

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Norfolk Training Services Limited**

**15 June 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*

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## **Norfolk Training Services Limited**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Norfolk Training Services Limited (NTS) was set up as a group training association for the transport industry in 1969. It became a limited company in 1974. The principal training premises and the administrative offices are in Norwich. There is also a small training centre in Kings Lynn. NTS contracts with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in Norfolk to provide work-based learning for 229 young people in engineering and manufacturing technologies, business administration and law, preparation for life and work, construction, and retailing. Employed learners and those on work placements receive on-the-job training at their employers' premises throughout Norfolk. In addition, vocational training is provided to 207 school pupils, of whom 123 are training in motor vehicle engineering. The company also contracts with Jobcentre Plus to provide adults with a range of employability training programmes. There are 30 learners in basic employability training (BET). The learners are trained by 37 full-time and nine part-time members of staff. NTS works with 273 employers.

2. In March 2006, the unemployment rate for Norfolk was 2.6 per cent, which is the same as the rate for England as a whole. According to the 2001 census, minority ethnic groups constitute 1.5 per cent of the population of Norfolk, compared with a national average of 9.1 per cent. The proportion of learners in the county remaining in education and work-based learning at the age of 16 is 79 per cent, which is lower than the national average of 84 per cent.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

#### Grade 2

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** NTS's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for quality improvement. Its equality of opportunity arrangements are satisfactory. Preparation for life and work is good, as is business administration and law. Engineering and manufacturing technology training is satisfactory.

4. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The managers of NTS are well aware of the company's strengths and weaknesses. The self-assessment report is too detailed for staff to work to effectively, but it is broadly accurate. The self-assessment process involves all staff and takes into account the views of employers and other external agencies. It makes good use of data, feedback from learners and observations of teaching and learning.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** NTS was judged inadequate by an ALI inspection in 2002, and its leadership and management were very weak. Since then, it has made substantial improvements and its leadership and management are now good. Staff and managers have built up a momentum for continuing improvement, which is supported by effective management arrangements.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORFOLK TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED:

- continue to raise the success rate of engineering apprentices
- improve attendance in engineering
- further develop staff's and employers' understanding of equality of opportunity
- manage the provision of additional support for apprentices more effectively

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		2

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>			<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Motor vehicle</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	115	3	

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Employability training</b>		<b>2</b>	
Work-based learning for adults	30	2	
Entry to Employment	33	2	

<b>Business administration and law</b>			<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Administration</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	22	2	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. The inspection focused on the areas of learning with the most learners. These are engineering and manufacturing technologies, business administration and law, and preparation for life and work. The training given by NTS to school pupils in motor vehicle engineering was included. Construction and retailing were not inspected. The Jobcentre Plus preparation for life and work programme inspected the BET at Norwich.

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	25
Number of learners interviewed	72
Number of staff interviewed	43
Number of employers interviewed	19
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

7. **Success rates in business administration are good.** They have improved consistently over a period of three years and are well above the national average. Sixty-two per cent of advanced apprentices achieve the full framework within the expected time.

8. **There is good progression from Entry to Employment (E2E) to work-based learning, jobs and further training.** The rate of progression has been maintained at a high level for three years and is 64 per cent in the current year. Many learners progress to apprenticeships at NTS.

9. Learners on preparation for life and work programmes demonstrate good development of work-related skills by taking part in a range of activities, in the classroom and in work placements. Learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes achieve good success rates in literacy.

10. **School pupils receiving training in motor vehicle engineering at NTS achieve a high standard.** They complete a level 1 national vocational qualification (NVQ) and learn many work-related skills and disciplines. They have a good, dedicated motor vehicle workshop and are well supported.

11. The motor vehicle engineering apprenticeship success rate has improved over the previous 12 months but remains low. Currently, only 31 per cent of leavers complete their apprenticeship. The advanced apprenticeship success rate is satisfactory.

### The quality of provision

12. **The training in business administration is good.** Training sessions are well planned and executed. **Assessment continues to be a strength**, and there have been **significant improvements** in the area of learning since the 2002 and 2003 inspections.

13. **The individual support given to learners in preparation for life and work is particularly good.** Many learners have severe obstacles to learning at the beginning of their programme. These are dealt with through an effective referral and review system.

14. Staff make **frequent visits to engineering apprentices in the workplace**. They quickly identify learners' support needs, and monitor their progress well.

