

INSPECTION REPORT

KEITS Ltd

10 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
- **learnndirect** 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

KEITS Ltd

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. KEITS Ltd was established in 1997. In 2003, the company was awarded the status of Equine Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). Steady growth and development has been continuous until 2004 and, during this period, KEITS took in 72 learners from another national training provider and a small number of learners from other providers that ceased trading. During the past year, learner numbers have reduced in line with a revised Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contract. KEITS aims to be the largest and the best specialist private provider of support for skills development and learning in the workplace throughout the land-based sector. The company aims to offer training to all young people aged 16 to 24 years and to assist, wherever possible, all employees and employers over that age who seek to extend their skills and to further develop their careers.

2. Two executive directors strategically manage KEITS. The managing director founded the company, and his business partner is financial director. They are supported by three non-executive directors responsible for centre awards, health and safety, business development, and operations. The directors are supported by a business support manager and a part-time associate director responsible for quality assurance, continuous improvement and research projects. There are seven full-time assessors and eight part-time assessors. Nine internal verifiers from the KEITS team support the assessment process. Two full-time business development consultants, four full-time administrative staff and one full-time quality assurance manager complete the team. Eight of the team hold teaching qualifications.

3. There are currently 407 learners funded through a range of LSC contracts, franchise from other providers and private funds. The inspection focused on 332 learners following animal care, equine and floristry programmes. Eight agriculture, four horticulture, 20 gamekeeping and 16 business administration learners were not included in the inspection, although the inspectors interviewed some of these. The biggest LSC contract is with Hertfordshire LSC, which takes lead responsibility and also allocates funds for learners around the country. Smaller contracts with Kent LSC and Cambridgeshire LSC include funding for adults through the European Social Fund.

4. KEITS is unique in its work to widen participation from learners living in particularly remote rural locations and to offer specialist subjects. In that respect, KEITS frequently deals with learners living in areas with high levels of deprivation, including low wages, poor transport, limited access to further education, and low aspirations. Learners have a wide range of prior achievement. Some have few general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above. Other have completed national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 3 as part of full-time post-16 education. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is at a level similar to that found across rural areas.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** The provision in agriculture,

horticulture and animal care is satisfactory. Leadership and management, including quality improvement are satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is good.

6. The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.

The self-assessment process is satisfactory. This has taken place annually for the past seven years. It draws on the views of learners, employers and staff. Staff fully understand how they contribute to the process. The company makes good use of data. The format of previous self-assessments has been helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Quality improvement action-planning is clearly related to the self-assessment and links with the company's business and strategic plans. The directors have followed up previous improvement actions well. The current self-assessment is in a new format and this has not been helpful in identifying weaknesses, whereas previous versions were much clearer. Inspectors generally agreed with judgements made in the self-assessment but found it insufficiently self-critical in terms of the effect of weaknesses on retention and achievement.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.

Since the previous inspection there has been a slow improvement in the retention and achievement rates. This has been adversely affected by KEITS taking in 72 learners from another training provider. These learners were at the end of their programme and many did not wish to continue. The grade profile is worse than at the previous inspection but the past four years has been a period of considerable expansion, with several new contributory areas of learning. KEITS works with a particularly challenging group of learners and makes good use of data to identify where changes are leading to improvements. The company has used self-assessment well to identify weaknesses and there have been good action plans to rectify these.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR KEITS LTD:

- continue to improve retention and achievement rates
- further develop the work-based learning delivery model
- more collection and sharing of best practice
- increase the levels of employers' engagement in key training processes

GRADES

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

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

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Floristry and flower arranging		2
Apprenticeships for young people	32	2
Other workforce development	20	2
Equine		3
Apprenticeships for young people	218	3
Other workforce development	20	3
Animal care		4
Apprenticeships for young people	34	4
Other workforce development	8	4

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. The inspection was carried out over a two-week period. During the first week, two inspectors visited learners in the Southwest, the Midlands, the eastern England and the North. During the second week, the inspection focused on learners in the Southeast and home counties. With significant learner numbers following a range of programmes, inspectors focused on inspecting the contributory areas of learning of animal care, equine, and floristry and flower arranging within the agriculture, horticulture and animal care area of learning. A small number of agriculture and gamekeeping learners were included in the interview sample.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	22
Number of learners interviewed	76
Number of staff interviewed	25
Number of employers interviewed	33
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	42

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Across all programmes, the pass rate for external key skills examinations is good.** Improved arrangements designed to integrate key skills with the NVQ are leading to higher levels of achievement of the key skills award.

10. **In animal care, learners develop good practical skills to meet the requirements of their job role.** They carry out practical tasks competently and to a good commercial standard. Equine learners are developing appropriate skills in caring for and riding horses. All learners are employed in the industry.

11. In floristry, the standard of learners' work is high. The flower arrangements produced for assessment routinely meet the high standards set by floristry employers and their customers. The range of work activity is good. The standard of work in the learners' portfolios of evidence is good. On equine and animal care programmes, the standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory.

12. For mature adult learners participating on NVQ-only programmes, retention and achievement have improved. In floristry and flower arranging, retention is excellent on the NVQ-only programme, although none have achieved the qualification. On the animal care NVQ-only programme, both retention and achievement are good. Adult learners on floristry programmes find their learning experience very positive.

13. Achievement rates are improving but remain low overall. During the past year, KEITS has made good efforts to ensure that learners achieve more. Many learners who do not complete their apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship are awarded NVQs and NVQ units.

14. Across all programmes, learners frequently work with customers and visitors as part of their normal work activities. In floristry, in particular, this gives increased levels of confidence and customer service.

15. Retention rates are mostly low. In equine programmes, most learners leave because they no longer want to work in the horse industry. KEITS has introduced initiatives to improve retention and there is an improving trend. Retention for advanced apprentices is better than for apprentices. For animal care apprentices, the retention rate is poor. The transfer of 72 learners to KEITS from another training provider affected these figures adversely.

