

INSPECTION REPORT

Derwent Training Association

01 September 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Derwent Training Association (DTA) was founded in 1988 to promote and extend training opportunities in engineering. It is a registered charity and a not-for-profit company. Its training centre is based in Malton, North Yorkshire. DTA is the lead partner for a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in advanced engineering and manufacturing, with Yorkshire Coast College.
2. Eighty-seven per cent of DTA's work is publicly funded through North Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). All its publicly funded learners are advanced apprentices. Sixty learners are following engineering and manufacturing technologies programmes. A further five are following emergency fire service operations programmes, one is following a construction, planning and the built environment programme and one is following an arts, media and publishing programme. DTA subcontracts all the training and assessment for health, public services and care to North Yorkshire Fire Service (NYFS). DTA quality assures NYFS's provision. All learners are employed.
3. DTA is managed by a board of trustees who are representatives of engineering companies, most of which have employees who are following programmes with DTA. The company has two senior full-time managers, one responsible for training and the operational management of the organisation, and the other for preparing monthly financial reports to the board and the co-ordination of the administration staff. There are seven other staff, three of whom are part-time trainers. Two of the other staff have management positions covering workshop management and management of the assessment process and monitoring of learners' progress. In addition, one of the staff is responsible for technical developments in advanced technology. Two part-time subcontracted trainers deliver part of the programme.
4. The Ryedale area, from where DTA recruits its learners, has a minority ethnic representation of less than 1 per cent, according to the 2001 census, compared with 9.1 nationally. The unemployment rate in the Ryedale area is 1.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.5 per cent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Leadership and management are good, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Provision is good in engineering and manufacturing technologies programmes.
6. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** DTA has an effective self-assessment process. The report provides a generally accurate account of the company's provision. DTA consults widely on the self-assessment process and uses feedback from a wide range of sources. A satisfactory range of evidence including data is used to make judgements. The development plan is used effectively as a shared working document. Inspectors identified most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but also recognised additional strengths and

DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION

weaknesses. The grades given in the self-assessment report are the same as the inspection grades for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Inspectors gave lower grades for engineering and leadership and management.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.

Staff are committed to providing high-quality training. Since the previous inspection, DTA has increased the number of learners and the range of courses it offers, while successfully maintaining high standards. The company has maintained and built on the strengths identified by the previous inspection and developed new strengths. Many initiatives to improve quality have been implemented since the previous inspection. Overall, qualification success rates are consistently high and above the national average. The grade inspectors gave for quality improvement at this inspection, is higher than at the previous inspection.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION:

- continue to enhance the quality improvement system
- continue to maintain and improve the high qualification success rates and quality of training
- ensure consistent and steady progress for learners at level 3 of the national vocational qualification (NVQ)
- improve target-setting at progress reviews for on-the job training

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Engineering		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	60	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. The inspection reported on and graded engineering and manufacturing technologies programmes. There were too few learners following health, public services and care, construction, planning and the built environment, and arts, media and publishing programmes, for them to be separately reported and graded. Evidence was collected from these areas to support judgements in leadership and management.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	26
Number of staff interviewed	7
Number of employers interviewed	12
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	7
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	1

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- good partnership working with employers and local and national organisations
- clear strategic direction
- good operational management of programmes
- good initiatives to promote engineering to under-represented groups
- much sharing of good practice

Weaknesses

- some ineffective monitoring of training

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Engineering

Strengths

- high overall qualification success rate
- good acquisition of additional qualifications
- very good resources
- high standard of off-the-job training
- good progression opportunities and advice

Weaknesses

- slow progress by some learners
- weak planning of on-the-job training

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION:

- the day trips
- being treated as an adult
- the very experienced staff
- learning things relevant to jobs and interests
- the well-organised, well-planned learning, particularly on performing engineering operations programmes
- the good teaching
- the opportunities to learn on a broad range of equipment
- the small group sizes which make learning personal

WHAT LEARNERS THINK DERWENT TRAINING ASSOCIATION COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of time available to do the NVQ
- the planning of on-the-job training

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good partnership working with employers and local and national organisations
- clear strategic direction
- good operational management of programmes
- good initiatives to promote engineering to under-represented groups
- much sharing of good practice

