

INSPECTION REPORT

TTE Training Limited

04 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*

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TTE Training Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. TTE Training Limited (TTE) is a private training provider in Ellesmere Port in Cheshire. It was established in 1990 by ICI Chemicals and Polymers Ltd (now Ineos Chlor), Shell UK Ltd and the Associated Octel Company Ltd. TTE contracts with Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide work-based learning for young people. It is managed by the chief executive and a small senior management team. TTE employs 40 staff.

2. TTE provides training for apprentices and advanced apprentices in engineering and laboratory operations. All learners are employed by TTE during their training. Local sponsoring companies sponsor nearly all the learners. TTE also offers commercial training in a variety of specialist engineering areas.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 1

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding.** TTE's leadership and management are outstanding. Quality improvement and provision in engineering are also outstanding. Equality of opportunity is good.

4. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Self-assessment makes a valuable contribution to quality improvement. The process uses contributions from learners, sponsoring companies and staff. The self-assessment report is self-critical and balances description with judgements on the quality of the provision. TTE identified most of the strengths identified by inspectors.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to maintain the high quality of provision.** TTE has been very effective in making improvements since the previous inspection. Achievement rates have greatly improved and all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been put right.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR TTE TRAINING LIMITED:

- improve teaching from good to excellent
- improve training in equal opportunities for learners and staff
- maintain outstanding retention and achievement
- recruit more women and more learners from minority ethnic groups
- continue to improve resources

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		1
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		1

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Engineering			1
Apprenticeships for young people	140		1

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. All engineering provision was inspected and graded. The provision in laboratory operations was not inspected as there were too few learners.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	59
Number of staff interviewed	29
Number of employers interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	4
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

7. **Achievement rates are outstanding.** The achievement rate has improved from about 70 per cent at the previous inspection to more than 90 per cent. Average achievement rates for the engineering sector are below 40 per cent. The rate of achievement of key skills qualifications is excellent. All learners who complete the first stage of off-the-job training achieve all key skills. Learners achieve a wide range of extra qualifications.

8. **Learners' work is exceptionally good.** Learners achieve a good industrial standard of practical work and produce very good written work.

9. **Learners develop excellent personal skills.** They recognise that the programme increases their confidence. They display excellent personal skills and express themselves clearly and coherently.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	0	6	3	0	9
Total	0	6	3	0	9

10. **Support with literacy, numeracy and language is good.** Initial assessment is thorough and all learners who need support get it.

11. **On- and off-the-job training are very good.** Teaching is very good. Learners benefit from well-planned lessons and well-qualified and experienced teachers. On-the-job training is well managed by individual mentors. Learners can work in a variety of departments, which helps them develop skills and collect evidence.

12. **Resources are good.** Learners work in a new, purpose-built training centre. Some staff are seconded to the training centre by their companies and provide training in the latest techniques. Learning materials and equipment are good.

13. **The personal development of the learners is good.** Learners take courses in problem solving, team building and learning to learn. They increase their confidence and develop their skills to fit into the workplace.

14. **Learners benefit from very good extra training in the workplace and at the training centre.** They are set difficult targets that go beyond the apprenticeship requirements. The extra training is relevant to the industry and increases the learners' value in the workplace.

15. **Learners get excellent support throughout the programme.** Before starting the course, they are helped with job interviews and finding a sponsoring company. During the programme, frequent and effective progress reviews, together with informal contact with staff, provide excellent support. Learners receive good support when they move to full-time work.

Leadership and management

16. **The management of training is very good.** Managers focus on improving the provision and continue to make big improvements to all aspects of it.

17. **Strategic planning and business planning are very good.** TTE has a clear vision and suitable strategic goals. Business planning focuses on providing a good learning experience. Staff are fully involved in planning.

18. **The management of health and safety is exceptionally good.** Much attention is paid to health and safety during training. TTE promotes health and safety effectively to learners and sponsoring companies.

