

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Project Management (Staffordshire) Limited**

**23 March 2006**



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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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

## Project Management (Staffordshire) Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Project Management (Staffordshire) Limited (PM) was formed in 1982 to provide occupational and personal development for young people. It offers preparation for life and work, training and assessment in literacy, numeracy and language, and national vocational qualifications (NVQ) and apprenticeships in retail and commercial enterprise, engineering and manufacturing technologies (which was not inspected), and construction, planning and the built environment. It is funded by Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The company was previously inspected by the ALI in 2002.

2. The company is based in Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, and operates from a main training centre at Cleveland House. There are 176 learners in the areas inspected, including 81 following apprenticeship programmes, 36 in NVQ training, and 59 on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes. The company works with a range of local employers, from large multinationals to small family businesses.

3. PM employs 49 staff including two directors, a quality manager, a training manager, a development manager and a number of development officers. The programmes are supported by 16 supervisors, 11 tutors, two engineering technicians, two co-ordinators, a company accountant and five administrative staff.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Leadership and management and the contributory areas of equality of opportunity and quality improvement are good, as is training in retail and commercial enterprise and preparation for life and work. Training in construction, planning and the built environment is satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The process includes feedback from staff and learners but not from employers or subcontractors. The self-assessment report is largely descriptive and identifies strengths, good practice and areas for improvement. It does not identify key weaknesses clearly in bullets and text. There is little evaluative judgement.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** It has maintained many of its strengths and improved on its areas of weakness since it was inspected in 2002. The inspection team identified improvement activities as one of the company's strengths.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT (STAFFORDSHIRE) LIMITED:

- extend the reinforcement of equality of opportunity beyond the induction programme
- make the self-assessment process more inclusive and self-critical

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT (STAFFORDSHIRE) LIMITED

- promote the sharing of good practice across areas of learning
- improve the supervision of subcontractors
- continue to improve and maintain the progress of learners in construction
- make better use of data with all staff
- continue to build on the improvements in the quality improvement systems

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

<b>Construction, planning and the built environment</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Construction crafts</b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	50	3	
NVQ training for young people	16	3	

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Warehousing and distribution</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	31	2	
NVQ training for young people	20	2	

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Employability training</b>		<b>2</b>	
Entry to Employment	59	2	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. All areas received a grade 2 at the previous inspection apart from warehousing, which was a grade 3. Under the cycle 2 inspection process, warehousing was selected for inspection because of its previous grade, construction was selected because of its curriculum links to the E2E programme, and E2E was inspected because it was not available at the previous inspection.

8. Engineering training was not inspected, but contributed to the findings in leadership and management as its achievement trends supported the grade given at the previous inspection.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	53
Number of staff interviewed	42
Number of employers interviewed	17
Number of subcontractors interviewed	7
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2
Number of visits	24

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

9. **Learners' work in construction is good**, and exceeds the requirements of the qualification being offered. Most employers feel confident in allowing learners to work with minimal amounts of supervision. One plumbing learner who has only been on programme for six months has already fitted a complete bathroom suite to industry requirements with minimal supervision. In decorative occupations, learners are producing graining and marbling work to a very high standard. Learners take great pride in their work and are highly motivated to maintain these high standards.

10. **NVQ achievement rates in warehousing and distribution are good** and have increased from 51 per cent in 2002-03 to 82 per cent in 2004-05. The apprenticeship programme is too new to have generated any achievement rates, but retention rates are good for all warehousing and distribution learners.

11. There is **good progression for learners in retailing**. Both of the advanced apprentices have progressed from NVQs at level 2. Fourteen employees of one employer have been promoted to supervisory positions after completing their NVQs, while at another employer, six of the eight learners who completed NVQs at level 2 in team leadership have enrolled for NVQs at level 3. This group's progress has inspired others to enrol for the new warehouse apprenticeship programme. A learner on a work placement has secured full-time employment and is gaining new skills as a tool repairer.

12. **E2E learners' achievement is good**. The proportion of E2E learners who progressed into employment, education or training was 69 per cent in 2003-04, 54 per cent in 2004-05, and 37 per cent in 2005-06. A further 40 per cent of the 2005-06 intake is still in learning. Attendance rates are high at over 85 per cent. Learners gain in confidence, maturity and self-esteem, and achieve significantly improved vocational and employability skills. They also achieve in-house certificates for aspects of the programme, including citizenship, employability skills, teamwork and equality of opportunity. Learners on the

Homeworks project achieve in-house certificates for their skills in painting and decorating and gardening.

**13. Achievement rates on construction programmes are very low.** No apprenticeship frameworks have been completed since the programmes began in 2003-04. NVQ achievement improved from 37 per cent in 2002-03 to 43 per cent in 2003-04. However, only four of the 25 learners who started an NVQ programme in 2004-05 have achieved so far, and eight are still in learning. PM had staffing problems in 2003, and concentrated its resources on a pilot project with Stoke-on-Trent College. Learners' progress and achievement fell during this time. Additional staff are now in post and learners' progress is improving. Effective targets are being set, and learners are making satisfactory progress towards their NVQs and apprenticeship frameworks.

### **The quality of provision**

**14. The practical training in painting and decorating is good.** Tutors' technical knowledge is up to date, and they use a variety of training methods and styles to meet the needs of learners. They develop learners' practical skills well, giving good practical demonstrations that hold learners' interest. They confirm learners' understanding through questioning and participation in the demonstrations. Learners are complimentary about the individual support they receive and many carry out tasks normally associated with higher-level qualifications.

**15. Key skills development in construction is good.** All assessors in painting and decorating are qualified to teach and assess key skills up to level 3. They have developed construction-based assignments and work activities which give learners a good understanding of key skills and their relevance to vocational qualifications. Key skills are taught as part of the vocational training.

**16. PM provides good work placements for construction learners.** Most work placements cover the wide range of work activities required to meet the needs of the learners and the requirements of the NVQ. Employers move learners between work locations to ensure they participate in all the required activities. Employers provide a safe work environment and play an active role in reviewing learners' progress and helping them to gather workplace evidence for the NVQ.