Weaknesses

- some ineffective monitoring of training

9. Partnership working with employers and local and national organisations is good, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. DTA works very effectively with other providers and partners to develop provision to meet local engineering needs. The chief executive has a clear vision of where the company is going and uses the partnerships to meet this vision. The successful CoVE partnership benefits learners and employers. DTA identifies local engineering companies' needs and responds by purchasing modern equipment for use by learners and employers. Good use has been made of the links to enable staff development and updating. Good links with local schools has allowed the development of a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in engineering and the increased participation of girls. DTA has provided staff to local colleges and has trained staff from colleges and schools to teach specialised engineering skills. The company allows its premises to be used for the teaching of the GCSE. The new subcontracting arrangement with the fire service has been carefully planned by both parties. DTA is involved in the development of training for the industry.

10. The number of employers engaging with DTA has increased significantly since the previous inspection. Relationships with employers are very supportive and productive. DTA communicates effectively with employers through newsletters, telephone calls and visits. Employers respect the experience of DTA's staff. Staff help companies with product development and business solutions. Directors are all employers who have engineering apprentices following training programmes with DTA.

11. DTA is forward thinking and has a clear strategic direction, which is understood by staff, learners and employers. The company has grown steadily and considerably in the past five years, working with an increasing number of learners, employers and schools. Plans are in place to extend the premises and increase staff numbers. Staff are consulted on a regular basis through trainer meetings and full-time staff meetings and understand the organisation's direction. They are aware that targets are linked to successful operation of the business plan and have the opportunity to comment on the day-to-day running of the business. The board of directors is active in setting and monitoring the company's strategic direction. Succession planning is in place.

12. Operational management of programmes is good. Programmes are well managed and provide good training for learners. Communication among managers, trainers and administrative staff is good. Regular, well-minuted staff and trainer meetings are held each month. Actions from these meetings are planned and recorded and all staff are made aware of progress. There are also frequent, well-minuted meetings with the subcontractor and partner organisations. Monthly board meetings keep directors informed on all aspects of DTA's activity, including learner retention and achievement, and financial review. These meetings are seen as a good opportunity to engage with local engineering companies and receive regular updates on learner training needs and employer demands. Effective use and monitoring of an internal communications file ensures that all staff are kept well informed. Good use of a notice board ensures that staff are kept up to date with learners' plans and progress, forthcoming tests and test results. A useful calendar of events, which is shared with staff, indicates actions required on a monthly basis. Staff are also kept up to date daily through informal discussion and information is posted electronically. A staff intranet is being developed. Good communication with employers ensures that they are well informed of learners' progress, absences and lateness. A user-friendly website is being developed with areas for parents, learners and employers.

13. Resources are managed effectively. The business manager sets and monitors the budget and provides detailed monthly financial statements to the board. The budget is sufficiently detailed to enable the managers and the directors to quickly identify potential areas of shortfall and act upon them. The purpose-built accommodation meets learners' needs. Equipment is plentiful and modern, allowing learners to have an excellent learning experience. The management information system is well managed. DTA responds quickly and efficiently to requests for data. Monitoring of learners' progress on most programmes is effective. However, monitoring of level 3 learners' progress is not.

14. Training is tailored to meet the needs of individual learners. The staff to learner ratio is very good and learners are taught in small groups. All staff have adequate time to meet with individual learners and are able to provide effective additional tutoring if necessary. All staff are accessible to learners and are experienced in meeting their pastoral needs. Staff are happy and fulfilled in their work, and their turnover and sickness levels are extremely low. Learners and employers benefit from continuity. Staff work well as a team to support each other and meet learners' needs.

