

INSPECTION REPORT

The Care Learning Centre Limited

08 December 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- 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

The Care Learning Centre Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Care Learning Centre Limited (CLC) is a private limited company based in Newport on the Isle of Wight. It was formed in May 2001 to offer training in elderly care across the island. A team of three directors and two managers manage CLC, which employs eight other full-time staff and eight part-time staff.

2. CLC contracts with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeships for young people. Most of its apprentices are on social care programmes. They are employed in residential homes for the elderly, domiciliary care, or residential homes for people with behavioural and learning difficulties. Since 2003, CLC has also had a contract for apprenticeships in business administration and customer service. Currently, it has 11 learners on these programmes.

3. In partnership with the Isle of Wight College, CLC is a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in residential and domiciliary care for adults. CLC is the lead partner in a collaborative co-financed project with 12 providers, which is funded by the LSC and the European Social Fund (ESF). The project covers Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and offers national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 4, and the registered managers' award for those employed in care for the elderly. CLC is a subcontractor for another co-financed LSC/ESF project that recruits learners employed in elderly care onto training programmes leading to two NVQ units.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** CLC's leadership and management are satisfactory, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Its provision in health, public services and care is also satisfactory.

4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The company's most recent self-assessment report was written in March 2005 and was revised in October 2005. Staff participated in the self-assessment process in March, but they were not involved in the revised report. The self-assessment report does not accurately identify the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The report is not sufficiently self-critical and many of the strengths identified are normal practice.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** CLC has recently introduced a number of initiatives to improve the quality of its training provision. These are beginning to have a positive effect on learners' progress and completion rates. However, CLC has not systematically dealt with the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The self-assessment process and resulting development plan are not fully effective in identifying improvements, and the inspection grades have not changed since the previous inspection.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE CARE LEARNING CENTRE LIMITED:

- improve arrangements for teaching and learning
- improve target-setting in learners' progress reviews
- improve recording and monitoring arrangements

GRADES

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

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

Health, public services and care			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Social care</i>		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	109	3	
Other government-funded provision	98	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. The social care provision was reported on and graded separately. Evidence was examined from business administration and customer service to support judgements in the key findings section of the report.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	11
Number of learners interviewed	38
Number of staff interviewed	21
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	17
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	5

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

7. **On all of the training programmes, learners demonstrate good skills in the workplace.** The learners' confidence in working with clients increases as they develop their skills in the workplace.

8. In social care apprenticeships, achievement rates are satisfactory. CLC is taking action to improve timely completion and more recently recruited learners are making appropriate progress. Learners in the co-financed provision are making satisfactory progress.

9. In business administration and customer service apprenticeships, achievements are satisfactory. Five of the seven apprentices who started their programmes in 2003-04 have successfully completed their framework. Four of the 16 advanced apprentices who started their programme in 2003-04 have achieved the framework and seven are still in learning. The learners are making satisfactory progress.

10. Several learners have progressed from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships. In social care, some learners have been promoted to senior posts, and some have progressed to nursing training.

The quality of provision

11. **There are high levels of support for learners, including personal and additional learning support.** In all apprenticeship programmes, assessors make frequent visits to the learners. These visits are weekly in business administration and customer service, and at least fortnightly in social care.

12. Assessment is satisfactory. Learners' portfolios are clear and well presented. CLC uses a range of assessment methods, often selected to suit the needs of individual learners.

13. Individual learning plans include target dates for the completion of individual components of the programmes. Since September 2005, CLC has been collecting and monitoring data on individual progress monthly. This is proving effective in rectifying slow progress and identifying learners who are not making satisfactory progress.

14. Assessors generally carry out training in the workplace in response to individual learners' needs. CLC runs some short courses at the training centre. A programme of workshops for the technical certificate, NVQ and key skills has recently stopped, as few learners attended.

15. CLC has a satisfactory range of programmes in social care, which meets the needs of learners and local employers. The self-financed projects provide opportunities for adult learners employed in the care sector to gain NVQs or work towards them.

16. Initial assessment is appropriate and identifies learners with additional support needs in literacy, numeracy and language. These learners receive appropriate support, although the staff involved do not currently hold specialist qualifications.

17. Target-setting in learners' progress reviews is inadequate. Staff who are not linked to the training programmes carry out the progress reviews. They do not have sufficient expertise to monitor progress and set appropriate targets. The targets set are not always clear and measurable, and they are not linked to the targets recorded in individual learning plans.