19. There have been big improvements since the previous inspection. Achievement rates have greatly improved and all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been put right. Internal verification is now well managed and effective.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very good management of training
- good and well-managed resources
- very good strategic and business planning
- exceptionally good management of health and safety
- significant improvements in provision since previous inspection
- good pre-course guidance and recruitment

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Engineering

Grade 1

Strengths

- outstanding achievement and retention rates
- very good on- and off-the-job training
- good resources
- good additional training
- highly effective personal development of learners
- excellent support for learners

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TTE TRAINING LIMITED:

- opportunities to learn new practical things
- that teachers have all been in industry and they use their experience to make learning sessions more interesting
- the learning modules - 'we can really concentrate on learning a skill for three solid weeks'
- not having to go to college - 'it's all here'
- 'that staff really listen to what we say'
- being able to develop skills that are useful at work
- the support from staff
- the residential week - 'it was brilliant - it helped us get to know each other and ourselves'
- the atmosphere where everybody, apprentices and staff, gets on
- that apprentices are treated maturely, with respect and in the same way as colleagues - 'we then respond maturely'
- 'that we have learnt so much in such a short time'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK TTE TRAINING LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the size of groups in phase 2 - 'there are 12 of us desperate to learn and we are sometimes stood around waiting for attention'
- the procedure for managing BTEC assignments needs to be refined
- the canteen - 'this is dreary, it has no natural light and it needs better ventilating and more microwaves'
- some of the visual aids and handouts, which are not up to the usual standard'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 1

Strengths

- very good management of training
- good and well-managed resources
- very good strategic and business planning
- exceptionally good management of health and safety
- significant improvements in provision since previous inspection
- good pre-course guidance and recruitment

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

20. The management of training is very good. Retention and achievement rates have improved since the previous inspection. TTE has good strategies to improve learners' performance. Staff are involved in setting and meeting demanding but realistic targets for retention, achievement and progression. Useful information on achievement is readily available to staff, who monitor learners' progress carefully. Staff take suitable action to ensure learners make progress as planned. On- and off-the-job training are to good industrial standards and meet the needs of learners and sponsoring companies. TTE ensures that learners develop excellent vocational and personal skills. Most learners follow a thorough and demanding schedule that meets their training needs and provides them with training in thinking, learning, leadership and personal effectiveness.

21. Resources are good and well managed. Staff have suitable qualifications and experience. Staff development is effective and focuses on improving achievement rates and support for learners. TTE has modern, purpose-built workshops and classrooms, which are appreciated by learners. Staff use good learning materials and teaching aids. All premises have been adapted for learners with disabilities. Sponsoring companies have recently made a generous donation of industry-standard equipment.

22. Senior managers provide very good strategic and business planning. TTE has a clear vision for the standard of its training. Staff are fully involved in setting and achieving the company's strategic and business goals. Each year staff spend time as a group agreeing the strategic and business goals for the next 12 months. Staff have an important role in deciding how to improve the provision. TTE has carried out an effective risk assessment for its business and commercial work. Much importance is placed on the strategic goals and progress is carefully monitored by groups of staff and managers to ensure they are met. TTE has met most of its main goals for this year. The business plan and strategic review are shared with staff and sponsoring companies.

23. Health and safety are well managed. In 2001 and 2005, TTE received sector awards for training and education services from a national accident prevention society. In the years in between, it was highly commended. For the past four years, TTE's health and safety management systems have been considered to follow the highest standards of

practice after thorough audits by a national safety society. TTE's standards of practice are also rated as excellent by the local LSC. TTE runs a competition in which points are given for good practice and for reporting hazards. The winning learners are awarded cash to donate to a charity of their choice.

24. Communications within TTE are good. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and those of their colleagues. Management has an open, consultative style. Managers keep staff, learners and sponsoring companies fully informed of TTE's goals and expectations. Staff meet regularly to discuss issues and share good practice. External communications have improved since the previous inspection, especially with the smaller sponsoring companies. External communications are now good.

