this inspection improvements resulted in all aspects being graded as good. All the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been dealt with.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Dental		2
Apprenticeships for young people	111	2

44. The managing director of Temp Dent heads a staff team of 13 employees, six of whom are permanent. All are occupationally experienced and are based at the company's sole offices in north London, which are also the venue for off-the-job training. Temp Dent offers training to dental nurses employed in surgeries across London. Learners are all taking the level 3 NVQ in oral health care, with more recent starters taking a temporary advanced apprenticeship framework. The framework, including the necessary key skills qualifications, will not be finalised until 2006. All applicants for training are interviewed and tested for literacy and numeracy skills by Temp Dent's staff. Learners join the programme in March or September of each year. They are employed in dental practices within three months of beginning training, either on their own initiative or through Temp Dent's efforts. Learners are inducted onto the programme and into their jobs, with both inductions covering health and safety, and equality of opportunity. All workplaces are checked for safety by Temp Dent's staff. Learners attend off-the-job training at Temp Dent for one day each week. Assessment takes place monthly and progress reviews quarterly. Learners are beginning to receive formal key skills training.

Dental

Grade 2

Strengths

- well-managed and delivered off-the-job training
- flexible assessment opportunities for learners
- good partnerships with employers

Weaknesses

- poor recording of support given to learners

Achievement and standards

45. Learners display particularly good skills when working alongside dentists and often anticipate their needs, having sterilised tools or dental sundries ready so that treatments are not delayed. Learners observed in the workplace demonstrated particularly good attention to health and safety at all times. Safety practices include using disposable equipment and paying scrupulous attention to disinfection and sterilisation. Some learners have done extremely well in their jobs, and one is acting as practice manager as she completes her apprenticeship. Learners progress well to other dental courses on completing their course. One-third of learners continue their studies with Temp Dent and another third do so with other colleges and hospitals.

46. The retention rate has been a weakness in the recent past but has been improving and is good for the 2004-05 intake. Of the 61 starters in 2004-05, 80 per cent are still in learning. All 18 starters in 2005-06 are still in learning. In previous years, most of the learners who dropped out did so in the first few months of their programme. Temp Dent has emphasised improved induction, both on and off the job and made visits to the workplace more frequent in the first few months when learners are more at risk. It has also improved preparation for external tests and introduced closer performance monitoring of learners to identify more accurately those who may be at risk of leaving. Learners have made slow progress through the NVQ in the past but this has been improving with each new intake of learners as the retention strategy has become established in the work of the tutors and assessors. Learners are now making good progress. For example, while 50 per cent of the September 2003 starters completed two units in six months, this improved to 66 per cent for the March 2005 starters. The latter figure included a learner who had obtained five units and another who has just completed their NVQ. Comparisons of data for September 2003 starters with July 2004 starters showed even more dramatic improvements in the number of units gained 14 months into their programme, with 25 per cent and 62 per cent of learners respectively having achieved six or more units. All leavers who have qualified leave Temp Dent in employment. Several learners have gained promotions to more senior posts such as practice manager before completing their qualification. Achievement rates at Temp Dent have historically been low and are at not yet satisfactory. The recent improvements in rates of retention and progression through the NVQ have yet to feed through into improved achievement rates.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		61													
Retained*	0		0													
Successfully completed	0		0													
Still in learning	18		49													

*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	4		88		58	100	36	100								
Retained*	0		16		27	47	16	44								
Successfully completed	1		6		18	31	13	36								
Still in learning	3		36		4	7	1	3								

*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

47. Off-the-job training overall is good and managed well. Learners can attend different

classes should they miss a session. The pattern of delivery is tailored to meet the needs of learners, with classes held in the day, on evenings and on Saturdays. All sessions are planned well and tutors make effective use of teaching resources such as dental models and products. Learners are interested by and enjoy the sessions. All tutors demonstrate good questioning techniques to check learning and learners are fully engaged in the learning process. In the observed sessions, tutors linked training well to learners' practical activities at work. Learners very clearly improve their knowledge and understanding through attending training sessions. Individual support is often given to learners after training sessions, sometimes for two hours.