15. Some motor vehicle engineering learners have a poor attendance record. Their jobs take priority over their off-the-job training. At some support sessions, attendance is not reported and there are learners who have failed to attend for several months.

16. Staff do not sufficiently monitor the progress of E2E learners. Tutors do not keep a central record of the units completed by each learner, and they spend too long in each training session checking the tasks learners have still to complete.

17. Too few learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes progress into jobs, despite employers' confidence in their training and ability.

### Leadership and management

18. **Effective action has been taken to improve success rates.** The number of staff has been substantially increased and effective management systems have been implemented to raise quality. Support arrangements for learners are generally effective.

19. NTS has a **strong sense of purpose in providing opportunities for training and employment** to people who have little or no prior attainment. Its work to promote participation by these groups and by people with disabilities has been effective.

20. Some aspects of the provision of additional support for apprentices are weak. There is insufficient communication between tutors, assessors and learning support staff. Learners are expected to miss part of the programme for the technical certificate in order to attend support sessions, and some vocational staff have little awareness of the learning support available to their learners.

21. Some staff have a poor appreciation of equality of opportunity, and in some areas of learning the topic is not promoted enough during training.

### Leadership and management

#### Strengths

- effective initiatives to improve success rates
- effective support arrangements
- good quality improvement arrangements
- effective actions to increase participation by under-represented groups



## **Weaknesses**

- some weak aspects of the provision of additional support for apprentices
- poor appreciation of equality of opportunity by some staff

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Motor vehicle***

#### *Strengths*

- high standard of achievement by school pupils
- frequent assessment and support visits
- good monitoring of progress

#### *Weaknesses*

- some poor attendance

## **Preparation for life and work**

#### *Strengths*

- good progression by E2E learners
- good pass rates in literacy on Jobcentre Plus programmes
- good development of work-related skills
- particularly good individual support

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient progression into jobs for learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes
- insufficient monitoring of E2E learners' progress

## **Business administration and law**

#### *Strengths*

- good overall success rate for apprenticeship frameworks
- good-quality training
- highly effective assessment
- significant progress since the previous inspection

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in training

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORFOLK TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED:**

- the friendly helpful staff
- the staff treating everyone with respect
- the sense of achievement
- that it is not like school
- the facility to start at any time during the year
- that there is no need for entry qualifications
- the opportunity for work placement with employers
- the good employers that NTS find for them
- the free bus service

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORFOLK TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- the amount of paperwork - there is too much of it
- the time it takes to find a work placement
- the number and age of the motor vehicles used in engineering
- the facilities at the Kings Lynn training centre

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- effective initiatives to improve success rates
- effective support arrangements
- good quality improvement arrangements
- effective actions to increase participation by under-represented groups

#### Weaknesses

- some weak aspects of the provision of additional support for apprentices
- poor appreciation of equality of opportunity by some staff

22. NTS has introduced a range of good strategies to improve success rates. Managers, tutors and assessors recognise that success rates have been poor and they now give a high priority to the close monitoring of individual learners' progress. NTS's staff successfully use assessment planning and learners' progress reviews to ensure that learners and employers maintain a good focus on progress. Managers set demanding success targets for all programmes. The achievement targets for each area of learning are closely scrutinised every month by the managing director and the managers, and action is agreed between managers, assessors and tutors to improve any slow progress by learners. If necessary, assessors arrange to visit learners more often to help them stay on target. Success rates on all programmes have improved significantly over the past two years. NTS carefully screens all employers to gauge their commitment to training and assessment, and has developed a broader range of entry level and pre-apprenticeship programmes to provide better access to vocational training at all levels.

23. NTS provides learners with a comprehensive range of personal and specialist support that encourages success and builds self-confidence and motivation. The pastoral support provided by all staff is particularly good. Support is also provided to encourage learners to take additional qualifications and skills training to enhance their employability, for example higher-level key skills and additional NVQ units. All learners undergo a systematic diagnostic assessment of their basic literacy, numeracy and key skill support needs. If it is needed, effective support is offered. The success rates for those who take up the support has improved over the past two years. There is good support to encourage Entry to Employment (E2E) learners into apprenticeship programmes, and help is available with transport to work and personal matters.

