

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Canto Limited**

**05 May 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
- **learn**direct 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

## Canto Limited

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for Canto Limited	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
Key Findings	3
What learners like about Canto Limited	6
What learners think Canto Limited could improve	6

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	7
Equality of opportunity	8
Quality improvement	8
Preparation for life and work	10

# INSPECTION REPORT

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Canto Limited (Canto) is a not-for-profit limited company based in Northampton, founded in November 1992 to provide an employment action programme for the local chamber of commerce. Canto provides training for learners aged 16 to 24 years with moderate to severe learning difficulties or other severe disadvantages. The training centre has facilities to support 50 learners and comprises two workshops, six teaching rooms and administration offices. Most learners are referred by Connexions and come from Northampton and the surrounding area. The training is funded by the Northamptonshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and is provided in partnership with a local college.
2. Learners have a very wide range of learning needs, difficulties and disabilities. Some are disengaged from learning. Programmes seek to improve learners' quality of life through a programme of activity aimed at improving their life skills, increasing social integration, and supporting personal development and career progression.
3. Canto is managed by a project director and a senior manager. They are supported by a personnel director and four programme managers. There is a skills for life co-ordinator, and eight full-time and two part-time tutors. Skills for life is the government's strategy for training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Volunteers are occasionally used to support the company's work with learners. Three part-time volunteers were working at the company during the inspection.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** More specifically, Canto's leadership and management and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are satisfactory. Provision is satisfactory in preparation for life and work.
5. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is well established. Managers produce several drafts of the self-assessment report to ensure that staff have an opportunity to respond to issues. However, teaching staff are not sufficiently consulted about the report's judgements. Monitoring of the company's action plan is good. Strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report are monitored and appropriate targets are followed up. Timescales and responsibilities are clearly identified. The self-assessment report identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors but overall it is insufficiently critical. Several areas identified as strengths are overstated. Weaknesses in the area of learning are not identified.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The company has clear and well-considered priorities for how it can maintain and improve the quality of the provision through a period of growth. It has successfully tackled some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report of 2003. However, inspectors found new weaknesses and gave a lower grade for the area of learning than at the previous

inspection.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR CANTO LIMITED:

- develop an effective curriculum management structure
- implement an effective procedure for quality improvement
- promote the development of learners' work skills
- effectively monitor and promote equality of opportunity

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b><i>Independent living and leisure skills</i></b>		<b>3</b>	
Other government-funded provision	12	3	
Entry to Employment	8	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. One area of learning, preparation for life and work, was reported on and graded. All provision was inspected in the same week.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	8
Number of staff interviewed	17
Number of employers interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits	1

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

8. **Learners' achievement of personal skills is good.** Learning targets are challenging and carefully tied in with each learner's personal goals and aspirations. They are shared and agreed with learners. Progress is monitored and recorded at the end of the target period. Learners achieve milestone targets related to improved confidence, self-esteem, behaviour and attitudes. Learners who use inappropriate language are challenged by tutors, who sensitively encourage them to develop alternatives. All learners are required to clock in and out of the centre. This helps them to develop time management skills.

9. **Progression rates from the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme are poor.** Few learners progress into further education, employment or training. The proportion of learners who progressed in 2003-04 and 2004-05 was 29 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. Of the 20 learners who started the programme in 2005-06, only one has progressed. However, eight are still in learning.

10. **Learners' work skills are not sufficiently developed to support their progression into employment.** Work skills are not integrated with learners' programmes. At the time of inspection, only three learners were in placements. Work skills are not sufficiently planned at progress reviews or included in individual learning plans.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Preparation for life and work	0	3	2	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

11. **Canto uses good teaching strategies to meet learners' individual needs.** Tutors use a wide range of strategies to plan learning, motivate individuals and engage them in a range of learning activities. In the better sessions, learning is individually planned and resources are carefully selected to support individual needs. For example, an electronic whiteboard was used particularly effectively in literacy and numeracy sessions, to engage learners actively in the learning process. In a literacy session, learners used a 'word wall' to develop their vocabulary and ability to construct simple sentences.

12. **Programmes are designed well to meet the needs and interests of learners.** Programme content is targeted at helping learners to develop a range of skills to enable them to live independently. The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the needs of learners with a very wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff provide a safe and welcoming environment for vulnerable learners. Learners comment favourably on the benefits they receive from taking part in project work.

13. **Staff and learners hold weekly events to celebrate success by announcing achievements and presenting certificates.** The achievements of learners who complete milestone targets or who make a significant contribution to the programme are publicly celebrated.