18. **Arrangements for teaching and learning are unclear.** Apart from short courses, for example in first aid and manual handling, training is no longer carried out at the training centre. Employers are expected to provide on-the-job NVQ training, but CLC does not monitor this. Assessors cover the technical certificate and key skills during the assessment visits, as well as providing additional training for the NVQ. There are no clear boundaries between assessment and teaching and learning. The assessors do not record teaching and learning activity. Learners can attend the centre when their assessor is available, to work on their portfolios of evidence or use the resources.

Leadership and management

19. **CLC has good partnership arrangements.** In partnership with the Isle of Wight College, it is a CoVE in residential and domiciliary care for adults. CLC is the lead partner of a co-financed project with 12 providers throughout Hampshire and is subcontracted by another co-financed project on the island. It is an active member of the 14-19 quality improvement group of the Isle of Wight. CLC works in partnership with employers' groups on the island and the network of training providers.

20. **Staff development is good.** CLC supports new staff in gaining appropriate qualifications, such as assessor awards and teaching qualifications. The appraisal process identifies staff training needs and records the courses attended. Staff attend relevant short courses.

21. **The use of management information has recently improved.** CLC is using data relating to each intake to manage learners' progress more effectively.

22. **CLC has recently introduced initiatives to improve the quality of its provision.** In August, it introduced individual learning plans, which include individualised target dates for the completion of all components of the learners' programmes. In September 2005, CLC introduced monthly reports, to monitor learners' progress against these target dates and deal with the issue of slow progress. The company is now using them to monitor the learners' progress through the training programmes. However, not all initiatives have been equally successful. For example, progress reviews do not include adequate arrangements for target-setting.

23. **CLC has well-established quality assurance arrangements.** However, it has not collated a set of current policies and procedures. It updates policies and procedures, but does not check them for consistency. An extensive audit process is in use, but it does not identify areas for improvement effectively.

24. CLC has good resources, but its facilities and equipment for training are not used sufficiently. The new premises are accessible to people with restricted mobility, although the first floor is only accessible by stair lift. CLC plans to locate facilities for learners on the ground floor.

25. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. CLC has made arrangements for suitable staff development. In the meantime, learners with identified needs are making satisfactory progress.

26. The company's arrangements to promote equality of opportunity are satisfactory. CLC has appropriate policies and procedures, although they are not written specifically for learners. Learners gain a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity issues, which CLC checks and clarifies at their progress reviews. At monthly directors' meetings the company collects and analyses data on ethnicity, gender and disability. However, CLC does not have appropriate action plans to deal with the under-representation of target groups.

27. Internal verification is satisfactory and complies with awarding body requirements. Regular assessor and standardisation meetings are effective in improving assessment practice.

28. **The company's recording and monitoring procedures are inadequate.** For example, CLC does not systematically maintain records of additional support and teaching and learning. It does not monitor some key aspects of its training provision, such as the on-the-job training and individual training that CLC's staff provide.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good partnership arrangements
- good staff development

Weaknesses

- inadequate recording and monitoring arrangements

Health, public services and care

Social care

Grade 3

Strengths

- high level of support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate target-setting in learners' progress reviews
- unclear arrangements for teaching and learning

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT THE CARE LEARNING CENTRE LIMITED:

- 'being treated like an adult'
- 'friendly staff who are easy to talk to'
- 'assessors are easily available if you need help'
- 'good individual support'
- 'visits to the workplace at night and also at home'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK THE CARE LEARNING CENTRE LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the wording of the specifications
- the dates of progress reviews or assessment visits
- the directions to its premises - 'CLC is hard to find and needs a bigger sign'
- the workshop sessions - reintroduce them at CLC

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good partnership arrangements
- good staff development

Weaknesses

- inadequate recording and monitoring arrangements

29. CLC has good partnership arrangements. These have extended the range of its training programmes and supported improvements in the provision. Since 2004, CLC has been a joint partner with the Isle of Wight College in a CoVE for residential and domiciliary care for adults. The company has worked in co-operation with the college to extend resources and to liaise with local employers in the sector. CLC is the lead partner in a co-financed project to provide NVQs in the workplace throughout Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. There are currently 12 providers contributing to the project. The project manager visits them regularly and networking meetings are held approximately every three months. The meetings are used to share good practice and to develop co-operative links between the providers. The partnership is working well, and the project is likely to reach its recruitment and achievement targets. CLC is also a member of a network of work-based learning providers on the Isle of Wight, and attends regular meetings. CLC is an active member of the Isle of Wight Council 14-19 quality improvement group and participates in some of the key subgroups. Through this link, CLC has liaised with a local school to introduce vocational provision in care for year 10 pupils, and two learners are currently involved in this initiative. CLC has well-established links with the care sector on the island through the local authority workforce development group and the Isle of Wight health and social care training and development group. Throughout these partnerships, CLC is highly thought of as a provider that is responsive to employers' needs and offers a good-quality service.