24. NTS's management of resources is satisfactory. Resources and accommodation at the training centres are adequate, with learners using up-to-date computer equipment and software, and other training and assessment resources that reflect current industry standards. Learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes have access to a good range of periodicals and textbooks. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Staff training is well managed to ensure all unqualified staff are studying for teacher training qualifications. NTS does not currently provide child protection training for the staff who work directly

with vulnerable young people and adults. Communications with employers and outside agencies are productive, and communications within the organisation are generally good.

25. There is insufficient communication between tutors, assessors and the additional learning support staff over the provision of additional learning for apprentices. Learners have to take time off from their day-release technical certificate training programme to attend support sessions, and some sessions have been poorly attended. The reporting of absence and attendance at these sessions has been poor, as has the communication of some test results to vocational tutors and assessors. Some tutors and assessors have little commitment to additional learning support, and vocational tutors are not always aware of the literacy and numeracy support available to their level 3 learners.

26. NTS does not use key learner data effectively to risk assess learners or predict their individual support needs. For example, punctuality, attendance, transfer between programmes, progression rates, levels of learner support needs, early leaver and success rates are not used well to gauge the effectiveness of support interventions, plan future support strategies or identify trends in learners' performance.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

27. NTS is successfully enabling people in Norfolk with low prior educational attainment to gain skills, qualifications and employment. That is the company's mission and it allows many young people and adults to participate in work-based learning who would not otherwise do so. Learners are recruited through Connexions and schools as well as the youth offending team, the youth remand centre and social services. Independent applications are referred to Connexions to ensure that prospective learners have access to the full range of support and independent advice.

28. NTS collects and analyses equal opportunities data well. It has data on its recruitment, retention and achievement by gender, ethnicity and disability, and compares this with county averages to identify under-represented groups and to set targets. A high proportion, 41 per cent, of young learners are assessed as needing additional support to learn and to gain social skills. Six per cent have a physical disability. The proportion of learners at NTS from minority ethnic communities is slightly higher than the proportion of the population in Norfolk as a whole. Initiatives to further increase the participation of people from minority ethnic groups have included meetings with local community groups. Other initiatives have attempted to increase the proportion of women in motor vehicle engineering and construction but these have had little success yet.

29. Equality of opportunity forms part of all learners' induction, and is promoted throughout their training. Learners' knowledge and understanding of the principles of equality of opportunity are reviewed a number of times during their training, and most are able to explain them simply but accurately. Learners who are found to have gaps in their understanding during the progress reviews are referred to the equal opportunities manager who meets with them to reinforce their previous training. The equal opportunities manager has acted to deal with learners' negative attitudes which occasionally are exhibited in abusive behaviour. She has investigated each occurrence swiftly and dealt with it effectively.

30. NTS has carried out equal opportunities training for all its staff. It checks that employers have an equal opportunities policy and that they comply with legislation. Most

staff have at least a satisfactory awareness of equal opportunities issues. Some have a very good awareness, but in a few cases, staff are not clear about when they can and should challenge an employer's poor attitude towards minority groups or women. Some teaching materials do not promote equal opportunities. The lesson observation scheme does not identify strengths and weaknesses in equality of opportunity practice.

31. Since it was last inspected, NTS has upgraded its accessibility to wheelchair users although the facilities are still not good. One toilet designed for wheelchair users is adequate, but can only be accessed by manoeuvring through four normal-width doors and negotiating turns through narrow corridors.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

32. NTS has a particularly effective quality improvement strategy that links closely to the self-assessment process and a satisfactory cycle of business planning. The quality improvement arrangements and the company's action plan are carefully and frequently monitored by the managing director, the senior management team and the quality manager.

33. NTS has a satisfactory range of policies, procedures and strategies to manage all aspects of its business. Its assessment and internal verification arrangements are effective. Assessors' judgements are monitored regularly, and assessors and verifiers meet regularly to ensure consistency.