25. TTE provides good value for money. It makes effective use of its staff and buildings to meet the needs of learners and its own needs as a business. TTE keeps accurate information about its running costs and uses this effectively to plan and manage training. Financial management is particularly effective and is externally audited each year. Managers share the company's financial information with all staff.

26. Literacy, numeracy and language support are effectively managed. All learners are tested to check that they have the skills and aptitude to achieve level 3 qualifications in engineering. If appropriate, learners are tested for dyslexia. Only a few learners need literacy, numeracy or language coaching or support with dyslexia. These learners receive suitable help. However, TTE does not have a written strategy for providing literacy, numeracy and language support. Nor does it produce reports on the effectiveness of this support.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

27. Since the previous inspection, TTE has greatly improved its approach to equality of opportunity. It has clear and well-established policies on equality of opportunity, harassment, bullying and grievances. It reviews these regularly to ensure they reflect current legislation and important equality and diversity issues.

28. Pre-course guidance and selection procedures are good. TTE is in contact with 150 schools in the region. Staff visit about 100 of these, often with representatives from sponsoring companies, and provide good careers advice and information to potential learners. TTE holds open days at the training centre. These receive good support from sponsoring companies and give potential learners a useful insight into careers with various companies in the region. Recruitment procedures are clear and generally consistent for all learners and all sponsoring companies. TTE provides interview training for all sponsoring companies to help ensure equality of opportunity for applicants. The main sponsoring companies, including Shell and Ineos Chlor, are doing good work of their own to promote equality of opportunity. Applicants with learning difficulties and disabilities are given good support when they apply for training.

29. Promotion of equality of opportunity is now satisfactory. Learners receive a basic introduction to equal opportunities at induction. This is reinforced during progress reviews and supplemented in the final stages of training. Learners understand the main issues and work in an atmosphere that encourages respect for individuals. However, TTE does not provide enough activities, videos or worksheets to give learners more information and improve their understanding of equality and diversity. Staff receive suitable training in

current legislation. However, they are not given enough training in the wider issues.

30. TTE is aware of the low numbers of women and learners from minority ethnic groups and uses various methods to promote training to groups that are traditionally under-represented in engineering. For example, it targets girls' schools for recruitment campaigns and arranges talks for young women in mixed schools. It also has links with groups to encourage women into engineering. It promotes training to minority ethnic groups by advertising in minority newspapers and using its contacts with representatives of local groups. When new sponsoring companies join TTE, it studies their local area to identify possible initiatives to widen participation such as initiatives involving schools with a high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or initiatives in areas of social disadvantage. TTE gathers useful information on learners' gender, ethnicity, age, disability, learning needs and achievements.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 1

31. The quality of provision has greatly improved since the previous inspection. TTE has put right all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection in the occupational area and in leadership and management.

32. At the previous inspection, the rate of completion of apprenticeships was good at about 70 per cent. It is now outstanding at about 90 per cent.

33. Quality assurance arrangements are now thorough. TTE has clear, well-written policies and procedures covering all aspects of the training. Procedures are clearly presented in flowcharts. TTE has very good arrangements for monitoring and improving teaching. It has an effective programme for observing teaching. Feedback from observers is constructive. Weaknesses are effectively followed up by managers, who provide support to improve teaching. The pattern of grades given by TTE's observers matched the pattern of grades given by inspectors. Quality control of lesson plans and other documents is very good and encourages continuous improvement through a feedback system.

34. TTE uses a good range of methods of gathering feedback from learners, sponsoring companies and staff. Its analysis and use of feedback from learners is excellent. A learners' committee is particularly effective in achieving dialogue between learners and staff. The committee has a high profile in the organisation. It meets monthly and is attended by representatives of all groups of learners, the training manager and often the chief executive. The learners organise the committee, set the agenda and produce good records of the meetings. Actions agreed at the meetings are quickly followed up. Improvements resulting from recent meetings have included staggered breaks to avoid overcrowding in the canteen, a revised points system for apprentice of the year and a new microwave. In return, learners have agreed to clean cooking equipment and have prepared a cleaning schedule. Learners value the committee. They feel that TTE's managers value their opinions. They have realistic expectations and understand commercial and financial constraints.