**17. Personal and social support for learners is good.** All learners speak highly of the individual support given by PM's staff and their employers. Staff in construction have been suitably trained in areas such as counselling, anger management, drug misuse, child protection and the reinforcement of positive social attitudes and behaviour. They have provided personal and social support for learners, and sometimes for their families as well. Many initiatives are in place to build learners' confidence. These include social activities such as paintball, team-building events and football coaching. Learners speak positively of the support they receive with literacy and numeracy.

**18. Learners in warehousing and distribution benefit from very good employer involvement in training.** Learners' working environments are good, and their employers are willing to change their shifts so that they can attend training. They also allow learners to change jobs to gain experience for other aspects of the qualification. Supervisors help learners complete assignments and build portfolios. Employers promote their learners'



success through local award ceremonies and by publishing the details in briefing documents.

19. **E2E learners receive a good induction** over a three-week period. All three strands of the programme are covered well. Staff assess learners' literacy and numeracy levels and whether they need further support. They prepare an initial assessment summary, which is kept in the learner's file. Tutor and learner contribute to an assessment of the learner's ability and potential. Learners take part in vocational tasters, and experience a programme of personal and social development. At the end of the induction, most learners are in a good position to choose their preferred option. Inspectors observed two of the personal and social development sessions during the induction programme, both of which were good. Relationships between learners and staff are good.

20. **The Homeworks project is used well to broaden the E2E programme.** Learners work in teams out in the community doing gardening work and painting and decorating. They learn vocational skills and develop employability skills, including time-keeping and working in teams. Homeworks meets the needs of those who prefer to work outside, those who are not yet sure of their preferred vocational route, and those who are not yet ready to take part in a work placement. Most of the young people on the programme face considerable barriers to learning and employment and the programme is very successful at helping them overcome these barriers, with over 80 per cent entering employment or training.

21. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and are deployed well to meet the needs of learners. There are sufficient materials, tools and equipment for practical activities. Workshop areas are spacious and well maintained. Resources for literacy and numeracy include an up-to-date ICT suite. A minibus has been adapted to accommodate laptop computers and to facilitate off-site reviews.

22. **There is poor assessment planning for some college-based learners in construction.** Assessors are not visiting learners in their workplaces to allow them to demonstrate competence through discussion with their employer, or to gather valid work-based evidence. One learner has been in a plumbing work placement for six months but has yet to be visited by his college assessor. The learners' college work is not progressing as fast as that being carried out in the workplace.

23. **There is insufficient recording and planning of learning in warehousing and distribution.** Learners are not set short-term targets with specific deadlines. The targets they are given are vague. At one employer, six learners have been recruited to a new apprenticeship framework but have made no progress. They have had initial assessments and a progress review, but have collected no evidence for key skills or the NVQ. Some recording of individual learners' progress is insufficiently detailed.

24. PM takes too long to meet the **literacy, numeracy and language needs** of E2E learners. Literacy and numeracy form one of the three strands of the E2E programme, and many of the learners have literacy and numeracy needs. There are not enough staff to provide prompt support, and some learners have been on the waiting list for five months. In 2004-05, there was a difference of 30 per cent in the rates of progression between learners who had achieved literacy and numeracy qualifications, and those who had not.

25. **E2E learners have insufficient understanding of equality of opportunity.** Equality of opportunity is covered well at induction, but plays no further part in the programme except at progress reviews. The progress review documents indicate that there is little reinforcement of what has been learnt about equality and diversity and there is no extension of learners' knowledge and awareness. Learners display a basic understanding of equality issues and have a limited recollection of those raised at induction.

### Leadership and management

26. **PM's strategic and operational management is good.** The company has a very clear sense of direction which is clearly understood by staff. Company strategy is publicised effectively and the business plan is e-mailed to all staff. PM responds well to government, regional, local and LSC priorities, and to the changing training context. The company made a successful transition to the development of apprenticeship programmes. PM continues to have the open and consultative approach to management identified at the previous inspection. Managers are accessible and there is good collaborative work within teams. This is replicated by staff with learners, creating a positive learning environment.

27. PM has **productive links with external bodies** including Stoke-on-Trent City Council's housing department which funds the project costs for Homeworks. The senior directors have good links with local bodies and strategic groups that work with young people and act as a source of support for learners. Learners have good access to a range of additional learning activities through the external links. Income from PM's commercial activity is used to fund additional activities such as paintball, outdoor activities, football coaching and boxing, and the on-site gym.

28. **Staff development continues to be a strength.** There is a well-established and well-documented system of appraisals, at which performance is discussed and targets are set and monitored. PM encourages staff to pursue personal and professional development, and gives them time off to complete courses when necessary.

29. PM takes **good actions to remove barriers to learning.** Staff set a culture of respect and expectation for all learners, and raise their aspirations. All learners are guaranteed a place at the centre regardless of background. PM works effectively to recruit particularly hard-to-reach learners, and exceeded the targets for gender, minority groups and disabled learners set in the development plan for 2003-04. Work with the youth offending team keeps young offenders motivated and focused. Learners who have chaotic lifestyles receive structured support and guidance, and additional funds and sponsorship are used to support individual learners.

30. PM provides a **good range of induction activities to raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity.** During the three-week induction programme, all learners attend the citizenship programme and actively explore their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, harassment and bullying, human rights, equality of opportunity and the legal implications of drugs misuse. Learners attend a session on race awareness with a consultant from the local race equality council. Their opinions, attitudes and beliefs are challenged and they are encouraged to analyse their own responses to different customs and traditions and identify stereotypical prejudices.

31. PM effectively **promotes equality of opportunity.** Learners' success at all levels is

celebrated through articles in the company's news sheet, and positive role models are used to challenge gender and ethnic stereotypes. In the training centre, tutors challenge behaviour and language in order to prepare learners for the world of work. Learners are very positive about being treated fairly and have a clear understanding of bullying, harassment and the complaints procedure. The provider makes good use of regional and local ethnic newspapers and calendars to promote the programme. The equality policy is promoted at induction.