14. Assessment practice is generally satisfactory. Most work is marked promptly with feedback which tells learners how they can improve.

### **Leadership and management**

15. **The project director and the company's management team provide clear strategic direction.** Staff are personally committed to the company's mission to provide opportunities for the most disadvantaged learners to gain personal and work skills and to achieve their potential. The vision and purpose of the organisation are understood well by all staff. The organisation is well respected in the community it serves.

16. **Internal communications are good.** The company has effective staff meetings, which are held every week and involve all employees. The meetings have a formal agenda, the minutes are well recorded and circulated to all staff, and actions are detailed and followed up effectively. Informal communication is strong, and staff demonstrate a good team spirit.

17. **Canto has developed good partnerships to promote its work with disadvantaged people.** The project director chairs a training development partnership consisting of a wide range of small to medium-sized local training providers. Canto is actively involved in a national initiative to develop a learning programme for learners for whom E2E is not appropriate.

18. The management of learning support is satisfactory. Learners receive a comprehensive initial assessment during the first five weeks of the programme. An individual action plan with appropriate targets is produced and shared with learners and tutors. Monitoring of literacy and numeracy targets is thorough.

19. **Curriculum management is insufficient.** Some tutors feel unsupported. Tutors do not receive sufficient guidance about how to improve their teaching. Good practice is not shared. Tutors seek advice and guidance from each other. Lesson plans, schemes of work and course files are not standardised.

20. **Arrangements for quality assurance are weak.** Tutors are regularly observed by the project director. However, grading of sessions is too generous. Observers do not make sufficient comment about whether learning is taking place. There are no action plans for staff arising from the observation.

21. **Canto does not sufficiently monitor and promote equality of opportunity.** The company collects data on learners' characteristics but it does not analyse this information to set meaningful recruitment targets. Canto does not actively promote its programmes to encourage recruitment from a wider range of groups.



## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- clear strategic direction
- good internal communications
- good partnerships

### **Weaknesses**

- weak arrangements for quality assurance
- insufficient monitoring and promotion of equality of opportunity

## **Preparation for life and work**

### ***Independent living and leisure skills***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of learners' personal skills
- good teaching strategies to meet learners' individual needs
- well-designed programmes to meet learners' needs and interests
- good celebration of learners' achievements

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor progressions rates for E2E learners
- insufficient development of work skills
- insufficient curriculum management

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CANTO LIMITED:**

- the sense of humour of tutors
- being treated as adults
- being successful
- the practical aspects of learning, such as the community awareness project
- the opportunities to progress to other things

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK CANTO LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- access to more computers at Rushden
- access to the internet

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

#### Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- good internal communications
- good partnerships

#### Weaknesses

- weak arrangements for quality assurance
- insufficient monitoring and promotion of equality of opportunity

22. The project director and the company's management team provide clear strategic direction. Staff are personally committed to the company's mission to provide opportunities for the most disadvantaged learners to gain personal and work skills and to achieve their potential. The vision and purpose of the organisation are well understood by all staff. The organisation is well respected in the community it serves. The local social services and Jobcentre Plus value Canto's commitment to support learners for whom there is little other local provision. The project director was recently awarded a national honour in recognition of the company's services to disadvantaged people. Five staff members, including a programme manager, are former learners. They have a good understanding of the needs and aspirations of learners from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds. Staff provide a positive role model for learners.

23. Internal communications are good. The company has effective staff meetings, which are held every week and involve all employees. The meetings have a formal agenda, the minutes are well recorded and circulated to all staff, and actions are detailed and followed up effectively. Informal communication is strong, and staff demonstrate a good team spirit. Staff and learners hold weekly events to celebrate success by announcing achievements and presenting certificates. Learners enjoy and value these meetings. Learners are represented on a well-established committee, which discusses housekeeping and maintenance as well as training and related issues. The committee's recommendations are acted on and followed up at the next meeting.

24. Canto has developed good partnerships to promote its work with disadvantaged people. The project director chairs a training development partnership consisting of a wide range of small to medium-sized local training providers. The project director and a programme manager represent Canto on a committee run by the local Connexions service to promote learning opportunities for those not in education, employment or training. Canto is actively involved in a national initiative to develop a learning programme for learners for whom E2E is not appropriate.

25. Staff training and development are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Most hold a recognised teaching qualification or are working towards one. Staff have attended recent training in autism awareness, working safely, dyslexia awareness and health and safety. Four staff have a counselling qualification, which they use effectively

to support learners. Attendance at training and development events is satisfactory. Appraisals are closely tied in with the company's business plan and learners' needs. Induction for new staff is thorough and covers the company's ethos, health and safety and equality of opportunity. New staff are supported well.