34. Managers prepare the self-assessment report and devise action plans using accurate information on learners' progress and achievement, the analysis of feedback from learners at different stages in their training, the outcomes of detailed observations of teaching and learning, and the results of audits of the quality procedures. There is a well-established process of setting and meeting challenging targets to improve the performance of all programmes. The observation of staff is sufficiently self-critical to develop individual development plans and improve personal performance. The analysis of staff performance contributes to the staff development programme and the annual appraisal process. These arrangements have contributed to the continuous improvement in learners' success rates over the past four years.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Motor vehicle</b> Apprenticeships for young people	115	3

35. NTS has 105 apprentices, 10 advanced apprentices and 123 school pupils on motor vehicle engineering programmes. Most are training in light vehicle engineering but 25 apprentices are training in heavy vehicle engineering, 10 in motor cycle engineering and 14 in vehicle body repair. Most apprentices work in small independent garages and attend a training centre, either in Norwich or Kings Lynn, on one day each week. Some apprentices who are not employed or with a work-placement provider at the start of their programme spend an initial period full time in the training centre. The school pupils are trained one day each week in a dedicated workshop containing four cars.

#### **Motor vehicle**

##### *Strengths*

- high standard of achievement by school pupils
- frequent assessment and support visits
- good monitoring of progress

##### *Weaknesses*

- some poor attendance

#### **Achievement and standards**

36. The school pupils work hard and make good progress in light vehicle mechanics or body repair and refinishing. By the end of the two-year programme they almost all complete a level 1 NVQ. They learn to change brake pads and replace oil filters, for example. The programme is popular and pupils are selected on the basis of their interest in engineering. Most have either lost interest in academic study at school or have already become regular non-attenders. They are enthusiastic and motivated by their training. For pupils not familiar with success at school, the acquisition of practical skills and the achievement of a qualification builds their confidence significantly.

37. The apprentice's success rate has improved substantially since July 2005. The success rate in 2004-05 was low at 17 per cent and had only improved slightly from the previous year. Since July 2005, NTS's managers and staff have placed a strong emphasis on framework success rates in engineering. The success rates in 2005-06 for the full apprenticeship framework are much better, and the number of apprentices who have already completed the framework and the progress of current apprentices indicate that the success rate is approaching a satisfactory level. The number of apprentices achieving the technical certificate has risen from 15 in 2004-05 to 40 so far in 2005-06.

38. Learners achieve a good standard of engineering competence during their training. The small, privately owned garages where most apprentices and advanced apprentices work offer good opportunities for them to develop skills. All learners take part in a wide range of servicing and repairs involving all makes and models of vehicle. They are supervised by experienced and enthusiastic staff in the workplace who encourage them to learn how to perform a wide variety of tasks. Some learners are able to complete complex tasks that are well in advance of those that would be expected. Advanced apprentices supervise work and mentor new entrants to the trade.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	9	22	57	22	46
		timely	7	14	34	14	27
	2004-05	overall	6	33	57	33	45
		timely	6	33	33	33	25
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	75	16	48	13	32
		timely	84	1	22	1	13
	2004-05	overall	88	22	52	18	41
		timely	80	4	27	4	19

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### The quality of provision

39. There is good monitoring of learners' progress. Information is held centrally on the progress of each learner in each aspect of the qualification framework. Information from assessors is collated centrally and shows what percentage of the NVQ, key skills and technical certificate each learner has completed. This information is updated every month following assessors' meetings with their line managers. The system is relatively new and has been successful in identifying slow progress but not yet in preventing it.

40. Staff visit learners in the workplace to support them at least once a month and in some cases as often as once a week. This is a strength identified in the self-assessment report. NTS has deliberately increased the frequency of support visits to learners to raise success rates. Learners' progress towards the completion of the NVQ has improved and employers and learners have welcomed the additional level of contact. Learners' progress reviews are thorough and involve workplace supervisors. The review records contain detailed targets for the period until the next review. Staff quickly identify learners' support needs, and this has, in some cases, led to further background knowledge sessions being arranged. Staff plan learners' assessments in detail so that they and their employers clearly understand what is expected of them. NTS's staff have a good understanding of the work learners carry out in the garages. Communication with workplace staff is good.

41. Many learners progress into motor vehicle engineering from the preparation for life

and work programme. All are given good information, advice and guidance on a career in the industry. They receive a thorough initial assessment using diagnostic tests to assess their literacy and to identify needs for additional support. A high proportion of apprentices receives support. It is effective and, for those learners progressing from E2E, builds on the work they have done in their previous programme. The improvement in literacy skills is a major factor in the learners' progress and is well supported by employers.