48. Assessment opportunities are well planned and flexible. Dental surgeries are often busy places and assessors try not to be too disruptive to work patterns. Assessment generally takes place on a monthly basis in the workplace. Assessment plans are flexible to suit the needs of learners and employers, with some assessments taking place at weekends. A detailed assessment plan is developed for each learner when the previous assessment is completed. This enables learners to identify easily what they are expected to achieve by the next assessment. Some simulations also take place at the training centre for emergency procedures, such as a fire or a client being scalded. Other assessors act as 'patients' in role plays. The feedback provided at assessment is thorough and supportive, promoting effective learning. Assessors clearly identify the performance criteria that have been assessed and learners are able to monitor their progress. Assessors offer effective support to learners to help them complete their assignments and are sensitive to the personal problems of their learners, knowing when not to put pressure on them. If assessment opportunities are too limited at a particular dental practice, assessors ensure that learners can carry out work in alternative practices. Additional assessments are provided to support learners making slow progress. Assessors meet each week at Temp Dent to share good practice to improve the assessment process. For example, if an assessor needs to observe fissure seals, it is better to book observations during school holiday periods when they are most likely to occur.

49. Temp Dent gives very effective support to learners who have no previous dental experience, offering them foundation training for two months so that they become more 'job-ready'. Those who are not employed get formal support in jobsearch and interview techniques. All learners are generally employed within their first three months of training. Learners are very aware of who to approach should they ever experience problems. Tutor-assessors handle the personal problems of learners sensitively, helping ensure that they complete their assessments after a break if necessary. There are examples of learners being 'fast-tracked' to complete early, for example in the event of pregnancy.

50. Employers provide effective support for learners. They have a good understanding of the NVQ and are kept well informed about the progress their learners are making. All employers receive a pack with detailed guidance, such as the off-the-job training schedule. Employers are actively involved in learners' quarterly progress reviews and are supportive in playing their part to help learners obtain their qualification. Employers are particularly supportive of the assessment process and help to provide assessment opportunities. Many learners are part of their employer's appraisal system and are encouraged to attend training sessions additional to the on-the-job training for the dental nursing qualification. One employer has been supported by Temp Dent to achieve an external quality award. Employers provide learners with an induction to the workplace which includes health and safety issues and equality of opportunity. Courses meet the needs of employers and

learners. Temp Dent offers a number of progression opportunities and promotes training well.

51. Learning resources are satisfactory. There are some good models and posters which most tutors use effectively. Staff at Temp Dent have developed some very good learning materials to support off-the-job training, and are currently updating them to include the best parts of different tutors' learning materials to provide additional resources. Learners have restricted access to ICT, but this is included as part of future planning for aspects such as online key skills testing.

52. Progress reviews are satisfactory and take place quarterly. Temp Dent has clear guidelines on how to conduct reviews and all staff have been trained to follow the guidelines. The progress review forms are regularly reviewed for effectiveness and are completed satisfactorily by all staff involved in the review process. Specific targets are set and previous targets are checked. Employers are actively involved in the review process and their comments are recorded on the review forms. If the employer cannot be present, they complete the form at a later date. Individual learning plans are amended during reviews if necessary. Sometimes learners are unsure of the difference between reviews and the regular action-planning that takes place between them.

53. Support for learners with additional learning needs is adequate. All current learners are given a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills during the enrolment process. Applicants are referred to specialist providers if they have learning difficulties that Temp Dent cannot deal with and that would prevent them coping with a level 3 qualification. Some past applicants have returned to Temp Dent, for example after receiving specialist support in English for speakers of other languages. The results of initial assessment are recorded on individual learning plans and tutor-assessors give additional support, usually on an individual basis. The extensive support given to learners is poorly recorded, however. This does not allow managers to collect data on how support is affecting learners' progression through the main qualification and to make judgements on the effectiveness of different support methods. Different training materials are given to learners with weaker literacy skills.

Leadership and management

54. The apprenticeship training programme at Temp Dent is managed well. Teamwork and communication are particularly good among the tutor-assessors. Regular assessors' meetings help to ensure consistent assessment practice as well as the sharing of good practice. Examples of this good practice include that half-term school holidays are the best time to target assessment opportunities where procedures on children's teeth are needed. Internal verification is planned in advance and checks a range of evidence, with an emphasis on observation. Learning resources are shared and are consistently used. Learners are prepared well for external examinations. Temp Dent works closely with employers to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. Learners' activities are continuously planned to schedule future assessments and make clear links between their on- and off-the-job training, including preparation for external examinations. Learners regularly give feedback on their training which Temp Dent's staff analyse and act upon to improve training. Inspectors identified the strengths cited in the self-assessment report, although these strengths were sometimes in the text of the report rather than headline bullets. Good progress is being made against weaknesses identified and the weak areas are rapidly becoming at least satisfactory.