The quality of provision

16. In animal care, KEITS provides good support for the development of employers' businesses. Employers greatly value the help, advice and guidance they receive on matters such as health and safety, and equal opportunities.

17. In equine programmes, KEITS provides good guidance and support to develop work-based assessors. The company has been particularly effective in increasing the number of work-based assessors. These help learners to benefit from more assessment opportunities as part of their day-to-day work. Mainly in equine programmes, but across all programmes, KEITS has been effective in its work to develop employers. This includes NVQs in management subjects and the provision of privately funded NVQs in horse care.

18. In floristry, there is good engagement of employers to support training and assessment. New employers are quickly taught the requirements of the training programmes and are able to offer support to their learners from a very early stage.

19. In equine programmes, KEITS makes good use of prior qualifications. Where appropriate it gives credit for this prior learning.

20. Recruitment arrangements are satisfactory. Across all programmes, KEITS works hard to engage employers, particularly those with employees who will benefit from a work-based

learning qualification.

21. The company's resources are satisfactory. KEITS works with a very wide range of equine yards, liverys, kennels, zoos, country estates, and floristry retailers. Most of these offer the learners an appropriate work environment. Employers and KEITS's staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. The company routinely loans resources such as laptop computers and specialist textbooks to learners.

22. The company's induction and initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory. These place an appropriate focus on health and safety, equal opportunities and the NVQ process. KEITS uses initial assessment in relation to skills and competence to identify assessment opportunities. For literacy and numeracy, initial assessment is weak.

23. The assessment process is efficient and well managed, particularly in equine programmes. The company plans assessments well and keeps learners informed. The range of assessment evidence is good. It includes direct observation, testimonies, photographs and professional discussions. Assessors produce useful records of their assessment activities, which feed well into the learners' portfolios of evidence. The company uses internal verification well to check the quality of assessment.

24. Employers and assessors provide the learners with support, which is generally satisfactory. Where KEITS identifies personal problems, employers and the company's staff provide appropriate support and, where necessary, refer learners to more specialist service. The company's support for the learners' literacy and numeracy needs is weak.

25. **For floristry learners, there is insufficient support for those with the knowledge and understanding required to complete the award.** These learners find the standard awarding body questions difficult to interpret. Where formal on-the-job training from employers takes place, such as in equine programmes, KEITS does not monitor the quality of this formally.

26. **In animal care there is insufficient accreditation of prior learning.** Some learners have already completed qualifications as part of full-time further education.

27. **Across all programmes, there is insufficient planning of on-the-job training.** The delivery model that KEITS uses focuses mainly on the assessment of competence. The company makes little formal effort to plan the way in which learners will develop the necessary skills and knowledge. KEITS uses individual learning plans to set strategic dates for achievement, but there are no additional plans which break down the training and learning as learners work towards the overall aim set out in the individual learning plan.

28. **Learners' progress reviews are weak.** These place excessive attention on setting targets in relation to assessment. The quality of targets set for learners varies widely. Although learners' progress reviews take place frequently, they do not focus on overall progress towards the individual learning plan and do not set targets in relation to on-the-job training and skills development. Additionally, they do not give enough attention to rectifying the learners' particular support needs and frequently they do not involve the employer sufficiently. In floristry, learners' progress reviews are much better.

Leadership and management

29. **The strategic and business management of the company are good.** Its directors set clear direction and demonstrate good leadership role models for KEITS's staff. There is a clear operating structure, with well-defined roles and responsibilities.

30. **KEITS champions the work-based learning route within the land-based sector.** As one of the largest providers nationally, the company is active in promoting the model, networking with other providers and national bodies, and research and development activities.

31. **The CoVE is well managed, with well-recorded development plans.** The company carries out good reviews of ongoing developments and good progress against the key CoVE performance criteria.

32. **The company's use of data to monitor performance is good.** It maintains accurate records centrally, with systematic arrangements to ensure that those staff working in the field update this information regularly. KEITS uses data to provide directors with a useful range of retention and achievement performance reports. The company sets all staff challenging performance targets appropriate to their job roles.

33. **The company's strategy to manage remote working is good.** Most of KEITS's staff work remotely, including its directors. Assessors attend a monthly supervision meeting. A clear meetings structure has been designed. All staff meet at least once a year to deal with strategy and self-assessment matters.

34. There is good promotion of opportunities, particularly for rural learners and those in remote locations. The KEITS model focuses entirely on taking work-based learning and associated accreditation into the workplace. Many of the learners would find it difficult to access this opportunity by any other means. Work with adult learners, some with many years' experience, has been very well received by those following the programmes.

35. **KEITS is engaged in a useful range of projects and initiatives designed to further widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups.** The company has used various research projects to establish methodologies to increase the numbers of learners. KEITS makes positive efforts through its marketing and promotional activities to overcome these. The company regularly provides editorial materials for a range of subject-specific publications.

36. **There are good arrangements to ensure compliance with the company's systems and procedures.** KEITS updates its key processes regularly to reflect current practice. The company records key processes, such as recruitment, induction and assessment, in systems files, which it issues to all staff.

37. Staff appraisal and staff development are satisfactory. KEITS supports newly appointed staff through a mentoring system. Annual appraisal includes staff's own self-assessment of their performance. Directors' appraisals include comments from all staff as well as their own self-assessment.

38. The promotion of equal opportunities to employers and learners at the start of the

learning programme is satisfactory. The ongoing monitoring and reinforcement of equal opportunities is also satisfactory. Assessors check this during their six-weekly visits. KEITS has devised standard questions as a means of promoting discussion on equal opportunities. The company promotes equal opportunities well during assessment and adapts methodologies accordingly.

39. KEITS's strategy to improve the quality of its provision, and particularly retention and achievement rates, is satisfactory, although the initiatives introduced to improve retention are progressing slowly. KEITS has used data to analyse the reasons why learners leave early and identify the point at which they are at greater risk. Resources have been targeted at improving levels of motivation, such as earlier achievement of NVQ units, more celebration of learners' achievements, and the development of closer working relationships with employers.