30. Staff development is good. The number of staff has doubled since 2002. Many of the newer staff were not appropriately qualified when they were appointed, although they had relevant vocational qualifications and experience. CLC prioritises assessor and internal verifier qualifications, and staff are appropriately qualified to carry out these roles. CLC makes a major commitment to support staff in gaining teaching qualifications. Ten of the staff are completing teaching qualifications at level 3. They are making good progress and many intend to continue to level 4. Staff have also taken key skills tests at level 2 in order to more fully understand the key skills requirements of the framework. Two staff have certificates in basic skills literacy at level 3, and one of these also has the qualification in numeracy. CLC has identified additional staff to take appropriate qualifications and take responsibility for providing support in literacy, numeracy and key skills. The company is participating in a skills for life initiative and one of the directors is working with a facilitator to plan appropriate staff development and training. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Staff development needs are effectively identified at the six-monthly appraisal meetings. Staff attend short courses relevant to their training roles and vocational training.

31. Communications at CLC are satisfactory. Most staff come to the centre regularly throughout the week, although their main role is assessment in the workplace. There are good informal communications between staff and a high level of commitment to the company. New staff have a thorough induction, and the six-monthly appraisal process is effective in maintaining staff morale and identifying their development needs. A regular cycle of meetings is the main means of keeping staff informed. However, apart from the monthly directors' meetings, records of the agenda items discussed and actions to be taken are not sufficiently clear and detailed.

32. The company's management of additional literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Until recently, an appropriately qualified member of staff provided specialist support for learners with identified additional learning needs. CLC has transferred this responsibility to other members of staff. They are not currently appropriately qualified, but will receive training in the near future. There are 13 learners with identified additional learning support needs, and these are being supported by their assessors and by the newly appointed staff. The learners are making appropriate progress.

33. The management of resources is satisfactory. CoVE funding has enabled CLC to provide good facilities and equipment for learning. For example, there are good resources for first-aid and manual-handling courses, and up-to-date computer equipment with access to the internet is available to learners who attend the centre. However, few learners attend the centre and these facilities are under-used. CLC provides appropriate textbooks and additional materials.

34. The use of management information has recently improved. Since September 2005, CLC has introduced the analysis of data relating to each intake of learners to monitor their progress. This is proving more effective than the use of data collected for LSC-monitoring purposes. Regular data updates on recruitment, retention and achievement are proving effective in monitoring progress towards the targets of the self-financed project. This data includes analysis of targets relating to ethnicity, gender and learners with additional learning needs. Data trends are routinely discussed at the monthly directors' meetings.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

35. CLC has a wide range of policies and procedures relating to equality of opportunity written for staff. A children and young persons' policy has recently been added to the range. Although the company updates the policies annually, it does not evaluate them critically to check that they are fit for the purpose. For example, CLC has a disability statement, but it is not clear who the target audience is or what purpose the statement fulfils. There are no policies and procedures that have been specifically written for learners. The learners' handbook, which is given out at induction, mentions equal opportunities and complaints policies but these are not made available to the learners. The document does not include reference to bullying and harassment and how to deal with these issues. However, the appeals procedure relating to assessment is included in the handbook. Learners gain an appropriate understanding of equality of opportunities issues through the NVQ and technical certificate. At induction, learners receive a leaflet on equal opportunities, which an external organisation produces, and this is not discussed at the time. However, equal opportunities issues are discussed during the first progress review eight weeks into the course. In subsequent progress reviews, CLC checks the learners' understanding through the use of questions and scenarios. Overall, learners gain a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities issues in general and of their own rights

and responsibilities.

36. CLC's staff support the learners well. The company identifies and deals with their individual needs through initial assessment, progress reviews and regular visits by their assessors. Initial assessment identifies learners with additional learning needs and CLC provides individual support to support their learning. The company lends learners laptop computers to help them to complete their portfolios. CLC's premises are accessible to people with restricted mobility, although the first floor is only accessed by a stair lift. CLC is planning to move office accommodation upstairs and increase the availability of training rooms on the ground floor.