32. PM engenders a **positive culture of continuous improvement** among its staff. It encourages them to involve themselves in external networks and to share and discover good practice. The post-inspection action plan is used to raise standards. Overall success rates for NVQs have improved in the past two years. Engineering and retail in particular have good retention and achievement rates, and the E2E programme has a good achievement rate. Weaknesses in leadership and management have been dealt with, and PM meets its targets for retention and achievement rates.

33. Communications are now satisfactory. There are regular meetings, all well minuted and leading to appropriate action plans. Staff have good access to company information and policies by e-mail.

34. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified, and 80 per cent of the training staff have a teaching qualification. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. The company has a minibus which is adapted into a learning unit with four computers. It is used to support learning in workplace environments where learners may not have access to any learning facilities.

35. Health and safety is satisfactory. PM's comprehensive health and safety policy is updated annually. All work-placement providers undergo a health and safety visit that includes a thorough check of equipment and machinery, and a risk assessment. Each employer is monitored every three to six months, depending on the level of risk identified. A health and safety committee, which includes representatives from each department, meets monthly. The health and safety manager produces an annual audit report for the senior management team.

36. The provision of literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. All learners receive an initial assessment. Approximately 80 per cent need support and 60 per cent of these take up the offer. Literacy and numeracy support is provided at workplaces for learners who are employed or who do not regularly visit the main training centre.

37. Staff receive formal training on equality of opportunity every 18 months and their understanding is satisfactory. There is good awareness of harassment and bullying and respect for cultures and traditions, and racial equality but insufficient awareness of the implications of some legislation.

38. Equality of opportunity policies and procedures are satisfactory. PM's equality of opportunity policy includes supporting statements on a range of legislation, written in simple English. However, insufficient attention is given to the dates and implementation of the acts and their amendments. Learners sign a copy of PM's equality of opportunity policy at induction, and a copy is given to their workplace supervisors.

39. Access to the providers' premises is limited but there are satisfactory contingency plans for disabled learners. Learners are not given enough information on entitlements and adaptive technology, although this is provided in response to perceived need.

40. Staff at all levels make **insufficient use of data**. Senior managers receive reports on achievement and retention rates but make little use of data to monitor equality of opportunity and do not analyse the performance of different groups. Data is not used to monitor the effect of additional learning support on learners' achievement. Staff do not access the system or use it to analyse trends and improve their provision.

41. **Equality of opportunity is insufficiently reinforced**. Understanding of equality of opportunity varies between learners and areas of learning. The knowledge and understanding learners receive at induction is not monitored or reinforced enough at other points in their programme. There are few learning resources and materials for equality of opportunity.

42. **Some aspects of quality improvement are not monitored sufficiently**. One main subcontractor provides training for construction apprentices. PM does not have access to observation records or internal and external verification records relating to these learners. Teaching and learning observations within PM are carried out by tutors' peers and are not sufficiently critical. The results are not collated and not sufficiently monitored for trends and action-planning. PM evaluates employers' and learners' questionnaires. However, the questions asked are not sufficiently focused to be useful or to lead to effective action-planning.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- good strategic and operational management
- productive partnerships
- well-planned staff development
- good actions to remove barriers to learning
- good induction activities to raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good quality improvement

### Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information systems
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity
- weak monitoring of some aspects of improvement

## **Construction, planning and the built environment**

### ***Construction crafts***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good practical training in painting and decorating
- good key skills training within the vocational area
- good work placements
- good personal and social support for learners

#### *Weaknesses*

- very low achievement rates
- poor assessment planning for some learners

## **Retail and commercial enterprise**

### ***Warehousing and distribution***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement and retention rates
- good progression
- good employer involvement in training

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient recording and planning of learning

## **Preparation for life and work**

### ***Employability training***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rate
- good induction
- good use of Homeworks to broaden the E2E programme

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficiently prompt response to learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficient understanding of equality of opportunity by learners

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT PROJECT MANAGEMENT (STAFFORDSHIRE) LIMITED:**

- the practical work
- the relaxed atmosphere
- being treated like adults
- the supportive and approachable staff
- the opportunity to achieve something for the first time
- the really thoughtful and helpful staff
- the opportunity to be equal - I'm a girl and I'm a painter and decorator'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK PROJECT MANAGEMENT (STAFFORDSHIRE) LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- 'something more to do during the lunch break'
- 'nothing'

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- good strategic and operational management
- productive partnerships
- well-planned staff development
- good actions to remove barriers to learning
- good induction activities to raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good quality improvement

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information systems
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity
- weak monitoring of some aspects of improvement

43. PM's strategic and operational management is good. The company has a detailed three-year development plan and a very clear sense of direction. Its vision and mission are well understood by staff, and its strategy is well publicised through wall charts. Copies of the staff handbook and the business plan are e-mailed to all staff. PM responds well to government, regional, local and LSC priorities and adapts particularly well to the changing training context. It works with a number of partners to ensure it will be well positioned to take advantage of the current regeneration of housing in the city, and has made a successful transition to the development of apprenticeship programmes. PM continues to have an open and consultative approach to management. Managers are accessible and there is good collaborative work within teams. The management style is reflected in staff's relationship with learners, creating a positive learning environment.

44. PM has productive links with external bodies, particularly with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's housing department which funds the Homeworks project for E2E learners. The managing director and operations manager have good links with a number of local bodies and strategic groups that work with young people. Their good links with agencies such as the youth offending team, social services and probation service are used to recruit and support learners. PM has links with a number of local housing projects, and can refer learners if necessary. External agencies and employers give very positive feedback about their relationship with PM. Learners have good access to a range of additional learning activities that enhance their learning as a result of external links. Income from commercial activity is used to fund additional enrichment activities such as paintball, outdoor activities, football coaching and boxing, and the on-site gym.

45. Staff development continues to be a strength. There is a well-established and well-documented system of appraisals, at which performance and training needs are

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT (STAFFORDSHIRE) LIMITED

discussed and targets are set and monitored. There is a staff development plan for the whole company, which includes four staff development events a year. A staff development session on a theme of strategic importance is held once a year, and all staff attend. Last year it was on working with learners who have behavioural difficulties, and this year it is on cultural awareness. PM encourages its staff to pursue personal and professional development, giving them time off to complete courses if necessary. The annual staff training budget is £15,000.