40. The company uses monthly supervision meeting and other meetings to ensure that staff are following its systems. When KEITS introduces new systems, it communicates these well to staff through e-mails and weekly mailings.

41. The annual collection and evaluation of learners' and employers' feedback are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory rate of response and the results of evaluations are clearly analysed and circulated. Where issues are raised, the company deals with these promptly. KEITS uses employers' forums and employer engagement events, as part of CoVE activities, to gather employers' comments and views.

42. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. This has taken place annually for the past seven years. It draws on the views of learners, employers and staff. Staff fully understand how they contribute to the process. The company makes good use of data.

43. **The strategy to support literacy and numeracy is inadequate.** Although initial assessment in relation to the learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills takes place at induction, sometimes the company uses this inappropriately and administers it poorly.

44. **The development of the work-based learning delivery model is incomplete.** The model focuses insufficiently on the results of initial assessment to design a flexible and individual learning plan, and has no arrangements to ensure that on-the-job training and learner development is planned. It excessively focuses progress reviews on setting targets in relation to assessment, and places insufficient attention on their individual support requirements.

45. **There is insufficient quality assurance of key learning processes.** Observation of the key learning process is informal, particularly for new members of staff, but any information gathered is not used as part of the quality improvement cycle. There is insufficient formal checking of the quality of initial assessment, induction, on-the-job training, progress reviews, and additional support.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic and business management

- good use of data to monitor performance
- good strategy to manage remote-based staff
- good promotion of opportunities for rural and remote-based learners
- useful range of projects and initiatives to further widen participation
- good arrangements to ensure compliance with company systems

Weaknesses

- inadequate strategy to support learners' literacy and numeracy needs
- incomplete development of delivery model
- slow progress of initiatives to improve retention rates
- insufficient quality assurance of key learning processes

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Floristry and flower arranging

Grade 2

Strengths

- high standard of learners' work
- good engagement of employers
- positive experience for mature learners
- good actions to rectify identified problems

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates
- insufficient support for the development of learners' background knowledge

Equine

Grade 3

Strengths

- efficient assessment process
- good guidance and support of work-based assessors
- good development of employers within the equine industry

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention and achievement rates
- weak progress reviews for learners
- insufficient monitoring and planning of training

Animal care

Grade 4

Strengths

- good development of learners' practical skills to meet their job roles
- good links with employers to support their business development

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates on apprenticeships
- insufficient accreditation of prior learning for some learners
- insufficient planning of training
- insufficient review and monitoring of learners' progress

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT KEITS LTD:

- the help they receive from assessors – particularly with key skills
- how equine learners develop their knowledge of horses and health and safety
- getting a qualification which proves practical experience
- putting together a portfolio of evidence
- the gaining of a qualification for adult learners
- not having to go to college
- support received from workplace colleagues
- the improved confidence in dealing with floristry customers

WHAT LEARNERS THINK KEITS LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of visits from assessors
- the excessive amount of paperwork
- key skills delivery
- levels of employer involvement in assessment and supporting portfolio development
- the language used in knowledge tests in floristry
- the amount of structured training

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good strategic and business management
- good use of data to monitor performance
- good strategy to manage remote-based staff
- good promotion of opportunities for rural and remote-based learners
- useful range of projects and initiatives to further widen participation
- good arrangements to ensure compliance with company systems

Weaknesses

- inadequate strategy to support learners' literacy and numeracy needs
- incomplete development of delivery model
- slow progress of initiatives to improve retention rates
- insufficient quality assurance of key learning processes

46. The company's strategic and business management are good. Directors set clear direction and demonstrate good leadership role models for KEITS's staff. There is a clear operating structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities. Directors have good levels of vocational skills and experience in the land-based sector and contribute to frontline services, such as internal verification and dealing with employers. Strategic and operational plans set clear aims and objectives, take good account of the opportunities and threats facing KEITS, and appropriately build on identified business strengths and weaknesses. The company records development well and monitors its development plans frequently. Directors and staff have a very clear understanding of the position of the business. KEITS champions the work-based learning route within the land-based sector and, as one of the largest training providers nationally, the company is active in promoting the model, networking with other providers and national bodies, and research and development activities. The CoVE is well managed, with well-recorded development plans, good review of ongoing developments and good progress against the key CoVE performance criteria.

47. The company's use of data to monitor performance is good. KEITS maintains accurate records centrally, with systematic arrangements designed to ensure that staff working in this field update the information regularly. This gives directors a very clear indication of overall retention and achievement performance, as well as the performance of individual learners, different groups of learners, and assessors. The company uses data to provide directors with a useful range of retention and achievement performance reports. It monitors these bimonthly. Every month, KEITS reviews the work of individual assessors, highlighting those learners who are behind schedule or where there have been previous problems. This information is used at the monthly supervision meetings held with assessors to set new performance targets. The company sets all staff challenging performance targets appropriate to their job roles.

48. Most of KEITS's staff work remotely, including the directors. The company's strategy to

manage this is good. Assessors attend a monthly supervision meeting. This gives managers and staff an opportunity to discuss individual performance and update centrally held information. KEITS equips all remote-based staff with a laptop computer and makes good use of e-mail and telephones to share information. The company distributes updated paperwork and other information to staff through regular mailings. A clear meetings structure has been designed. This includes regular sector meetings, where matters relating to the different occupational areas are discussed, and four-monthly working group meetings, which focus on health and safety, equality and diversity, assessment and internal verification, marketing, and administrative support. All staff meet at least once a year to deal with strategy and self-assessment matters. Staff welcome the open style of communication.

49. Staff appraisal and development are satisfactory. KEITS is keen to employ staff with good vocational skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications. Directors are prudent in setting staff workloads and review overall resource requirements regularly. KEITS supports newly appointed staff through a mentoring system. The company encourages staff to continue with their own learning and skills development, and staff regularly work in their area of expertise. Annual appraisal includes staff self-assessment of their performance. Directors' appraisals include comments from all staff, as well as their own self-assessment. Staff are involved in a range of appropriate staff development, such as assessors' awards, health and safety qualifications and first aid.