37. All staff attend training on equality of opportunity. Appraisal records include the training events that have been attended and staff requests for future training on issues relating to equal opportunities. Over the past year, most staff have attended a relevant training event. The manager responsible for equality of opportunity recently updated staff on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 at a workshop following a general staff meeting. CLC does not monitor the effectiveness of the training received or routinely check staff understanding of equal opportunities issues at appraisal meetings.

38. CLC participates in a variety of promotional activities, for example, roadshows and visits to schools, but these events do not specifically target potential learners from under-represented groups. CLC tries to recruit from under-represented groups through improving its publicity materials, but it has not thought through this approach fully. For example, all the images of learners on some of CLC's publicity materials are of learners from minority ethnic groups, but this does not reflect the ethnic mix of the local community. CLC is participating in a local ambassador scheme, whereby some of the learners act as care ambassadors at promotional events. This is the second year of the scheme and three of its learners are care ambassadors, one of whom is a male learner. It is too early to identify whether this will have any effect on the recruitment of male learners. Most learners are employed and are referred to CLC by their employers. CLC has not developed sufficient links with employers to influence their recruitment practices in such a way as to target under-represented groups. Although the company monitors whether employers have equal opportunities policies and procedures, it does not monitor their implementation.

39. CLC has targets for increased recruitment from some under-represented groups, specifically men, and learners with a disability. Apart from improvements in publicity materials, which do not at present include examples of learners with a disability, there are no identified strategies for achieving these targets. The monthly directors' meetings include discussion of data regarding recruitment and achievement trends by gender, ethnicity and disability. However, CLC does not analyse data sufficiently to lead to action plans to deal with issues of under-representation. It has not systematically acted upon the other factors that affect the learners' recruitment and progress, such as transport difficulties.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

40. CLC is committed to improving the quality of its training provision and has used consultants to help to identify areas for improvement. Staff are highly motivated, but many of them are relatively new to training and are not fully aware of good practice in implementing training programmes. CLC has introduced some recent initiatives, which are beginning to have a positive effect. For example, it introduced improved individual learning

plans in August. These include individually planned completion dates for each component of the programme. CLC rewrote all individual learning plans of current learners, not just new learners, to include realistic target dates. Learners are aware of the target dates for each unit and work with their assessors to meet them. This is already having an effect on the learners' rate of progress and most of them are making appropriate progress linked to their planned target dates. Since September 2005, at monthly progress review meetings, CLC has routinely collected, analysed and discussed data on learners' progress. The company now monitors the progress of each learner and is able to identify those who are at risk of making slow progress and takes appropriate action. Originally, CLC introduced this initiative to deal with the problem of late completion and it now uses it to ensure that the progress of all learners is appropriately monitored throughout their programme. However, not all recent initiatives have been fully successful. An initiative that has been operating for over a year was aimed at improving the effectiveness of progress reviews. All progress reviews are carried out by one person, who is not linked with the learning programmes. This approach was introduced to ensure that progress reviews are objective. However, the process does not fulfil the purpose of reviewing learners' progress effectively by setting clear and specific targets. Currently, progress reviews are effective for other purposes, for example checking the learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and personal issues affecting progress. CLC did not identify the inadequacy of the target-setting process before the inspection.

41. CLC has produced four self-assessment reports. The company's most recent report was produced in March 2005 and revised in October 2005. Staff were involved in the self-assessment process in March, but the company did not consult them in the revision process. Both the self-assessment report and development plan altered significantly, and the strengths and weaknesses were changed. The current self-assessment report includes some of the strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors identified. However, the report is not sufficiently self-critical. It overstates the strengths, many of which are normal practice, and identifies few weaknesses. The development plan does not fully identify appropriate actions and it is not sufficiently detailed.

42. Assessment and internal verification processes are satisfactory. CLC has an effective sampling plan and internal verification arrangements that comply with awarding body requirements. The company holds regular meetings for assessors, and these include work-based assessors. It also holds regular standardisation meetings, which are effective in sharing practice, exploring issues of concern and improving assessment practice.

43. CLC has well-established quality assurance arrangements. However, it has not collated a set of current policies and procedures. The company updates its policies and procedures, but it does not check them for consistency. For example, some documents refer to monitor reviews whereas others refer to progress reviews, and some documents state that these occur every eight weeks, while others state 10 weeks. CLC has not carried out a critical evaluation of the policies and procedures in order to rationalise the processes and ensure that they are fit for their purpose. A number of documents fulfil overlapping functions.