15. Staff are very well qualified and experienced, and their appraisals and continuing professional development are good. Action plans arising from appraisals are monitored for progress. Action plans are designed to ensure that trainers are able to fulfil additional supporting roles in the event of specialist trainer absence. All full-time and part-time staff are currently engaged in career development. Learners benefit from having several competent trainers with experience of a range of engineering disciplines.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

16. DTA actively promotes engineering to under-represented groups, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. The company has helped in the regeneration of Ryedale, an area with few work opportunities for young people, by successfully raising the profile of engineering training. Although many women attend full-cost courses and previous female apprentices have successful engineering careers, DTA is conscious that its apprenticeship programmes are dominated by men. There were no female apprentices at the time of the inspection, nor were there any learners from minority ethnic groups. However, two girls

and one learner from a minority ethnic group are about to begin the engineering GCSE. Through its work with schools, 26 female learners have enrolled on to GCSE engineering courses since 2001. The company has tried to interest learners from minority ethnic groups by meeting representatives of these groups. The company's well thought out, memorable marketing literature includes prominent pictures of female learners and minority ethnic learners in order to help break down stereotypical images. DTA provides work-placement places to local secondary schools and also to young people throughout the LSC area, who have disengaged from the learning process. High-profile communication with schools has increased the opportunities available to raise the engineering profile of girls, for example through summer school events. DTA tailors its approach by delivering engineering from a design perspective. Projects are run in conjunction with an organisation dedicated to encouraging women to pursue careers in science and engineering. Some of the board members and DTA's senior managers are women.

17. DTA's management of equality of opportunity is good. Two members of staff take forward the equality agenda. The updated equal opportunities policy is clear and comprehensive, and includes a well-written policy on harassment. An equality and diversity action plan is produced each year, targeting areas in need of improvement. The company actively promotes equality of opportunity. The management information system provides information on learners' ethnicity, gender, retention and achievement and is used to identify under-represented groups and to plan activities to reach these groups. Learners are generally well aware of the company's policy and of the complaints procedure. An effective session on equality and diversity, using video and discussion, is included in the induction. During the programme, learners watch other videos and participate in further discussion to reinforce their recall and understanding of equality of opportunity. Fire service learners have an excellent understanding of equality of opportunity and how it affects their rights and responsibilities in the workplace and the training centre. Engineering learners have a satisfactory understanding of the issues. However, reviews are not adequately used to reinforce engineering learners' understanding of equality of opportunity. Most employers are aware of DTA's requirements for equality of opportunity, and all receive updates and useful booklets on related topics.

18. The modern purpose-built training centre provides good facilities for learners with restricted mobility, including a stair lift and toilet facilities. DTA has considered how equipment could be adapted to be used by learners with physical disabilities. DTA has a disability access policy, which allows additional help to be made available for applicants with a disability when taking selection tests.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

19. Sharing of good practice is good, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Other providers recognise the high quality of DTA's training. DTA generously shares systems and procedures with a wide range of organisations, through meetings and visits. For example, DTA has shared the structure of several of its courses with other training providers. DTA is receptive to feedback and new ideas and is constantly trying to improve the quality of its provision. Directors willingly share information and ideas and seek feedback on the quality of the training programme from learners and other employers. DTA's good links with other local and national organisations help it to incorporate best practice into its own training programmes. For example, learners benefit from accessing Yorkshire Coast College's online key skills training and formative

assessment programme. This good system enables learners to work on key skills and receive support and feedback at home and in the workplace. Staff adapt other providers' working practices to suit their own needs and are constantly trying to improve their existing systems, for example review forms, detailed employer recruitment forms and development plans. DTA makes good use of analysed data on the performance of other similar organisations, in order to reach a judgement about its performance. DTA holds the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, and a national quality assurance award.

20. All staff are committed to providing high-quality training. Since the previous inspection, DTA has increased the number of learners and the range of courses it offers, while successfully maintaining high standards. The company has maintained and built on the strengths identified by the previous inspection and has developed new strengths. Many initiatives to improve quality have been implemented since the previous inspection. Overall, qualifications success rates are consistently high and above the national average. The selection process has been improved and the range of courses offered has been changed to meet learners' needs. Flow charts have been introduced to ensure that all staff are aware of procedures. Audits are carried out on learners' files. DTA carries out audits of the fire service provision and seeks feedback from fire service learners. The grade inspectors gave for quality improvement at this inspection, is higher than at the previous inspection. All other grades were the same.

21. DTA collects information on learners' and employers' views through questionnaires and informal sessions. Comments and suggestions are recorded and acted upon swiftly. For example, a group of learners requested training in the use of a specific piece of equipment, which DTA quickly organised. A notice which gives details on the points raised and the company's response, is put up on the learners' notice board. The company collects detailed information on learners' destinations after they complete their training.