26. The company produces accurate and reliable data on learners' rates of retention and achievement. Managers have produced an effective and useful system for recording and recognising learners' progress and achievement. They make appropriate use of this information to set targets and monitor performance.

27. The management of learning support is satisfactory. Learners receive a comprehensive initial assessment during the first five weeks of the programme. An individual action plan with appropriate targets is produced and shared with learners and tutors. Monitoring of literacy and numeracy targets is thorough. Those learners who need specific additional support receive help from Canto's skills for life co-ordinator.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

28. Canto has established equal opportunities policies and procedures which cover discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation. The company has responded appropriately to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. The company's premises are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. There is a satisfactory complaints procedure which is written in an accessible way for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Learners receive appropriate information about equality and diversity during induction. They have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

29. Canto does not sufficiently monitor and promote equality of opportunity. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report and in the previous inspection report. The company collects data on learners' characteristics but it does not analyse this information to set meaningful recruitment targets. Most learners are referred to Canto from Connexions or local schools. Canto does not actively promote its programmes to encourage recruitment from a wider range of groups. Staff receive appropriate information about equality and diversity during induction, but there is insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity for existing staff.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

30. Canto has a quality assurance policy which covers most aspects of the learners' experience. The policy has not been reviewed or updated since 2002. Learners' feedback is regularly sought and appropriate actions are taken to resolve issues. A meeting for staff and learners is held every two months, during which learners can raise concerns and ask questions about their programme. These meetings are well recorded and subsequently actioned.

31. The self-assessment process is well established and generally led by managers. Managers produce several drafts of the self-assessment report to ensure that staff have an opportunity to respond to issues. However, teaching staff are generally not sufficiently consulted about the judgements in the report. Monitoring of the company's action plan is good. Strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report are monitored and appropriate targets followed up. Timescales and responsibilities are clearly identified. The

self-assessment report identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors but overall it is insufficiently critical. Several areas identified as strengths are overstated. Weaknesses in the area of learning are not identified.

32. Arrangements for quality assurance are weak. The company has an established procedure for the observation of teaching and learning. Tutors are regularly observed by the project director. However, grading of sessions is too generous. Observers do not make sufficient comment about whether learning is taking place. There are no action plans for staff arising from the observation. Only three observations have been carried out in the three months before the inspection. There are no standard procedures or paperwork for tutors to produce lesson plans or schemes of work. Good practice in teaching and learning is not effectively shared to benefit learners.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Preparation for life and work

### Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Independent living and leisure skills</i></b>		<b>3</b>
Other government-funded provision	12	3
Entry to Employment	8	3

33. Canto provides preparation for life and work programmes at centres in Northampton and Rushden. Courses are designed to develop life skills, increase social integration, support personal development and enable career progression. Programmes are not externally accredited. E2E programmes have been offered since 2003. A 'pre-E2E' programme was introduced in 2005 to meet the needs of learners for whom E2E was not appropriate.

34. Canto has 20 learners, of whom 14 are men. Eight learners are following the E2E programme and 12 are on the pre-E2E programme. Most learners are white British. Learners have a wide range of individual needs which are difficult to meet in traditional settings owing to the degree and nature of support required. The range of learners' disabilities includes sensory impairments, mental health needs, challenging behaviour, autism and medium to severe learning difficulties. Many learners also have additional personal and social needs.

35. Learners attend programmes for between 28 and 35 hours a week. Learning is delivered in 45-minute sessions in class sizes of five or six. Learners who make appropriate progress at entry level may move into further education to progress on to literacy and numeracy qualifications. The provision is managed by the project director. He is assisted by a senior manager and four programme managers. There are 10 tutors. A skills for life co-ordinator manages the literacy and numeracy provision.

### ***Independent living and leisure skills***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of learners' personal skills
- good teaching strategies to meet learners' individual needs
- well-designed programmes to meet learners' needs and interests
- good celebration of learners' achievements

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor progressions rates for E2E learners
- insufficient development of work skills
- insufficient curriculum management

## Achievement and standards

36. Learners' achievement of personal skills is good. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report. Learning targets are challenging and carefully tied in with each learner's personal goals and aspirations. They are shared and agreed with learners. Progress is monitored and recorded at the end of the target period. Learners achieve milestone targets related to improved confidence, self-esteem, behaviour and attitudes. Learners who use inappropriate language are challenged by tutors, who sensitively encourage them to develop alternatives. All learners are required to clock in and out of the centre. This helps them to develop time management skills. Learners who need to achieve punctuality targets have their timetable signed at each session by their tutor to record attendance and punctuality. Volunteer staff work effectively to provide encouragement for the learner and support for the tutor. Staff have developed an effective procedure for recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning.