50. The company's strategy to support the learners' literacy and numeracy is inadequate, a weakness that KEITS acknowledges. Although initial assessment in relation to the learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills takes place at induction, sometimes the company uses this inappropriately and administers it poorly. Information gathered through initial assessment, and through learners' and employers' comments on ability in this area, is not used to design an individual learning plan that develops and improves these skills. Some employers do not comprehend the effect of literacy and numeracy on learners' performance. While assessors offer good levels of help to the learners, they do not have the appropriate experience and qualifications to deal with literacy and numeracy. Dyslexia screening is subcontracted. Support arrangements in relation to dyslexia are unclear. Some staff are keen to gain additional qualifications in this area. A range of resources to support literacy and numeracy is held centrally but staff are unclear how to use this.

51. The development of the work-based learning delivery model is incomplete. The KEITS model is largely founded on engaging those employers with staff who are eligible for work-based learning funds and introducing a system of assessment for the range of competences gained through normal work activities. The model focuses insufficiently on the results of initial assessment to design a flexible and individual learning plan, and it has no arrangements to ensure that on-the-job training and learners' development is planned in a coherent and individual way. The model excessively focuses learners' progress reviews on setting targets in relation to assessment, and places insufficient attention on learners' individual support requirements, such as literacy and numeracy and other barriers which stand in their way. While KEITS is working well with an increased number of employers, it is not doing enough to engage employers in delivering the key learning processes.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

52. There is good promotion of opportunities, particularly for rural and remote-based learners. The KEITS model focuses entirely on taking work-based learning and associated

accreditation into the workplace. Many of the learners would find it difficult to access this opportunity by any other means. Some of the occupational areas that KEITS offers, such as gamekeeping and agriculture, would require learners to travel considerable distances to access training. For floristry, although this is often located in more urban areas, the specialist nature of training means that learners may find themselves having difficulties in accessing training. By working directly with employers, KEITS is giving more learners more opportunities to participate. Employers are particularly supportive of a model which does not disrupt business and production requirements as much as other arrangements. Through its CoVE activities, KEITS is expanding the range of opportunities available to learners and their employers. These include higher-level management qualifications and assessors' awards. Work with adult learners, some with many years' experience, has been very well received by those following the programmes. The KEITS model allows qualifications and subjects to be covered, which otherwise would be viewed as too marginal.

53. KEITS is engaged in a useful range of projects and initiatives designed to further widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups. It has used various research projects to establish methodologies to increase the number of learners. The company fully understands the particular barriers that stand in the way of widening participation within the land-based sector but makes positive efforts through its marketing and promotional activities to overcome these. KEITS regularly provides editorial materials for a range of subject-specific publications designed to challenge stereotypical perceptions. It seeks to form partnerships with other organisations to raise awareness. The company routinely analyses data on equal opportunities and KEITS is able to spot trends in recruitment and achievement. It is involved in local initiatives to promote equal opportunities and is performing well against locally set equality and diversity impact measures, particularly in relation to disability. The KEITS equal opportunities working group meets regularly and discusses a good range of topics relating to equality and diversity. Minutes and action plans show that KEITS is working hard to make improvements in equality and diversity in a difficult occupational area.

54. The promotion of equal opportunities to employers and learners at the start of the learning programme is satisfactory. KEITS has its own comprehensive equal opportunities and diversity policies and procedures and sets employers clear requirements. All website and promotional material clearly reinforces the company's commitment to equal opportunities. KEITS checks this when it carries out the initial health and safety check of employers. Some employers have adopted a model equality and diversity policy designed by KEITS and view this as free advice. At induction, learners and employers receive a useful information pack and LSC leaflet and KEITS encourages discussion. Learners receive no formal training in respect of equality and diversity, but mostly they do recall the discussion at induction. Staff discuss equality and diversity regularly and the subject forms an agenda item at most meetings. Staff have detailed information on their laptop computers that they can use to update their own knowledge, as well as provide learners and employers with specific information, such as about religion or legislation.

55. The ongoing monitoring and reinforcement of equal opportunities are satisfactory. Assessors check these during their six-weekly visits. Standard questions have been designed as a means of promoting discussion on equal opportunities, although assessors tend to use these questions too literally and often lack the confidence to discuss these matters. In some cases, good discussion does take place and challenging topics, such as

how to deal with disabled customers, or dealing with difficult work colleagues are analysed. KEITS does not set learners any exercises to help them develop a better knowledge of equal opportunities. Learners mostly understand how they can raise a complaint or concerns. The company promotes equal opportunities well during assessment and adapts methodologies accordingly. Where issues are raised, KEITS deals with these promptly and, where necessary, it will cease the relationship with an employer.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

56. KEITS's strategy to improve the quality of provision, and particularly the retention and achievement rates is satisfactory, although the initiatives introduced to improve retention are progressing slowly. In its self-assessment, KEITS asserts that the nature of its business, and the locations and types of business and learners with which it works, need to be understood as a specific contextual barrier to retention. For example, in the Southeast, learners are often drawn by the higher wages and better work conditions offered within the retail sector. KEITS has used data to analyse the reasons why learners leave early and identify the point at which they are at greater risk. During the past two years, the company has broadened the range of management information reports. Resources have been targeted at improving levels of motivation, such as earlier achievement of NVQ units, more celebration of learners' achievements, and the development of closer working relationships with employers. In some subjects, assessors have been replaced. Significant effort is allocated to ensuring systems and procedures are followed. Team-building events for staff take place. KEITS looks outwardly to identify successful strategies to improve retention and achievement and introduces these where it judges that they will make a difference.