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching sessions are generally well planned, with aims, objectives and a list of the resources needed. There are short breaks during background knowledge sessions, and practical demonstrations to confirm the theory. Tutors ask questions regularly and all learners actively participate in sessions. Practical training makes good use of the available resources and is particularly suited to the needs of the learners. Tutors make regular checks to ensure that each learner has completed each stage. Some lesson plans are not detailed enough. They do not give detailed timings for the session and offer little opportunity for tutors to gauge its pace. Some of the visual aids in use are adequate but are not used to best effect. In these cases, the information displayed is too detailed and contains some spelling and grammatical errors. Other practical aids are used well. For example, motor vehicle components are cut as a section to give learners an understanding of their working parts.

43. During the regular assessment visits, assessors observe learners carrying out tasks, or assess product evidence. Assessment decisions are fair and reflect the standards required. Learners' portfolios are good, and contain a large proportion of observation evidence. Much of the other evidence in portfolios is based on job cards and documents with little photographic evidence until recently.

44. Staff are appropriately qualified and all have good industry knowledge and experience. There are separate workshops for the different types of courses. One is for the sole use of school pupils. The resources at the training centres are adequate for practical and background knowledge learning sessions, although some of the teaching resources at the Kings Lynn centre are going out of date.

45. Some learners' attendance at training sessions is poor. Too often, their jobs take priority over their off-the-job training. Attendance at some learner support sessions has not been adequately reported and managed, and some learners have not attended for a number of months. NTS has collected data that shows that, on average, the non-attendance rate is around 25 per cent. Recently, some of the reasons have been identified and managers are now taking action to deal with them.

### **Leadership and management**

46. The management of the motor vehicle engineering provision at NTS has been transformed over the past year. In July 2005, the self-assessment process concluded that the engineering provision was unsatisfactory, based mainly on the poor success rates at that time. Engineering was managed separately from the other areas of learning and little benefit was gained from the good practice elsewhere in the company. A strategy of gradual change which had been followed until that time was abandoned. A new manager was appointed and several engineering staff left the company. Over the past year, there has been a substantial investment in new staff. The frequency of visits to learners in the workplace has been increased and the training for the technical certificate has considerably strengthened. Management systems for progress reviews and assessments



have been put in place. The progress of individual learners is monitored closely and staff know at a glance what percentage of each element of the framework each apprentice has achieved.

47. The closer integration of engineering with the other areas of learning has improved the sharing of good practice. Over the past year, the transfer of good practice has mainly benefited engineering, and has included the measurement of personal skills development at learners' progress reviews. The mechanisms are now in place to enable the sharing of good practice throughout the organisation.

48. Internal verification is satisfactory and takes place throughout the period of assessment. The internal verification process has recently identified that portfolios do not carry a sufficiently wide range of evidence. Effective action has been taken, and more recent assessments include photographs and process evidence in addition to the previous product evidence.

49. NTS manages engineering programmes for school pupils well, and has been doing so for four years. The company plays an important role in the success of the schools programme in Norfolk. The information, advice and guidance given to school pupils is good at the outset, and they are supported well throughout their programme.

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

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Employability training</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Work-based learning for adults	30	2
Entry to Employment	33	2

50. NTS provides training for 33 learners on E2E programmes at the training centres in Norwich and Kings Lynn. The programme includes vocational training in motor vehicle engineering, construction and administration. Learners attend the training centre for an induction, which includes an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs. During the induction their individual learning is planned. Learners follow a range of options including work experience, vocational skills training and personal and social development. The average length of stay is 22 weeks and includes work placements. Learners work towards vocational qualifications and develop the skills to progress to employment, education or training.

51. Thirty Jobcentre Plus learners are on BET for a period of up to 26 weeks. Most are in work placements for between one and four days a week. On the remaining days, they study literacy, numeracy, and work-related skills, and carry out jobsearch activities. They are offered opportunities for external qualifications in literacy and numeracy.

***Strengths***

- good progression by E2E learners
- good pass rates in literacy on Jobcentre Plus programmes
- good development of work-related skills
- particularly good individual support

***Weaknesses***

- insufficient progression into jobs for learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes
- insufficient monitoring of E2E learners' progress

**Achievement and standards**

52. The overall rate of progression from the E2E programme into employment with training, other jobs or further education is good. Sixty-six per cent of learners progressed in 2003-04 and 57 per cent in 2004-05. So far this year, the overall achievement rate is 64 per cent, with 30 per cent of learners progressing into work-based learning, 24 per cent into jobs and 10 per cent into further education. The average length of stay on E2E programmes is 22 weeks but some learners are ready to progress at 11 weeks.