44. Quality assurance arrangements include an extensive audit process. However, audit reports are descriptive and do not identify the effectiveness of the policies and procedures. For example, the company gains learners' and employers' feedback through regular questionnaires at key points of the programme. The audit process identified that response

rates are low, but it did not identify the shortcomings of this method of gaining feedback. CLC attempts to improve response rates, but the company has not explored alternative methods of gaining feedback.

45. CLC's recording and monitoring procedures are inadequate. Paperwork is not completed consistently. For example, assessment records vary in detail and in recording specific time-bound actions. Minutes of meetings are descriptive and do not adequately record who is taking actions and by when. Records of additional support provided have not been maintained and information about the progress of individuals with identified additional support needs is not shared with the assessors or progress reviewer. The company does not keep records of the training given to individual learners during visits to the workplace. It does not monitor some key aspects of provision. Observation of teaching and learning is restricted to formal group sessions. There is no monitoring of the quality of on-the-job training or of training provided by CLC's staff during visits to the workplace. CLC does not monitor whether employers comply with the responsibilities they accept as part of the employer agreement. These include making available sufficient time, resources and support for learners training and assessment, nominating a key worker to support the learner, and allowing learners to attend one study day a week at CLC for the literacy, numeracy, language and key skills and technical certificate elements of the programme.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Social care		3
Apprenticeships for young people	109	3
Other government-funded provision	98	3

46. There are 207 learners on social care programmes. Of these, 109 are on work-based learning programmes for young people, 70 are apprentices, 35 are advanced apprentices, and four are working towards NVQs only. In other government-funded provision, there are 56 learners working towards NVQs at level 2, and 13 working towards the registered managers' award or the NVQ at level 4 as part of a co-financed project funded through the LSC and the ESF. In addition, 29 learners are enrolled on a co-financed project where CLC is the subcontractor, and are working towards the completion of two NVQ units. All learners are employed in residential care for the elderly or for people with learning difficulties, or as carers who visit clients in their own home. Staff from CLC and some work-based assessors carry out assessment. Learners attend CLC for additional mandatory training courses and some attend to work on their portfolios with their assessors. Most training is carried out at the workplace by employers or CLC's assessors.

Social care

Grade 3

Strengths

- high level of support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate target-setting in learners' progress reviews
- unclear arrangements for teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

47. Learners demonstrate good skills in the workplace and gain increased confidence in working with clients. Learners' portfolios of evidence are well organised and show a good understanding of the background knowledge components of the programmes.

48. Achievement rates are satisfactory. On the advanced apprenticeship programme, 46 per cent achieved their framework in 2001-02. In 2002-03, only 25 per cent achieved the complete programme, but a further 35 per cent completed their NVQ. In that year, the technical certificate component of the programme was late in its availability from the awarding body. Of the learners recruited in 2003-04, 33 per cent have achieved the framework and nine learners are still in learning. Five of these learners will complete the framework in December 2005. Achievements of the apprenticeship framework have been satisfactory to date. Of those learners who started in 2003-04, 39 per cent have completed the framework and another 23 per cent are still in learning. Of those who started in 2004-05, 5 per cent have successfully completed their qualification and 79 per cent are still

in learning.

49. Current learners are making satisfactory progress. Some learners are ahead of their targets. Most learners are working to achieve the target dates for each unit of their programmes as recorded on their individual learning plan. Where learners fall behind, a recently introduced monitoring process identifies appropriate additional action.

50. Several apprentices have progressed from level 2 to level 3 programmes and into senior positions at work. A number of learners have also progressed into nurse training.

51. The first intake of learners on the co-financed project have not yet reached the end date of the programme. However, of the 85 learners who started the NVQ at level 2, 18 have completed the qualification and a further 56 are still in learning. Of the 26 learners who started the NVQ at level 4, 12 have completed the qualification and 13 are still in learning.

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	9		22		22		20	100	15	100	5	100				
Retained*	0		3		13		7	35	8	53	3	60				
Successfully completed	0		2		8		5	25	7	47	3	60				
Still in learning	8		18		9		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		57		62	100	33	100	25	100	10	100				
Retained*	0		22		42	68	20	61	12	48	7	70				
Successfully completed	0		3		24	39	14	42	10	40	4	40				
Still in learning	10		45		14	23	1	3	0	0	0	0				

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		23	100	15	100										
Retained*	1		14	61	12	80										
Successfully completed	1		9	39	11	73										
Still in learning	1		3	13	0	0										