57. KEITS has good arrangements to ensure compliance with company systems and procedures. This is particularly important with such a high number of remote-based staff. The company updates its key processes regularly to reflect current practice, and records key processes such as recruitment, induction and assessment in systems files, which it issues to all staff. KEITS mentors new staff during the early part of their employment. The mentors work alongside other staff and ensure that they use the correct paperwork and follow the correct systems. Administrative staff carry out routine audits as completed documents are returned to the head office. This ensures that KEITS performs well against external audits. External verifiers' reports indicate very high levels of compliance. The company uses monthly supervision meetings to ensure that staff are following company systems. When KEITS introduces new systems it communicates these well to staff through e-mails and weekly mailings. A single member of staff takes responsibility for document control. KEITS is planning an intranet to give staff better access to current documents.

58. The company's collection and evaluation of learners' and employers' feedback are satisfactory. This process takes place annually. The rate of response is satisfactory and the company clearly analyses and circulates results of evaluations. Where issues are raised, KEITS deals with them promptly. During the past year, a consultant has been employed to collect learners' feedback. This has produced more useful detailed information on learners' views as well as numerical data. The company uses employers' forums and employer engagement events, as part of CoVE activities, to gather comments and views from employers. Directors develop close working relationships with employers, and employers view them as accessible, helpful and prompt in their response to queries. The sharing of best practice among staff is satisfactory. KEITS looks outwardly to identify best practice from the land-based sector and the standards unit, but sometimes it has difficulty in seeing how to apply this to its situation. The internal meeting structure offers staff a good

opportunity to share best practice.

59. There is insufficient quality assurance of key learning processes. There is an over-reliance on internal verification as a means of checking for quality, but the only formal check is at the end of the work-based learning cycle. Observation of the key learning process is informal, particularly for new members of staff, but any information gathered is not used as part of the quality improvement cycle. The initial engagement of employers by marketing staff is not observed. The company formally evaluates processes used at initial assessment, during induction and when the individual learning plan is formulated. KEITS does not observe the delivery of on-the-job training, although it does initially check the appropriateness of employers' premises from a training and resource standpoint. Learners' progress reviews are not observed by managers with a view to establishing how these might be made more effective.

60. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. This has taken place annually for the past seven years. It draws on the views of learners, employers and staff. Staff fully understand how they contribute to the process. The company makes good use of data. The format of previous self-assessments has been helpful in identifying its strengths and weaknesses. Quality improvement action-planning is clearly related to the self-assessment and it links with the company's business and strategic plans. The directors have followed up previous improvement actions well. The current self-assessment report is in a new format and this has not been helpful in identifying weaknesses. Previous versions were much clearer. Inspectors generally agreed with judgements made in the self-assessment, but found it insufficiently self-critical in terms of the effect of weaknesses on retention and achievement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Floristry and flower arranging</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	32	2
Other workforce development	20	2
<i>Equine</i>		3
Apprenticeships for young people	218	3
Other workforce development	20	3
<i>Animal care</i>		4
Apprenticeships for young people	34	4
Other workforce development	8	4

61. Fifty-two learners are enrolled on floristry programmes. Eight are advanced apprentices, 24 are apprentices and 20 are adult learners following an NVQ at level 2. The adult learners' programme is funded through two local LSC initiatives in Cambridgeshire and Kent specifically designed for these mature learners. All of the programmes are delivered entirely in the workplace. Employers are responsible for any occupational training that is required and an assessor visits each learner every six weeks. Learners and employers receive information before signing up for training and can discuss the programme with a member of KEITS's staff before enrolling.

62. There are 42 learners working towards qualifications in animal care. Of these, 13 are advanced apprentices, 21 are apprentices and eight are working towards NVQs in animal care at level 2. Learners are employed or work at work placements in a variety of animal care contexts. All of the training is provided on the job by employers' staff. Assessors visit learners in the workplace every four to six weeks to carry out assessment and progress reviews. Learners are mainly recruited directly from employers by KEITS's marketing department.

63. In horse care there are 238 learners, of whom 62 are advanced apprentices, 156 are apprentices and 20 are NVQ learners. All learners are working towards NVQs at level 2 or level 3 in horse care. They are employed in a very wide variety of equine yards, including commercial livery stables, riding schools, studs and horse rescue centres situated throughout central, southern and eastern England. All training and assessment takes place in the workplace. Employers carry out the training.

Floristry and flower arranging

Grade 2

Strengths

- high standard of learners' work
- good engagement of employers
- positive experience for mature learners
- good actions to rectify identified problems

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates
- insufficient support for the development of learners' background knowledge

Achievement and standards

64. Learners produce a high standard of work. Most of the flower arrangements produced for assessment are part of the commercial work of the shops and are produced in response to customers' orders. The range of work activity is good. Photographic evidence in learners' portfolios of evidence also shows the same high quality of work. Workplace supervisors insist on a high standard of work leaving the shops, and in some cases the learners are working to a higher level than their qualification demands. Younger learners are working in a safe environment, with good support from the employers. They enjoy their work, feel valued and quickly become more confident dealing with customers.

65. Overall retention is unsatisfactory. In 2003-04, 60 per cent of the advanced apprentices and more than 60 per cent of the apprentices left their programme early. KEITS identified the problem and has used data to analyse reasons for early leavers. Actions from this have resulted in a lower rate of learners leaving training early and a higher proportion of early leavers leaving with part of their qualifications and some NVQ units. In the current year there have been no early leavers. The programme is relatively new and it is too early to make any judgements on overall achievement rates. Performance has been significantly affected by KEITS taking over a significant number of learners from another provider, many of whom were at the end of their training programme and left quickly.