53. Learners achieve well on the BET programme in adult literacy. All of those who have taken the literacy course have achieved the entry-level qualification and 83 per cent achieved level 1. There is a strong emphasis on improving learners' grammar, spelling and punctuation. The portfolios for entry-level assessment cover a wide range of interesting topics, and are colourfully illustrated with photos and articles from newspapers and the

internet. Some learners achieve numeracy qualifications and a few achieve both literacy and numeracy.

54. Learners on E2E and BET programmes develop good vocational skills by taking part in a range of activities both in the classroom and at their work placements. They receive effective support to gradually improve their behaviour, attitude and skills, so that they are acceptable to employers. Several learners have achieved additional qualifications to enhance their employability, such as in lift truck driving.

55. Too few BET learners progress into employment. Although many work-placement providers offer their learners permanent jobs, too many others say they are pleased with the competence of the learners but no job is available. Some work-placement providers continue to support their learners after the end of the BET programme, for example by sponsoring them to take NVQs.

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

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																
<b>Entry to Employment</b>	<b>2005-06</b>		<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	95	100	69	100	210	100										
Progression <sup>1</sup>	34	36	39	57	138	66										
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	35	37	28	41	99	47										
Still in learning	33	35	1	1	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

<b>Jobcentre Plus funded programmes</b>																
<b>Work-based learning for adults</b>	<b>2005-06</b>		<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	129		371	100	299	100										
Retained*	69		273	74	223	75										
Planned learning completed	37		205	55	128	43										
Gained job	14		102	27	79	26										
Still in training	30		0	100	0	0										

\*retained participants are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## The quality of provision

56. Learners on E2E and BET receive particularly good support to remove barriers to their learning, education and employment, a strength which is identified in the self-assessment report. E2E learners have a wide range of difficulties at the beginning of their programme, including homelessness, aggressive and disruptive behaviours, autism and dyspraxia. These problems are dealt with through an effective referral and review system. One learner was found to have a light-sensitivity condition affecting reading. Specialised equipment was provided and the learner's reading ability improved. Learners are often

helped with transport, and some are given a moped. NTS supplies clothing for interviews and a staff member accompanies learners to interviews. There is a highly effective team of skilled staff who have a very good understanding of the learners' problems, and are effective at building their confidence and nurturing their self-respect. Staff are approachable and create an environment in which learners can share difficulties and be helped to resolve them swiftly. The ratio of staff to learners is good. Learners are paired with an existing learner to help them to settle into the programme.

57. The progress of E2E learners is not adequately monitored. The learners' files contain a record of the units they have completed, but tutors do not have access to a central record of individual learners' progress. Tutors spend too much of each session checking the tasks each learner has yet to complete. Many targets set in learning plans are too broad. They include 'gain a placement' or 'complete level 1 literacy'.

58. The development of learners' personal and social skills is good on the BET programme. Learners develop the skills necessary for finding and applying for jobs, such as effective personal presentation, and writing curriculum vitae and application letters. When the learner is assessed as being ready for work, they are found a work placement that matches their abilities and aspirations. Learners are encouraged to identify ways to manage their poor attendance and aggressive behaviour.

### **Leadership and management**

59. Preparation for life and work programmes are co-ordinated effectively at both training centres. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities. There is a formal meeting structure, supported by much good informal communication by means of weekly meetings. Staff are appraised annually, and their training needs are identified and supported well. There is good management of work placements, with employers understanding the requirements of the E2E programme. The appropriate health and safety checks are in place. It is too soon to measure the effect of the new skills for life policy and this is recognised by senior managers. Skills for life is the governments' strategy on literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The reorganisation of the business development officers has improved the service to employers, and the number of E2E learners who gain a placement has increased. Quality audit checks are supplemented by interviews with learners. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate.

60. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Instances of bullying are dealt with immediately by staff who then take long-term action, such as organising anger management training.

**Business administration and law****Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Administration</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	22	2

61. There are 31 learners in this area of learning, of whom 22 are apprentices in administration, and there are seven apprentices and two advanced apprentices in customer services, which was not inspected. Sixty per cent of the learners are women. Learners are either employed or are in work placements organised by NTS. They are recruited through employers, through Connexions or directly. Learners are visited at their workplaces by assessors at least once a month, and progress reviews are conducted quarterly. Training takes place at work and through planned programmes at the Norwich centre, including training for the technical certificates and key skills. The provision is managed by the training manager. She is assisted by two trainers, one of whom is the company trainer, five assessors and six internal verifiers. None of these work exclusively on business administration and customer services programmes.