46. Communications are satisfactory. There are regular meetings including whole-staff meetings every month, and departmental meetings every two months. All meetings are well minuted and have appropriate action plans. Staff have good access to company information and policies by e-mail.

47. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and 80 per cent of the training staff have a teaching qualification. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. The company has a minibus which is adapted into a learning unit with four computers. It is used to support learning in workplaces where learners may not have access to any learning facilities.

48. Health and safety is satisfactory. PM has a comprehensive health and safety policy which is updated annually. All work-placement providers undergo a health and safety visit that includes a thorough check of equipment and machinery, and a risk assessment. PM gives employers a pack which explains key aspects of health and safety. Each employer is monitored every three to six months, depending on the level of risk identified. A health and safety committee, which includes representatives from each department, meets monthly. The health and safety manager produces an annual audit report for the senior management team.

49. The provision of literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Since August 2005, all new learners have received an initial assessment. Approximately 80 per cent of those assessed need support, and 60 per cent of these take up the support offer. Literacy and numeracy support is offered at workplaces for learners who are employed or who do not regularly visit the main training centre.

50. Staff at all levels make insufficient use of data. Senior managers receive reports on achievement and retention rates but make little use of data to monitor equality of opportunity and do not analyse the performance of different groups. Data is not used to monitor the effect of additional learning support on learners' achievement. In the past three years, PM has significantly improved its management information system, and it can now produce a wealth of data. All staff have basic training in how to use the system, but many do not use it to analyse trends and improve their provision.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

51. PM works to remove barriers to learning. It sets a culture of respect and expectation, and raises all learners' aspirations. All learners are guaranteed a place at the centre regardless of background. PM works effectively with a local Asian agency to recruit particularly hard-to-reach learners. It liaises effectively with the youth offending team to keep young offenders motivated and focused, providing structured support and guidance for learners who have chaotic lifestyles. PM offers learners a free healthy breakfast, and uses additional funds and sponsorship to support individual learners. Projects with young



disadvantaged learners provide opportunities for their personal and social skills to be challenged and developed and their readiness for work placement and employment to be increased.

52. PM provides a good range of induction activities to raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity. During their three-week induction programme, all learners attend the citizenship programme. They follow an interactive programme of debate, discussion and analysis of case studies and scenarios. Tutors work with them to explore rights and responsibilities in the workplace, harassment and bullying, human rights, equality, and the legal implications of drugs misuse. The citizenship programme was introduced in January 2005 and newer learners are more aware of a range of equality issues. All learners attend a session on race awareness with a consultant from the local race equality council. Learners' opinions, attitudes and beliefs are challenged and they are encouraged to analyse their own responses to different customs and traditions and identify stereotypical prejudices. An external consultant delivers a session on drugs awareness.

53. PM promotes equality of opportunity well. Learners' success at all levels is celebrated through articles in the provider's news sheet, and positive role models are used to counteract gender and ethnic stereotypes. In the training centre, tutors challenge learners' behaviour and language in order to prepare them for the world of work. Learners are very positive about being treated fairly, and they have a clear understanding of bullying, harassment and the complaints procedure. The provider makes good use of the local and regional ethnic press to promote the programme. The quality manager is also the equality of opportunity representative, and has responsibility for maintaining and facilitating staff development and training, promoting good practice, keeping abreast of legislation and monitoring representation in recruitment and selection. Overall responsibility lies with the operations director. The equality policy is promoted at induction and learners' understanding is checked through progress reviews.

54. Staff development and training in equality of opportunity is satisfactory. They receive formal training on equality of opportunity every 18 months, and have a good awareness of harassment and bullying and respect for cultures, traditions, and racial equality. However, they not know enough about specific legislation.

55. Equality of opportunity policies and procedures are satisfactory. The provider has an equality of opportunity policy with supporting statements for a range of legislation, written in simple English. However, it gives insufficient attention to the dates and implementation of the acts and their amendments. The policy has very detailed information on harassment and bullying, the grievance and appeals procedure, health and safety, and the provision of additional support. Learners sign a copy at induction and a copy is given to their workplace supervisors.

56. Collection of equal opportunities data is satisfactory. Of the 236 learners who started the programmes in 2004-05, 17 per cent have a declared disability and 89 per cent are men. Just over 2 per cent of learners are from black ethnic groups, compared with 5 per cent of the local community. Forty-eight per cent of learners receive literacy and numeracy support. Data on learners and leavers is collected systematically by gender, ethnicity and disability. PM has exceeded the recruitment targets for gender, ethnicity and disability it set in its development plan for 2003-04. Data is not used to monitor the effectiveness of equality of opportunity activities or check staff and learners' understanding. It is not used

sufficiently when making management decisions and planning, or to analyse in-depth trends in the performance of different groups of learners.

57. The provider has contingency arrangements to provide access for disabled learners. Access to the providers' premises is limited, although there are appropriate toilets. PM's action plan in response to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is almost complete but has been put on hold because of the relocation of the training centre. Learners have insufficient access to information on entitlements and adaptive technology, although it is provided in response to learners' needs.

58. Equality of opportunity is insufficiently reinforced. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity varies between areas of learning and the length of time on programme. The knowledge and understanding learners gain through their induction activities is not monitored and reinforced enough at other points in their programme. There are few equality of opportunity learning resources and materials. Learners' views and attitudes are challenged at induction but their ideas, opinions and understanding are not developed further. Some learners move into work placements fairly soon after enrolment and miss out on some of the citizenship and equality awareness-raising sessions at induction. Learners have little time to follow up some of the fundamental issues, and can not remember what they learned at induction. Progress review questions are insufficiently challenging, and the written responses show limited understanding of the breadth of equality and diversity issues tackled at induction.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

59. PM engenders a positive culture of continuous improvement among its staff, and encourages them to come up with ideas to enhance learners' experience. The ideas are presented to senior managers and, if appropriate, are adopted and disseminated to other staff. The new style for progress reviews was suggested by a new member of staff, and a number of other small but significant changes have contributed to the overall improvement of the provision. Staff are encouraged to involve themselves in external networks and to share and discover good practice. Managers used the post-inspection action plan to raise standards. Overall success rates for NVQs have improved in the past two years. Engineering and retail in particular have good retention and achievement rates, and the E2E programme has a good achievement rate. In leadership and management, most of the shortcomings identified by the 2002 inspection have been dealt with. In particular, targets are now set for retention and achievement rates, and these are being met.