35. Internal verification is now well managed and effective. Internal verifiers examine learners' portfolios carefully and effectively observe assessors carrying out practical assessments.

36. During self-assessment, TTE makes good use of data on retention and achievement and

feedback from learners, sponsoring companies and staff. It has put right all the weaknesses in its self-assessment process at the previous inspection. The self-assessment report balances description with judgements on the quality of provision and identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 1

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Engineering Apprenticeships for young people	140	1 1

37. TTE has 140 advanced apprentices and apprentices in engineering. Four are apprentices and 136 are advanced apprentices. They are all following an engineering maintenance programme. Four learners are women. No learners are from minority ethnic groups.

38. All learners receive off-the-job training at TTE's training centre.

39. Advanced apprentices spend two years in the training centre developing a range of engineering skills, including skills in process, mechanical, instrumentation and electrical engineering. Their progress is recorded on TTE's own record of achievement. They also work towards a technical certificate. Key skills are integrated with first-year learners' vocational training. The advanced apprentices then spend up to two years at a sponsoring company working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 3. Some sponsoring companies encourage learners to pursue their academic studies further.

40. Apprentices spend seven weeks in TTE's training centre developing practical mechanical skills, and learning about health and safety requirements. They also start their technical certificate training. Key skills training is integrated into these learners' overall programme and is completed during the first seven weeks. Apprentices spend the next 16 months at a sponsoring company working towards an NVQ at level 2. They continue to attend TTE on one day each week to work towards their technical certificate.

41. Assessment and internal verification are done either by TTE, which is an approved centre, or by qualified staff at sponsoring companies which have their own approved centre. TTE employs nine assessors and five internal verifiers.

42. The sponsoring companies support the learners during their training and aim to employ them when they have completed it. A few learners do not have sponsors. TTE is trying to arrange sponsorship for these.

Engineering

Grade 1

Strengths

- outstanding achievement and retention rates
- very good on- and off-the-job training
- good resources
- good additional training

- highly effective personal development of learners
- excellent support for learners

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

43. Completion and retention rates for advanced apprentices are outstanding at about 90 per cent. The rates have greatly improved since the previous inspection when the completion rate was about 70 per cent. For the small number of apprentices, the retention and completion rates for the only year for which full data is available, 2003-04, are good.

44. All the advanced apprentices who complete their first year of off-the-job training and all the apprentices who complete their seven weeks of off-the-job training achieve their key skills qualifications. Key skills are integrated with learners' overall training. All the advanced apprentices who complete their two years of off-the-job training gain their technical certificate. These are excellent achievement rates. Many learners are encouraged by their sponsoring companies to go on to more advanced technical qualifications.

45. Learners' work is exceptionally good, both in the training centre and in the workplace. Learners work on their own initiative and talk confidently and accurately about their work. Attendance rates at learning sessions are very high. In many classes, the attendance rate has been 100 per cent since the start of the course. Learners enjoy the opportunities they have to develop new skills. Portfolios are well organised and have a good content including job cards and test results.

46. Learners achieve a wide range of extra qualifications. For example, they take courses in first aid, safe handling and lifting, and tower scaffolding. As part of their three-week induction, all learners also complete a health and safety course leading to a certificate.