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

The quality of provision

52. Learners receive a high level of support both from CLC and from most of their employers. CLC's staff visit the workplace regularly to provide assessment and monitor the learners' progress. Visits are arranged to suit the individual needs of the learners and may take place at any time of the day or at weekends. If requested, staff also visit the learners' homes. Visits are usually at two-weekly intervals. Assessors visit as often as twice a week to help learners who are struggling for any reason or to help those who are well motivated and wish to progress more quickly. Support from CLC's staff includes helping learners with employment issues and personal problems, such as housing or relationships. For example, where problems of bullying at work are reported, assessors have resolved the problem with the employer. Assessors or other staff provide learners with transport to and from the centre so that they can attend for portfolio work or tests. The company lends the learners a laptop computer if they have difficulty in writing their assignments. Learners who are identified as having additional support needs receive individual support from their assessor. For example, learners who do not have English as their first language receive support in developing their language skills. There is good communication between CLC's staff and employers. Employers feel that CLC keeps them informed of the learners' progress and are generally keen to support learners in achieving their targets. Many of them offer a range of learning opportunities relevant to the learners' work roles, which helps them to cover the NVQ requirements. This is particularly the case where managers and staff are recruited onto the co-financed provision and thereby have an up-to-date understanding of NVQ requirements.

53. All learners have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and CLC uses the results to provide appropriate individual support. Currently, the staff employed to provide additional learning support do not have specialist qualifications in literacy, numeracy or language support. However, all learners are making satisfactory progress and are on target to complete their qualifications.

54. Assessment is satisfactory. Learners produce clear and well-presented portfolios for each component of the apprenticeship framework. The technical certificate is integrated with the units of the NVQ. Learners use a range of relevant evidence. Observation of the learners in their workplace is well documented and supplemented with discussion to check their background knowledge. Where learners are not confident about providing written evidence through assignments or answers to questions, assessors will carry out oral assessment and record the results. Evidence is cross-referenced between relevant units of the NVQ and is clearly referenced to the national occupational standards.

55. CLC has a satisfactory range of programmes that meets the needs of learners, employers and the care sector. The company is the lead provider in a co-financed project funded by the LSC and the ESF for learners over the age of 25 to achieve NVQs at levels 2 and 4. A separate co-financed project recruits mature learners who are unsure of their ability to complete an NVQ qualification. It enables learners to carry out two units of the NVQ together with appropriate short courses. It is linked to an agreement with the local authority to provide further funding for those learners who wish to complete the full NVQ. A range of certificated short courses is offered, for example manual handling and first aid.

56. Target-setting at learners' progress reviews is inadequate. Progress reviews take place every eight weeks. Staff who are not occupationally competent carry out progress reviews. CLC chose this model to ensure that learners have an opportunity to raise any problems and seek support from someone who is not connected to their assessment. However, the arrangement means that there is insufficient expertise to monitor progress and set appropriate targets. The targets set at progress reviews are not always clear, measurable and achievable. They are not clearly linked to the targets recorded in the individual learning plans. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities and health and safety are appropriately reinforced during progress reviews. CLC encourages employers to attend progress reviews, and appointments for reviews are mutually agreed with employers and learners.

57. Arrangements for teaching and learning are unclear. A recent decision was made to stop workshop sessions for the NVQ, technical certificates and key skills at CLC because of poor attendance. Employers are expected to provide on-the-job training to cover the requirements of the NVQ. CLC does not monitor the training that employers provide or formally identify any gaps in the learners' knowledge and understanding. The identification of training needs takes place as part of the assessment process. CLC provides an appropriate textbook and assessors recommend additional sources of information. A workbook for each unit of the technical certificate is also available. Although assessors provide individual support to learners, they do not see this as training. The boundaries between assessment and training are not clear. Assessors do not record teaching and learning activities and do not set specific targets for learning. Learners can arrange to attend CLC at a time when their assessor is available. However, CLC does not monitor whether this arrangement meets the learners' needs.

Leadership and management

58. Internal verification is satisfactory. There is a clear strategy and sampling plan. Records are complete and comply with awarding body requirements. Internal verifiers meet regularly to standardise practice and also meet with assessors either individually or as a group. They provide the assessors with clear feedback. Assessors are observed working with their learners and written feedback is kept with their professional development records. There are regular assessor updates and standardisation meetings.

59. Most learners have an appropriate understanding of equality of opportunity. This is largely gained through the technical certificate and relevant NVQ units. CLC checks the learners' understanding effectively and reinforces it at their progress reviews.

60. The company's most recent self-assessment report identifies several strengths that the inspectors regard as standard practice. It does not identify one of the weaknesses that the inspectors identified. The report is broadly accurate but insufficiently self-critical.