60. PM has a clear annual quality improvement cycle that gives the timings of key processes. There is a thorough audit of procedures, and a percentage of forms is audited by the quality manager. The quality policy is brief but clear and covers all key aspects of training. PM's internal and external verification procedures and practices are effective. Assessors hold regular standardisation meetings that are well minuted and lead to appropriate actions. Documents are completed well and assessors are appropriately qualified.

61. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and incorporates the views of the staff. The strengths and weaknesses of programmes are discussed in team meetings and then taken forward by course representatives to the management team. The self-assessment report is too descriptive and not judgemental enough.

62. There are some aspects of quality improvement that PM does not monitor well enough. PM has one main subcontractor, Stoke-on-Trent College, which provides training for construction apprentices. PM does not have access to observation records for its learners' classes at the college, or to internal or external verification records for its learners' work. PM is aware of this and a member of staff liaises with the college learners to resolve the issues. The observation of PM's own teaching and learning is carried out by tutors' peers and is not sufficiently critical. The results are not collated or monitored sufficiently to identify trends and facilitate action-planning. PM evaluates employers' and learners' questionnaires. However, although the results are collated and reported on, the questions asked are too vague to allow useful analysis or to lead to effective action-planning.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Construction crafts</b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	50	3
NVQ training for young people	16	3

63. There are 66 construction learners, of whom 45 are apprentices, five are advanced apprentices and 16 are on NVQ programmes. Apprenticeships and NVQ programmes are offered in decorative occupations, trowel occupations, wood occupations, plumbing and glass installation. Learners on decorative occupations programmes attend PM's training centre for their off-the-job training. All other learners attend a local college. Learners are trained and assessed by occupationally competent staff. There is a three-week induction period during which time learners' literacy and numeracy levels are identified through initial assessment. During the induction period, most learners are given the opportunity to sample work activities in painting and decorating, engineering and general construction skills, spending up to a week in each of these areas. At the end of the induction programme, most learners are enrolled onto the E2E programme. Following the completion of the E2E programme and interviews with relevant assessors, learners begin training on apprenticeship or NVQ programmes.

#### **Construction crafts**

##### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good practical training in painting and decorating
- good key skills training within the vocational area
- good work placements
- good personal and social support for learners

##### *Weaknesses*

- very low achievement rates
- poor assessment planning for some learners

#### **Achievement and standards**

64. Learners' work is of a good standard. In many instances, the standard is above the requirements of the qualification being offered. Many employers interviewed during inspection stated that learners consistently demonstrated good practical skills and maintained high levels of performance in the workplace. Most employers feel confident in allowing learners to carry out most work activities with minimal supervision, and are rewarding them financially for their performance and contributions. Learners in decorative occupations are producing very good graining and marbling, and one plumbing learner

who has only been on programme for six months has already fitted a complete bathroom suite to industry requirements with minimal supervision. Learners take great pride in the work they produce and are highly motivated to maintain high standards. They are keen to discuss and demonstrate their new skills and are proud of their achievements. There are many examples of good-quality work displayed in the workshops.

65. Achievement rates on construction programmes are very low. There has been no achievement of apprenticeship frameworks, although 26 learners started apprenticeships in 2003-04 and 30 started in 2004-05. Of the 30 learners who started NVQ programmes in 2002-03, 37 per cent achieved the qualification, and of the 49 who started in 2003-04, 43 per cent have achieved so far. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, PM experienced staffing problems. Apprenticeship and NVQ programmes were under-resourced, and learners' progress and achievement deteriorated. Additional staff are now in place and learners' progress is improving on apprenticeship programmes. Many learners are being accredited for the technical certificate component of the apprenticeship framework. Staff are setting most learners effective targets for gathering NVQ evidence, and are making additional workplace visits to improve learners' progress towards the NVQ. Most learners are now making satisfactory progress.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	5																
Retained*	5																
Successfully completed	0																
Still in learning	5																

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>2005-06</b>		<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	17		30	100	26	100											
Retained*	0		3	10	17	65											
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0											
Still in learning	15		16	53	14	54											

\*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	1		25	100	49	100	30	100									
Retained*	1		10	40	32	65	15	50									
Successfully completed	0		4	16	21	43	11	37									
Still in learning	1		8	32	7	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

66. The practical training in painting and decorating is good. Trainers show up-to-date technical knowledge and use a variety of training methods and styles to meet the learners' needs. Learners carry out tasks normally associated with higher-level qualifications to enhance their practical skills and knowledge base. Trainers' practical demonstrations are good and maintain learners' interest. Learners' understanding is confirmed through questioning and by participation in demonstrations. Learners are complimentary about the high level of individual support they receive from trainers, and feel their employability skills are improved. They are given the opportunity to carry out relevant work activities around the training centre and apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge in a realistic work situation.

67. Key skills are taught as part of the vocational training in construction, and learners make good progress towards the achievement of key skills qualifications. The painting and decorating assessors are qualified to teach and assess key skills up to level 3. They have developed construction-based key skills assignments and work activities, which also provide additional evidence for technical certificates. Learners have a good understanding of key skills and their relevance to vocational qualifications.

68. PM provides good work placements, most of which cover the wide range of work activities required to meet the needs of the learners and the NVQ requirements. Employers are prepared to relocate learners to ensure they can experience all the required work activities. They deploy learners well and many give them the opportunity to carry out more advanced work activities. Employers provide a safe work environment for learners and play an active role in their progress reviews. Many employers have visited PM's training centre to see the resources, look at learners' work and discuss learners' support needs, progress and training programmes. Most employers are actively involved in assisting learners to gather workplace evidence for the NVQ in the form of photographs, witness statements and job sheets.