*Strengths*

- good overall success rate for apprenticeship frameworks
- good-quality training
- highly effective assessment
- significant progress since the previous inspection

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in training

**Achievement and standards**

62. Learners' overall success rate in achieving frameworks is good. Poor retention and achievement was a weakness at the 2002 inspection, but overall success rates have improved consistently over the past three years, from 52 per cent in 2003-04 to 67 per cent in 2005-06. They are now well above the national average. Learners are now making good progress, and their timely achievement of apprenticeship frameworks, at 62 per cent in 2005-06, is well above the national average.

63. The rate of achievement of key skills qualifications has improved in recent years. NTS has successfully tackled the issues of slow progress and lack of understanding about exemptions from key skills tests. Where appropriate, learners are encouraged to take key skills tests above the level required by their programme. Learners' achievement of additional qualifications is good, especially in information technology (IT).

64. Learners achieve satisfactory standards in their oral and written work. Their IT skills are often good, and they apply them to particularly good effect at work. They also develop significantly in confidence and in their communication skills.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	25	60	51	52	37
		timely	24	46	25	38	18
	2004-05	overall	29	59	56	59	45
		timely	27	52	35	52	28

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### The quality of provision

65. Learners benefit from good-quality training programmes. NTS and employers provide well-planned, supportive and effective training to develop learners' skills and careers. Initial advice and guidance is thoughtful and helpful. Learners' needs are accurately identified through initial assessment, and used to help develop appropriate individual learning plans and influence training styles. Learners' induction is thorough and phased to avoid providing too much information in one go. NTS's strong partnerships with employers significantly benefit learners. Employers are involved in discussions and decisions from the start. NTS has worked hard to improve the match of training programmes to jobs. A minority of employers do not have the capacity to maximise training opportunities for their learners, and cannot offer progression to level 3 programmes. NTS has been slow to find work placements for a few learners, although it has given them tasks to carry out at the training centre.

66. Off-the-job training is good. Training sessions are often well-planned and executed. The co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is good. Learners' individual programmes are carefully planned to include the elements of off-the-job training that they need. A core of activities to support work for the technical certificate and for key skills is supplemented when assessors or tutors identify other needs. For example, there have been recent courses in telephone skills. Employers increasingly support their learners to take additional work-related qualifications.

67. Assessment is good. It was identified as a strength at the previous inspection and is at the centre of NTS's arrangements to manage learning, support learners and promote their progress. Assessment is carefully planned, well in advance. There are detailed records, and excellent written and verbal feedback is provided to learners. Assessment strategies make good use of observations to fully involve employers, and learners are set clear targets. Internal verification is thorough and consistent.

68. Resources to support training and learning are satisfactory. Tutors and assessors are suitably qualified and experienced. They have a good understanding of the business context in which learners work. Staff development focuses clearly on improving teaching skills, and is led by the company tutor. Learners have adequate access to IT at the training centre, and training accommodation is suitable. The training rooms are not accessible to learners with significant mobility problems.

69. Equality and diversity are not promoted sufficiently during training. Learners are clear about NTS's commitment to equality and diversity, but there are too few opportunities for them to explore key aspects, especially in their on-the-job training. Tutors use some helpful questionnaires at review visits, which test and reinforce learners' knowledge of equality and diversity, but these do not form part of an overall programme to develop learners' understanding.

### **Leadership and management**

70. The area of learning has made significant progress since it was inspected in 2002. The two major areas of weakness identified have been dealt with successfully. Learners' achievements and the pace of their progress are now good. The quality of training has improved and the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is now good.

71. Managers and staff work closely together, as a team, to promote quality. NTS's scheme for the observation of training has helped to identify areas for improvement and has influenced the shape of staff development. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. However, its structure, which encourages repetition, and its writing style do not aid understanding or judgement. Staff have been insufficiently involved in the development of the report, although they are very clear about the actions identified for improvement.

72. NTS's commitment to securing equality and diversity is clearly understood by the staff, as are its key policies and procedures. Learners are introduced to these and to central equality themes at induction. There is satisfactory analysis of data of learners' ethnicity and gender.