37. Progression rates from the E2E programme are poor. Few learners progress into further education, employment or training. The proportions of learners who progressed in 2003-04 and 2004-05 were 29 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. Of the 20 learners who started the programme in 2005-06, only one has progressed. However, eight are still in learning.

38. Learners' work skills are not sufficiently developed to support their progression into employment. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. Work skills are not integrated with learners' programmes. At the time of inspection, only three learners were in placements. Work skills are not sufficiently planned at reviews or included in individual learning plans. The company has recently formed a partnership with a training consortium to promote opportunities for work placements but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this partnership.

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	20		8	100	21	100										
Progression <sup>1</sup>	1		2	25	6	29										
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	1		1	12	8	38										
Still in learning	8		0	0	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

39. Good teaching strategies are used to meet learners' individual needs. Tutors use a wide range of strategies to plan learning, motivate individuals and engage them in a range of learning activities. In the better sessions, learning is individually planned and resources are carefully selected to support individual needs. For example, an electronic whiteboard

was used particularly effectively in literacy and numeracy sessions to actively engage learners in the learning process. In a literacy session, learners used a 'word wall' to develop their vocabulary and ability to construct simple sentences. In a numeracy session, learners enjoyed working with fractions. The tutor invited them to cut up a range of shapes into segments. The tutor then produced a plate of sandwiches which learners were asked to cut into halves, quarters and eighths. Learners gained a basic understanding of fractions and also developed their motor skills. Differentiation strategies are effectively used to challenge learners. In one session, learners were invited to select a film they would like to watch based on a number of film reviews. They successfully used resources to distinguish between fact and opinion in judging the merits of different films. In other sessions, tutors made use of appropriate script types and font sizes to support comfortable reading conditions for developing readers.

40. Programmes are designed well to meet the needs and interests of learners. Programme content is targeted at helping learners to develop a range of skills to enable them to live independently. The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the needs of learners with a very wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff provide a safe and welcoming environment for vulnerable learners. Learners comment favourably on the benefits they receive from taking part in project work. For example, some learners saw a community awareness project as a positive way of helping them to attend activities or to access services they previously found difficult to use. Equality and diversity are effectively covered in a 'cultures and lifestyle' project.

41. Staff and learners hold weekly events to celebrate success by announcing achievements and presenting certificates. The achievements of learners who complete milestone targets or who make a significant contribution to the programme are publicly celebrated. Learners enjoy and value these meetings, which the company also uses to reinforce health and safety, behaviour and other issues. Meetings are chaired by the project director and attended by all staff and learners.

42. Assessment practice is generally satisfactory. Most work is marked promptly with feedback which tells learners how they can improve. However, some project work is poorly marked with little helpful feedback for learners. Learners do not receive sufficient guidance about how they can make improvements.

43. There is a thorough and effective initial assessment process to ensure that learners are on the right course. Initial assessment takes place over the first five weeks of the learners' programme. Support arrangements for those who need extra help are carefully explained. Staff complete daily progress sheets on learners and monthly and quarterly reviews are effectively used to report on progress and to amend targets where necessary.

### **Leadership and management**

44. Quality improvement arrangements are generally effective. Canto regularly seeks the views of learners through a learners' committee which meets every two months to discuss issues of concern and areas of improvement. These may relate to learners' behaviour, transport arrangements or facilities. These sessions are attended by the senior manager. The self-assessment process is led by managers. The involvement of teaching staff in this process is minimal. Staff are invited to make comments on the self-assessment report after a draft has been produced and circulated by managers. Staff are not sufficiently involved in decisions about the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision.



45. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Inappropriate words or behaviour are challenged by staff. Tutors and learners show respect for each other during sessions. Learners are encouraged to treat their peers fairly and to report any incidence of bullying. There is appropriate reinforcement of equality and diversity during induction and in learning sessions. Staff have not received recent training in equality of opportunity.

46. Curriculum management is insufficient. The programme is managed by the project director. However, he has many other responsibilities. Some tutors feel unsupported. Tutors do not receive sufficient guidance about how to improve their teaching. Good practice is not shared. The four programme managers do not have any staff management responsibilities. The role of the senior manager is unclear to most staff. Tutors seek advice and guidance from each other. Lesson plans, schemes of work and course files are not standardised.

47. The self-assessment process is insufficiently critical. It has correctly identified some of the strengths but has not identified the weaknesses. Inspectors gave a lower grade than that in the self-assessment report.