69. Personal and social support for learners is good. All learners speak highly of the support from their employers and PM's staff. Staff in construction have been suitably trained in areas such as counselling, anger management, drug misuse, and child protection, and are able to use their knowledge to benefit learners. They have helped learners experiencing family bereavement, the effects of alcohol and drugs misuse, and problems with living accommodation. In some instances, this personal and social support extends to the learners' families. Much support takes place outside normal working hours. There are many initiatives in place to improve learners' confidence. These include social activities

such as paintball, team-building events and football coaching with a local professional football club. PM provides a fitness facility which is accessible to all learners after working hours and is supervised by suitably qualified training centre staff. Learners also benefit from incentives such as free breakfasts and refreshments.

70. Learners receive adequate literacy, numeracy and language support. All learners have an initial assessment during their induction period, to identify any learning support needs. Where additional support needs are identified, learners attend sessions with basic skills staff. Learners speak positively of the literacy, numeracy and language support they receive.

71. Resources are satisfactory. Additional staff support learners in some construction areas to improve their progress. There are enough materials, tools and equipment to meet the needs of learners carrying out practical activities. College resources are good and include a learning resource centre where learners can access computer-based learning material to support their studies. Workshop areas are spacious and well maintained. There are adequate classroom facilities which create a suitable learning environment. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. Learners have good awareness of health and safety requirements and practices. There is good promotion of health and safety in all work areas. Learners are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment for all work activities. Work placements are subjected to regular health and safety reviews by PM's staff, and also undergo a thorough pre-placement risk assessment.

72. Assessment planning is poor for some learners. Some college-based learners are not being visited in the workplace by assessors. They cannot demonstrate their competence through discussion with their employer and assessor or gather valid work-based evidence. They carry out a wide range of work activities but are not formally recording them for the purpose of assessment. One learner who has been in a plumbing work placement for six months has yet to be visited by his college assessor. Both the learner and the employer feel that he is making slow progress at college. Assessment practice and the recording of assessment decisions are satisfactory for learners based at the training centre. Painting and decorating learners are collecting a diverse range of evidence from the workplace and assessors visit them at work. These learners are making adequate progress towards achievement of their NVQs and technical certificates.

### **Leadership and management**

73. An effective appraisal system ensures that construction staff receive good training which meets their professional and personal development needs. Staff are encouraged to bring forward ideas and suggestions to improve teaching and the provision as a whole, and are well supported by managers implementing new approaches and initiatives. Internal verification at the training centre is thorough and subject to well-developed recording systems. Assessors are well supported and guided through the internal verification process. Internal verification at the college is satisfactory. Quality assurance of the college-based provision has been ineffective and some learners have made slow progress. The provider has recently taken steps to deal with this. The allocation of resources to the on-site assessment and training provision has been improved, and the slow progress of learners at the training centre has been dealt with. The provider has recruited additional staff, and learners' progress towards achievement of their vocational and key skills qualifications has improved.

**Retail and commercial enterprise****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Warehousing and distribution</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	31	2
NVQ training for young people	20	2

74. PM provides modern apprenticeships and NVQs in warehousing to 51 learners. There are 29 apprentices and two advanced apprentices in distribution, warehousing and storage operations, and 18 learners on NVQ programmes in warehousing. Two learners are working towards an NVQ in team leadership at level 2.

75. Most learners are employed and receive training and assessment in their workplace. Currently, learners are based at five employers. The largest employer has 31 learners, and two of PM's staff are based at its premises. All of this employer's permanent employees under 25 years of age are offered the opportunity to study for an apprenticeship or NVQ, and its own training officers provide most of the assessments and observations. Staff from PM conduct performance reviews and manage the qualifications. A few learners are in work placements with small employers in the area. They attend a three-week placement at PM's training centre, after which, PM organises a work placement and learners undergo a two-week trial before transferring to the work-placement provider's pay roll.

76. Three members of PM's staff support learners, with regular visits and 12-weekly progress reviews. Learners on the new apprenticeship programmes receive monthly visits from key skills staff.

77. All employed learners receive an induction. This includes training about health and safety, harassment and bullying, and equal opportunities, as well as an introduction to the learning programmes. They also complete a skill scan to match their job to the qualifications offered.

***Warehousing and distribution****Strengths*

- good achievement and retention rates
- good progression
- good employer involvement in training

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient recording and planning of learning

**Achievement and standards**

78. NVQ achievement rates are good and have increased from 51 per cent in 2002-03 to 82 per cent in 2004-05. The number of learners on these programmes has reduced since the 2002 inspection. The main employers have now trained most of their learners under



25 years of age. The apprenticeship programme for warehousing and distribution is new and achievement rates are not available.

79. Retention rates are good for all learners. Retention rates for NVQ learners have gone up from 51 per cent in 2002-03 to 82 per cent in 2004-05. The warehousing and distribution apprenticeship is new, and it is too early to judge the retention rates. However, all the learners who started the programme are still in learning.