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		2003-04											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		2		5											
Retained*	0		0		1											
Successfully completed	0		0		0											
Still in learning	4		2		2											

*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	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		16		40	100	6	100								
Retained*	0		0		16	40	5	83								
Successfully completed	0		0		4	10	4	67								
Still in learning	7		10		7	18	0	100								

*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	2005-06		2004-05													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		9													
Retained*	0		0													
Successfully completed	0		0													
Still in learning	11		9													

*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

66. There is a good engagement of the employers to support training and assessment. KEITS quickly teaches new employers the requirements of the schemes and are able to offer support to their learners at a very early stage. They are highly supportive of their learners and spend considerable time ensuring that learners become familiar with the practices within the shop and the occupational competences required. One employer has its own training scheme and uses this alongside the NVQ. Its learners are able to cross-reference evidence between the two training programmes. In many of the shops, the workplace supervisors record the targets set during progress reviews and use this information to ensure that when customers order particular flower arrangements, the learners produce them and the evidence is recorded for the NVQ.

67. Mature adult learners find the training scheme to be a very positive experience. It raises their self-esteem and most find the experience of being able to gain a qualification, sometimes after many years in the industry, a very rewarding experience. In one case, a shop owner and her two employees are working towards the NVQ at level 2 and the owner who has been in the business for 30 years found that she was still learning new information and techniques. Some of these learners are capable of demonstrating competence at a higher level but are finding the NVQ at level 2 a very useful means of returning to the learning process.

68. Learners' inductions are carried out satisfactorily and within KEITS's guidelines. Learners are made aware of the requirements of the training programme, including health and safety within the workplace and the effect of equal opportunities legislation. They receive documents to back this up, and their understanding is checked during subsequent visits. The company screens all learners to identify any with learning support needs. None have been identified in this area.

69. The company's assessment and review of learners' progress are satisfactory. There is a good mix of evidence in assessment portfolios, including direct observation and witness testimony evidence, backed up by many photographs of completed flower arrangements. The assessor thoroughly reviews portfolio evidence and, where possible, will directly observe the learner working in the shop. Internal verification is satisfactory. All learners' portfolios receive a formative verification at the mid-point of the programme and a final verification at the end. Records of this are maintained in central file.

70. The assessor records the learners' progress and sets targets for the ensuing period. The assessor sends a copy of progress reviews to head office, where the company uses them to

update the management information system and to trigger monthly reports to the assessor. Employers are engaged in the review process, although some floristry shops give insufficient attention to the location where reviews take place. In some cases this was in the view of customers and other staff.

71. The company provides its learners with insufficient support in relation to the background knowledge required to complete the award. A bank of standard awarding body written questions are given to each learner as they near the end of each unit. In some cases, learners will receive the questions for up to five units at one time, which they find very daunting. The company relies on the learners picking up the knowledge during their work and does not provide the learners with any training to ensure that they have the required knowledge before they attempt the tests. Many of the questions are repetitive and younger learners find the questions difficult to understand.

Leadership and management

72. The company identified a number of difficulties in this area associated with a high number of part-time assessors. A well-qualified full-time assessor was appointed and the situation has improved significantly. Learners and employers now have a complete understanding of the awards, and learners are now more content with their programmes and know what they need to do to progress towards the qualifications.

73. Communications with employers are good. The regular assessor visits are backed up by telephone conversations and regular correspondence. KEITS's newsletter is particularly well received by employers as a means of keeping them up to date.

74. Equal opportunities are discussed at induction and learners receive KEITS's equal opportunities policy and complaints procedure. This is backed up during reviews by the use of standard KEITS's questions to test the learners' understanding of equal opportunities and to ensure that equal opportunities are applied in the workplace. The self-assessment report for this area did not identify all of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection.

Equine

Grade 3

Strengths

- efficient assessment process
- good guidance and support of work-based assessors
- good development of employers within the equine industry

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention and achievement rates
- weak progress reviews for learners
- insufficient monitoring and planning of training

Achievement and standards

75. Overall retention and achievements rates have shown a slow improvement since the previous inspection but remain unsatisfactory. During this time, KEITS has expanded the

number of learners and is working with a wider variety of employers. Where local providers have ceased operating, the LSC has requested KEITS to take over learners. KEITS has made good use of data to analyse the performance of the programme and to identify the reasons why learners leave early. A reorganisation, redefinition of roles and responsibility, and a number of quality improvement actions have been introduced to increase levels of retention and achievement. These are showing a positive trend.

76. Since 2003-04, there have been 128 advanced apprentices, of whom 11 have achieved the full framework. Of the 56 learners that have left early, 18 achieved an NVQ at level 3. Of the 376 apprentices who started since 2003-04, 54 completed the framework. Of the 169 who left early, 87 left with an NVQ at level 2. In 2004-05, of the 52 learners who left early, most left within the first three months and did not want to continue working in the horse industry. Of the 33 NVQ-only learners who started since 2003-04, five have achieved, nine have left early and 19 are still in learning. The pass rates for external key skill examinations are generally good. All learners are employed in the industry and are developing skills in the care and riding of horses, appropriate to the level of NVQ.

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		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	25		38		65		46	100								
Retained*	0		1		19		24	52								
Successfully completed	0		1		10		18	39								
Still in learning	25		22		15		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	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	64		137		168	100	192	100								
Retained*	0		13		71	42	88	46								
Successfully completed	0		6		48	29	74	39								
Still in learning	63		71		22	13	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	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	6		22		7	100	2	100								
Retained*	0		3		4	57	2	100								
Successfully completed	0		2		4	57	2	100								
Still in learning	5		14		1	14	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

77. The assessment process is efficient and well managed. All learners have an initial assessment to ascertain their level of riding and stable management. The company uses this process to verbally indicate learners' training needs and identify when further assessments are to take place. There is an effective and efficient process for accreditation of prior learning for those learners that have achieved the British Horse Society (BHS) stage 2 examination. KEITS has devised its own accreditation of prior learning process for BHS examinations, which effectively identifies additional assessment, down to different performance criteria level, to ensure that all learners are competent. Planning of assessment is good. All learners fully understand when the next assessment activity is to take place and what will be assessed. Records of assessment are clear and give a good record of achievement. Learners are assessed every six weeks and occasionally more frequently. All assessors effectively use a good range of assessment methods, including observation, witness testimony and professional discussion, according to individual learners' needs. KEITS uses too much assessment to identify poor training or the need for training. Assessment is rarely triggered as a result of training. Where KEITS had taken over learners from another training provider, assessment was checked thoroughly to assure competence, and learners appreciate the help and guidance to complete the programme.