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		2001-02		2000-01					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	48		40		34		36		39	100	32	100				
Retained*	0		0		0		0		36	92	27	84				
Successfully completed	0		0		0		12		36	92	27	84				
Still in learning	48		39		29		20		0	0	0	0				

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		5	100												
Retained*	0		4	80												
Successfully completed	0		3	60												
Still in learning	4		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

47. Both the on- and off-the-job training are very good. Training meets the needs of sponsoring companies and learners. The teaching is very good. Clear, well-developed lesson plans identify the goals, teaching methods and resources required. Off-the-job training programmes are well structured. Learners are moved through engineering specialisms spending three weeks in each. This gives them intensive learning periods in which they can develop their skills effectively by concentrating on one aspect of their training. Key skills are taught as an integral part of the first-year programme and exemptions are given for prior attainment. Sponsoring companies provide excellent support and facilities for advanced apprentices in their second year of off-the-job training.

48. Sponsoring companies provide good opportunities to learn on the job. Learners are given a full induction to the sponsoring company when they start their work placement. Each learner has a mentor who ensures that the learner has good access to resources and can gain suitable experience. Learners work in a range of departments, developing a wide range of skills and collecting evidence for their portfolios. Mentors are also responsible for learners' welfare during the apprenticeship. The system works very well. Many sponsoring companies encourage learners to continue their education to higher national certificate level. Some learners are able to take advantage of internal training opportunities offered to employees.

49. Both TTE and the sponsoring companies pay meticulous attention to health and safety and give learners extensive training in safety matters.

50. Learners benefit from good training resources. They use new, purpose-built premises where each workshop has access to classrooms equipped with a good range of teaching resources. TTE has plans for further investment in the training centre to increase the quality and quantity of realistic work experience. Sponsoring companies have matched this with generous donations of industrial-standard equipment.

51. Staff are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. Teachers make good use of their experience to add interest and realism to the learning sessions. Sponsoring companies second their own staff to act as training officers, usually for two to three years. This helps to ensure that current industrial practice is taught.

52. Learners receive very good extra training. All learners take courses in health and safety, scaffolding and rigging, safe handling and certified safety for access to sites. Learners appreciate the extra training and recognise its relevance to the workplace.

53. TTE provides an effective personal development programme that is valued by learners and sponsoring companies. Learners take courses in problem solving, team building and learning to learn. In each of the first two years of the apprenticeship, they attend a course at a residential activity centre to improve their confidence, communication skills and teamwork. Learners' representatives at staff meetings are articulate and professional.

54. Learners receive excellent support throughout the programme. During recruitment, candidates with learning difficulties or disabilities are given extra time for the aptitude tests. TTE tests all learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills and provides support if required. Extra key skills support is available and learners can get extra help with portfolio-building. TTE has a thorough system for reviewing learners' progress. During the first two years, training officers review learners' performance every three weeks. The reviews cover 12 key areas including technical knowledge, interpersonal skills and communication. A further review takes place every 12 weeks and involves the sponsoring company. It is unusual for a sponsoring company to miss a review. The 12-weekly reviews continue when the learner is on placement with the sponsoring company and performance in the 12 key areas is reviewed at the same time. The reviews are used to set and review clear targets for progress. Learners who leave the programme have either completed their technical certificate or are encouraged to complete it after they leave. Occasionally a sponsoring company is unable to offer a learner employment. When this happens, TTE helps the learner to find another sponsoring company, often with the help of the previous sponsoring company.

Leadership and management

55. Most learners understand equality of opportunity. TTE provides training in equality of opportunity during induction. Staff reinforce equality of opportunity during progress reviews, where it is dealt with as part of the general discussion rather than as a separate topic. Sponsoring companies also cover equality of opportunity in their workplace induction programmes. However, the coverage can be brief and some learners have difficulty recalling it.

56. Assessment and internal verification are good. Learners' portfolios contain a range of suitable evidence reflecting the tasks they complete in the workplace. Some assessment is by direct observation. Assessment takes place throughout the time a learner is working towards the NVQ. Internal verifiers observe assessors carrying out assessments and have a plan for sampling their work. TTE has a programme for observing sponsoring companies that do assessment and internal verification.