80. Learners make good progress. Both advanced apprentices have progressed from NVQs at level 2. Fourteen employees with one employer have been promoted to supervisory positions after completing NVQs with the provider. Assessors at one employer, who have been trained by PM, have expressed an interest in studying NVQs at level 3 in team leadership. At another employer, six of the eight learners who completed NVQs at level 2 in team leadership have enrolled for level 3, and their progress has inspired a further group of learners to enrol for the new warehouse apprenticeship programme. One learner on a work placement has made progress by securing full-time employment, and is gaining new skills as a tool repairer.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>	<b>2005-06</b>																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	2																
Retained*	2																
Successfully completed	0																
Still in learning	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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>2005-06</b>																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	29																
Retained*	29																
Successfully completed	0																
Still in learning	29																

\*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	20		33	100	41	100	37	100									
Retained*	20		27	82	22	54	19	51									
Successfully completed	0		27	82	21	51	19	51									
Still in learning	20		0	0	0	0	0	0									

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

## The quality of provision

81. Learners benefit from very good employer involvement in training, and have good working environments with modern facilities and new warehouses. Employers range from large multi-national companies to small family businesses, but most of the learners are employed by three local companies. At two employers, PM's assessors have their own training office and access to the warehouse at all time. They are treated by the employer as part of their training team, and learners have direct access to them. Employers are willing to change learners' shifts to meet the requirement of training, and allow learners to change job roles to gain experience in other aspects of the qualification. Supervisors in one company act as mentors to help learners complete assignments and build portfolios. Employers provide appropriate work experience for learners and good on-the-job training. Many employers approach PM for work placements on the recommendation of other employers. Learners on work placements are released regularly for further training at PM's training centre. Employers promote their learners' success at local award ceremonies. They invite celebrities to make presentations and publish the results in the local press. Success is also celebrated by publication in employers' briefing documents.

82. Programmes are matched well to learners' needs and interests and to their daily working routine. Staff from PM make presentations to groups of young learners on the qualifications available, and offer advice and guidance on the suitability of qualifications.

83. Initial assessment on warehouse apprenticeship schemes is satisfactory and identifies learners' additional needs, including those in literacy and numeracy. The individual learning plan is laid out well, and is used at all meetings between assessors and learners. Induction is satisfactory and includes a comprehensive introduction to the learning programme, health and safety, equal opportunities, and what to do in the case of harassment and bullying.

84. Learners' portfolios are laid out well and include a copy of the qualification standards. There are written questions for each unit and a unit evidence matrix specific to most employers. Assessment plans are well structured and feedback from observations is comprehensive. A range of evidence is presented in the portfolio including witness testimonies, work evidence and photographs. An audio recorder has recently been purchased to allow discussions and verbal questioning to be recorded.

85. Internal verification is satisfactory and all portfolios are checked before accreditation. Internal verification checks are planned well and all assessors know when they will be observed during the year. Experienced assessors are observed by the internal verifier twice

a year. Less experienced assessors are observed three times a year. Each assessor meets their internal verifier to discuss the issues raised. These meetings are valued by assessors and managers. Assessors meet every two months, and the roles of chair and minute taker are rotated to ensure that all assessors make an equal contribution. Internal and external verification issues are discussed at the bi-monthly development office meeting. Standardisation meetings are held to exchange good practice.

86. There is insufficient recording and planning of learning. The targets set at reviews are for three-month periods. Learners are not set short-term targets with specific deadlines that they can easily recognise and identify with. The targets are vague and examples include 'complete all work set'. At one employer, six apprentices have made no progress. They have had an initial assessment and a progress review, but there is no evidence in their key skills or NVQ portfolios. Learners are uncertain about the work they have been set and what the key skills requirements are. Some learners' progress is not recorded in enough detail. There are no standard forms to help learners keep track of their progress. One assessor writes in full the progress made, while another simply keeps a visitors log.

### **Leadership and management**

87. The provider has sufficient qualified and experienced staff and monitors their performance. Communications are good. All training co-ordinators attend monthly individual meetings and there are regular standardisation and development staff meetings. One assessor invites employers that are not in competition with each other to meet and share their current management issues.

88. PM's staff and learners demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity. All learners are asked questions at progress reviews to evaluate their level of understanding. Some of their responses are recorded on review forms.

89. PM implements quality improvement effectively, and staff have a strong focus on improving the learning experience. The self-assessment report is accurate and descriptive. It identifies the provision's strengths accurately and there is a development plan to maintain and improve the standards of learning. However, it does not identify the weaknesses in the provision.

**Preparation for life and work****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Employability training</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Entry to Employment	59	2

90. There are 59 learners on the E2E programme, of whom 58 are men and three come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The average length of stay on the programme is 15 weeks, after which learners aim to progress into work or further education or training. Most learners enter the programme through referrals from Connexions. However, a significant number self-refer, often as a result of recommendations from existing or former learners. A few are referred through other statutory and voluntary organisations. All learners live in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas, and their work placements are within a six-mile radius of PM's training centre. PM provides training in a range of vocational options for E2E learners, including engineering, painting and decorating, joinery, gardening and bricklaying. Off-the-job training takes place at PM's main premises. The Homeworks project provides training in gardening and painting and decorating in community settings for learners who are not ready to take part in a work placement. There is a subcontracting arrangement to support some joinery and bricklaying learners.

91. The E2E programme is managed by the E2E co-ordinator who is supported by two development officers and a tutor. Thirty members of staff contribute to the E2E programme, including specialist staff such as the skills for life manager, the skills for life and key skills tutor, and supervisors from the vocational areas. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language.

***Employability training****Strengths*

- good achievement rate
- good induction
- good use of Homeworks to broaden the E2E programme

*Weaknesses*

- insufficiently prompt response to learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficient understanding of equality of opportunity by learners

**Achievement and standards**

92. E2E learners' achievement rate is good. Sixty-nine per cent of learners progressed into employment, education or training in 2003-04, and 54 per cent in 2004-05. A further 11 per cent are still in learning. In 2005-06, 37 per cent of learners have achieved and 40 per cent are still in learning. E2E learners on the Homeworks project do particularly well, with over 80 per cent achieving positive outcomes. Staff monitor learners well, and encourage their attendance. The attendance rate is high at over 85 per cent. Learners gain in confidence, maturity and self-esteem, and significantly improve their vocational and

employability skills.