78. The guidance and support for developing work-based assessors is good. KEITS has been particularly effective in increasing the number of work-based assessors. These are usually supervisors in equine establishments. KEITS has supported 32 individuals to work towards achieving their assessor award, 23 of whom have achieved and nine are still in learning. KEITS uses 20 of these assessors to assess in the workplace. The company provides good guidance for those working towards their assessor award. There is a good range of different types of evidence used. This process is having a positive effect on supporting NVQ learners. Assessors are able to use KEITS's paperwork and overall it is having a good effect on improving the assessment process and strategies. KEITS's assessors are highly effective in adapting their working strategies to the needs of different equine yards, for instance ensuring that they arrive at the appropriate and right times. It is very rare for KEITS to cancel an assessment, and it is usually the equine yards that do so.

79. KEITS checks all equine establishments for resources, including the type and range of horses and equipment and staff qualifications. This identifies the level of NVQ that a learner can work towards. Where equipment is not available, for example a double bridle, KEITS's assessors will often provide the equipment themselves. A range of equine books is also available for learners. All assessors are suitably qualified in the equine industry and have either worked in the industry or own their own yards.

80. A particularly effective process is the development of equine employers. Most people come to the equine industry through a love of horses and gradually realise that they have to gain an understanding of business practice. KEITS is supporting four learners towards gaining an NVQ at level 4 in management and nine towards gaining an NVQ at level 5 in strategic or operational management. This process is having a dramatic effect on the welfare of learners in the workplace. For example, one yard has implemented staff appraisal through this process, another has recognised that their interview techniques were incorrect and another has established good risk-assessment processes in their establishment. The recognition of the NVQ process has also enabled learners that do not come within government-funded programmes to fund themselves to gain an NVQ in horse care. The increased understanding of management has also accounted for the development of assessors. There is increased recognition that the NVQ process supports other qualifications within the equine industry, and many employers now have a preference for NVQ-qualified learners.

81. There is considerable confusion over the purpose of learners' progress reviews. The progress reviews are weak. KEITS only uses them to identify what assessment has taken place and what assessment needs to take place. They do not look at training at all, only assessment planning. There is a very wide variation of what is recorded by different assessors. In some cases there are complete blanks. A bank of standard questions is used to gather equality of opportunity understanding, but these are not always appropriate to the industry. The involvement of employers is insufficient. They are asked to sign the review copy but do not participate fully in reviewing the learners' progress, especially in relation to training. Although a copy of the review is left with employers, some employers do not use it at all to plan training. It does not review the progress of learners. Few targets are set for learners, other than in relation to assessment. In some cases, there is a lack of experience by assessors in clearly identifying what previous skills a learner has achieved and the associated numeracy and literacy needs. KEITS assesses the literacy and numeracy and key skills level skills of learners if GCSE results indicate there is a need. The process is insufficiently formal. For example, in some cases, learners receive the assessment papers and are then asked to return them when they next see the assessor. There is no guarantee that the learners complete them under secure conditions. KEITS does have a policy to provide additional help, but it implements this process rarely.

82. The monitoring and planning of training are insufficient. The employer agreement clearly states that training should take place according to the agreed learning plan. There are no training plans. There are individual learning plans, which state the NVQ units to be achieved by a certain date. However, it is very difficult from these to identify an individual learner's training needs. The amount of training given in different establishments varies widely. There is no checking of the type or availability of training for learners. When a training need is identified, for example by initial assessment, the assessor discusses this with the learners but does not record this formally. It is difficult to identify what training has taken place and when, and if it is meeting the learners' needs. Some learners receive little or no training due to the type of business, while others receive structured training each day that does follow some form of plan. However, KEITS does not monitor or check this. Some learners are not making progress according to the dates set in their individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

83. KEITS has a process by which internal verification ensures that assessors are responsible for a number of businesses. There are five internal verifiers and two working towards their internal verifier awards. All internal verifiers receive a detailed monthly internal verification monitoring list as to what each assessor has done, and this process ensures that internal verification meets the awarding body's standards. The company manages key skills through initial assessment and integration into the area of learning, a process that the learners appreciate. KEITS issues laptop computers to some establishments to assist the IT unit in archiving records. Literacy and numeracy support are vague. The complexity of managing assessors across the country is supported by a monthly monitoring sheet to monitor the progress and status of the learners, which KEITS's staff value.

Animal care

Grade 4

Strengths

- good development of learners' practical skills to meet their job roles
- good links with employers to support their business development

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates on apprenticeships
- insufficient accreditation of prior learning for some learners
- insufficient planning of training
- insufficient review and monitoring of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

84. Learners develop good practical skills to meet the requirements of their job roles. They are able to carry out practical tasks competently and to a good commercial standard. Learners work in a range of animal care contexts, including zoos, visitor centres, animal sanctuaries, kennels, catteries and veterinary surgeries. These work placements provide good opportunities for learners to develop and practise their skills. In some cases, learners are developing good specialist skills, for example in the care of birds of prey, exotic zoo specimens and llamas. During the training programmes, some learners are promoted to positions of responsibility, for example as zoo-keepers and trainee kennel managers. Many job roles include contact with customers and visitors, as well as the day-to-day care of animals. Kennels and catteries are of a good commercial standard and demonstrate good levels of animal welfare.

85. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Their portfolios contain a good range of evidence, including photographs, witness testimonies and records of assessment. Many learners enjoy putting their portfolios together and are proud of the work they have produced. Learners' portfolios are generally well presented, although in some cases they produce too much evidence and include documents that do not prove competence or knowledge.

86. Retention and achievement rates are poor for apprentices and advanced apprentices.

Of the 39 advanced apprentices who have started training since 2002-03, only 15 per cent have completed their full qualification, with a further 33 per cent still in training. Of the 57 apprentices recruited since 2002-03, only 9 per cent have achieved the full qualification, while a further 37 per cent are still in training. Although some learners are making satisfactory progress, for others progress is slow and they have not made the progress expected when they started the training programme. Too many learners leave their training programme early without achieving either the NVQ or their key skills. For example, of the 20 learners who started an advanced apprenticeship in 2003-04, 10 left the programme early and of these only three achieved an NVQ at level 3. However, analysis of data shows that there has been some improvement in achievement since 2003-04. In 2004-05, of all the learners who left the apprenticeship programmes, 45 per cent had achieved their NVQ, compared with only 4 per cent for 2003-04. In 2003-04, 13 learners transferred to KEITS. These learners were making slow progress and, despite KEITS's intervention and support, many failed to achieve. Although numbers are small, retention and achievement rates for NVQ programmes are satisfactory. Of the 16 learners recruited since 2002, 62 per cent are still in learning and two have achieved their NVQ.

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		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		3		20		19	100								
Retained*	0		0		5		6	32								
Successfully completed	0		0		1		5	26								
Still in learning	1		3		9		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	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		21		31	100	52	100								
Retained*	0		2		15	48	28	54								
Successfully completed	0		0		5	16	20	38								
Still in learning	4		13		4	13	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	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		7		2	100										
Retained*	0		2		0	0										
Successfully completed	0		2		2	100										
Still in learning	3		5		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

87. KEITS provides good support for the development of employers' businesses. Employers greatly value the help, advice and guidance they receive. This includes help with health and safety policies and procedures, equality of opportunity policies, employment legislation and administrative systems and procedures. This advice and guidance is freely available to employers, and communication and working relationships are good. KEITS offers a range of training programmes, including first aid, assessor and management qualifications. In some cases, assessors are able to provide specialist vocational advice to help new businesses to develop.

88. KEITS's assessment and internal verification practices are satisfactory. Assessors make thorough records of practical assessments, although the recording of the assessment of knowledge and understanding is weaker. Assessment is planned and learners know when practical assessments will be carried out. However, most learners are unsure how to prepare for the assessment of knowledge and understanding, and they do not know how to collect appropriate evidence to demonstrate their knowledge. Support for learners is broadly satisfactory, although in some cases learners are given insufficient information about progression and career opportunities.

89. KEITS makes insufficient use of accreditation of learning for some learners. Some apprentices start their training with good previous experience and achievement, including qualifications at level 3 and above. There is no systematic assessment of their levels of vocational knowledge and ability at recruitment. Guidance for assessors does not clearly stipulate how accreditation of prior learning should be implemented and insufficient attention is paid to assessing learners' current knowledge when choosing their programme. For these learners there is no systematic use of their prior achievements and learning to enable them to complete their qualification more quickly. There is no formal or recorded matching of the requirements of the NVQ either to learners' current abilities or to their job role. In many cases, learners are working towards key skills at levels which are neither challenging nor developing their level of skill. For example, one learner who had achieved an A level at grade C in English was working towards key skills in communication at level 1. In other cases, learners whose initial assessment demonstrated that they were working at level 3 for key skills were still only working towards key skills qualifications at level 1. Too often, learners' programmes are insufficiently challenging and they make poor progress relative to their prior attainment.

90. The company's planning of training is insufficient. All of the training is provided on the job, but it is not sufficiently planned or linked to the requirements of the NVQ. Learners do

not develop their practical skills beyond those required to carry out their job. KEITS does not monitor the training and identifies gaps in skills and knowledge only when learners struggle to complete assessments. Although there is some informal discussion of learners' training needs with employers, KEITS does not record or review this. In some cases, it is left for learners to request training after difficulty with an assessment. The company does not use individual training plans effectively and they are often out of date. In most cases, assessors, learners or employers do not refer to them after they have been drawn up. Most employers do not recognise their responsibility to provide training, even though this is stipulated in their training agreement with KEITS. Most employers are not aware of the requirements of the apprenticeship framework.

91. KEITS does not formally plan the training for the technical certificate that advanced apprentices must achieve. The company does not keep records of the guided learning hours that learners should complete. There is no off-the-job training for the technical certificate, although this is recommended by the Sector Skills Council for animal care. The assessor's handbook contains insufficient guidance on implementing the technical certificate. The planning of support for literacy and numeracy is poor. In some cases, the company does not meet the learners' identified support needs and there is no learning plan for the achievement of key skills. Too often, learners are still not starting to compile their key skills portfolios, or work towards their technical certificates, until they are approaching the end of their training programme. Most learners have only a poor understanding of the different elements of their training programme, or how and when they will be achieved.

92. The monitoring or review of learners' progress are insufficient. Learners are not set mid- or long-term targets and there is insufficient monitoring of their progress towards completion of the qualification. Employers do not contribute towards reviews and in some cases reviews are carried out in public areas, where they are overheard by other members of staff and learners. Most learners have only a poor understanding of the progress they have made or what they have left to complete. Reviews do not include any discussion of new skills developed or any training carried out and are used mainly to plan assessment. Targets set are often too vague, such as to 'complete knowledge and understanding' for an identified unit or to 'continue to gather evidence or obtain witness testimonies'. Assessors are not clear about the purpose of reviews or the difference between review of progress and assessment planning.

Leadership and management

93. Communication and working relationships between the animal care staff team are good. Although some learners have had several changes of assessor, KEITS has managed this well and, as far as possible, has minimised disruption. Staff have appropriate experience and qualifications, and the company values and encourages training to maintain their vocational skills. Staff are committed to quality improvement, but the current self-assessment report does not include a separate section identifying strengths and weakness in the animal care provision. Most employers and learners are not aware that their views contribute to self-assessment or quality improvement. The staff's attention to equal opportunities is satisfactory, but there is insufficient development of learners' understanding of the broader aspects of equality and diversity.