93. Learners are assessed to identify their literacy and numeracy levels, and those below level 1 are encouraged to work towards and achieve a level 1 qualification. In 2005-06, 10 learners in literacy and 18 in numeracy have achieved at level 1. Eighty-six per cent of learners who achieved a level 1 qualification at PM during 2004-05 also progressed into employment, education or training. Learners also achieve in-house certificates for aspects of the programme, including citizenship, employability skills, teamwork and equality of opportunity. Learners on the Homeworks project achieve in-house certificates for the skills they gain in painting and decorating and gardening.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Entry to Employment	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	103	100	161	100	154	100											
Progression <sup>1</sup>	37	36	87	54	107	69											
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	37	36	87	54	107	69											
Still in learning	41	40	18	11	0	0											

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

### The quality of provision

94. The learners' induction is good. All the E2E learners follow a common three-week induction programme that covers all three strands of the E2E programme. Learners' literacy and numeracy levels are assessed and their support needs are identified. A summary of the initial assessment results is kept in the learner's file. Learners have an opportunity to take part in tasters of the main vocational curriculum areas. Each taster takes place over a week, and culminates in an assessment of the learner's ability and potential, to which both tutor and learner contribute. There is a programme of personal and social development, incorporating a citizenship programme and including equality and diversity, rights and responsibilities, employment skills and drugs education. At the end of the induction, most learners are in a good position to choose an option. For those less certain of their direction, or who are not yet ready to take part in a work placement, the Homeworks project provides a good taste of a work environment.

95. Two sessions of the personal and social development strand of the induction programme were observed by inspectors, and both were good. Learners concentrated well on the tasks set and contributed well to discussions. They were aware that they were acquiring knowledge and understanding. The sessions were well planned and tutors encouraged participation and gave positive reinforcement. Relationships between learners and staff are good.

96. The Homeworks project is used well by PM to broaden the E2E programme. The provider has gained local authority funding to support the scheme, and this helps to pay for staffing, materials and equipment. Learners choose to join the Homeworks project, and they work in teams out in the community doing gardening work and painting and

decorating. They learn vocational skills and also develop employability skills, including time-keeping and teamworking. Most of the young people on the programme face considerable barriers to learning and employment, and the programme is very successful at helping them overcome these barriers, with over 80 per cent entering employment or training. PM has also used the Pathfinder Project to help young people still at school progress into E2E. A third of the participants progressed to the E2E programme during 2004-05.

97. Resources to support the programme are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and are deployed well to meet the vocational and development needs of the learners. Resources for literacy and numeracy are good, including access to an up-to-date computer suite. Sessions are based in two very pleasant classrooms which are well furnished and suitable for small-group and individual support. However, they are on an upper floor with no disabled access. E2E learners have access to the same resources at the training centre as learners on the apprenticeship programmes for engineering and painting and decorating. Additional funding is used to pay for transport, materials and equipment for Homework learners. A minibus has been adapted to accommodate laptop computers and facilitate off-site reviews.

98. Staff at PM are approachable and have good relationships with learners, supporting them through personal difficulties. Most of the E2E learners are referred by Connexions, and each has access to a Connexions personal adviser who offers them well-informed advice about further education and career options. PM has well-established links with Connexions, and four days of the week of personal adviser time is allocated to the provider. PM's staff liaise actively with external agencies and voluntary organisations to provide specialist support on such topics as drugs education and equality of opportunity.

99. The three strands of the E2E programme are covered during the thorough induction process. There is a very clear focus on the vocational element throughout the programme, with a range of choices available to learners to meet their strengths and preferences. The high levels of positive outcomes reflect the learners' vocational choices. During their work experience and placements, learners also develop employability and social skills. They are aware of the increase in their confidence, self-esteem and maturity. Some learners do not benefit from personal and social development as part of the citizenship programme beyond their initial induction experience. Some learners receive literacy and numeracy support at separate sessions at the main centre. However, there is less focus on this aspect of the programme than on the vocational element.

100. PM does not meet learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs quickly enough. Literacy and numeracy form one of the three strands of the E2E programme, and many of PM's learners have literacy and numeracy needs. The importance of literacy and numeracy to learners' progress is indicated by the 30 per cent difference in positive outcomes between learners who received such support in 2004-05 and those who did not. During the three-week induction, learners have an initial assessment and their key skills levels are identified. The provider aims to support learners through to level 1 in both literacy and numeracy and there are two permanent members of staff to teach literacy, numeracy and key skills. They are currently supported by a temporary member of staff. However, the staff work part time and do not have time to meet all learners' literacy and numeracy support needs sufficiently promptly. Some learners have been on the waiting list for five months, and one has not yet been put on the waiting list.

## Leadership and management

101. Staff are well supported, and where annual appraisals identify development needs these are met. Observations of teaching and learning take place but insufficiently regularly. The system is based on peer observation, and there is no action-planning to ensure that any shortcomings are remedied to improve the learners' experience.

102. PM's marketing materials for the programme are colourful and contain attractive images. However, the most effective promotional tools are word-of-mouth from existing learners, and referral by agencies confident of the quality of provision.

103. Staff seek feedback from learners who leave or complete the E2E programme. The returns are analysed centrally, and indicate a high level of satisfaction with the programme, particularly the comprehensive induction. Learners' suggestions for improvements mirror comments made to inspectors. However, the process is insufficiently critical to identify useful action points to improve the provision. Relationships with staff are good, and learners regularly give informal feedback.

104. There are opportunities for learners to gain literacy and numeracy qualifications at PM. Level 1 qualifications are gained through online testing, but those for entry level require assessment and verification. There is an established and effective system to ensure appropriate internal verification is in place and is acted upon.

105. E2E staff contributed to the self-assessment process and report. Self-assessment of the curriculum area was fed back to the quality manager who produced the final report. The fourth draft of the report was prepared in time for the inspection. Although it was a lengthy and detailed document, much of the text on E2E was descriptive rather than analytical and there was no clear identification of strengths and weaknesses.

106. There is insufficient analysis and target-setting for equality of opportunity. Figures relevant to equality and diversity, including those on learners' gender, ethnicity and disability, are collected, collated and analysed centrally. There is analysis by participation and by positive outcome. However, the E2E team does not use these figures to set targets for different groups of learners or to develop the provision in terms of equality and diversity.

107. Learners have insufficient understanding of equality of opportunity. The topic is covered well at induction but not covered specifically during the programme other than at progress reviews. The review documents indicate that there is little reinforcement of equality and diversity and no extension of learners' knowledge and awareness. Learners display a basic understanding of equality issues and limited recall of those discussed at induction.