22. Internal verification is satisfactory. It is well planned and clear records are kept. Assessors and internal verifiers are very experienced.

23. Some monitoring of training is ineffective. The quality of training on employers' premises is well monitored by monthly observations of apprentices carrying out their jobs. However, the system for monitoring teachers' work in the classroom does not adequately discriminate between sessions which vary in quality. The quality of reviews is not adequately monitored. Peer observation is not used.

24. DTA has an effective self-assessment process. The report provides a generally accurate account of the company's provision. DTA consults widely on the self-assessment process and uses feedback from a wide range of sources. A satisfactory range of evidence including data is used to make judgements. DTA and the fire service have a sound understanding of the fire service provision, but it is not included in the self-assessment process. The development plan is used effectively as a shared working document. Inspectors recognised most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but also identified additional strengths and weaknesses. The grades given through self-assessment are the same as the inspection grades for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Inspectors gave lower grades for engineering and leadership and management.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Engineering Apprenticeships for young people	60	2 2

25. Sixty learners are following engineering programmes, all of whom are advanced apprentices. Seventeen are in the first year of their programme and are working towards an NVQ at level 2 in performing engineering operations. The remainder are working towards a technical certificate and an NVQ at level 3 in engineering. Eight are training in fabrication and welding, nine in engineering maintenance, 11 in mechanical manufacturing and 15 in engineering production or other engineering disciplines. All learners are employed by local companies. They attend weekly off-the-job training at DTA. The programme is intended to be completed within 42 months.

Engineering

Strengths

- high overall qualification success rate
- good acquisition of additional qualifications
- very good resources
- high standard of off-the-job training
- good progression opportunities and advice

Weaknesses

- slow progress by some learners
- weak planning of on-the-job training

Achievement and standards

26. The overall qualification success rate is good, particularly when taking into account the four-year duration of the programme and that most learners work for small or medium-sized companies. The success rate is substantially higher than the national average and was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. In 2003-04, 68 per cent of the advanced apprentices completed the full programme. In 2004-05 and 2005-06, a total of 40 learners left the programme, of whom 28 had completed the full framework, a success rate of 70 per cent. Of the 12 learners who left the programme before completion, most were at an early stage when they realised they no longer wished to follow a career in engineering. Some of the learners took up to eight months longer to complete the programme than intended.

27. Learners gain a high level of practical engineering skills. Employers recognise and value the high level of the skills that learners achieve and consistently choose DTA despite

the availability of closer, alternative training provision. Many learners gain valuable industrial qualifications which exceed the requirements of the programme, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. These include an electrical qualification which engineers working in maintenance are required to have, but normally take after the apprenticeship is completed. Fabricating and computer numerically controlled (CNC) machinery learners take a separate computer-aided design qualification which is more advanced than the apprenticeship requires and is better suited to the needs of the employers. After achieving the required number of units of a level 2 qualification in the first year of their programme, some learners complete additional units. This is particularly valuable where employers' needs have changed during the course of the programme and the new skills benefit the employer as well as the learner.

28. Most learners have already reached the required level of key skills when they start the advanced apprenticeship, and many are exempt from the tests. Learners who need to develop any aspect of their key skills receive computer-based training and support. Learners complete the tests and their key skills portfolio within the first year. Key skills assessment is integrated with the rest of the programme. The learners' portfolios are good and make effective use of evidence from their engineering work.

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	22	77	57	68	46
		timely	18	28	26	17	17
	2004-05	overall	*	*	*	*	*
		timely	*	*	*	*	*

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).

* indicates unreliable data.

The quality of provision

29. Engineering resources are very good. As well as conventional fabrication equipment and machine tools, the resources include a CNC milling machine and lathe of a standard that many learners use in the workplace. The computer suite includes CNC machine panels so that learners can practise programming and simulating the machine tool operation before using the CNC machines themselves. Many of the technically advanced machines have been purchased as a result of DTA becoming a CoVE and are used by employers for producing specialist components. The teaching rooms are of a good standard and are well equipped.

30. Off-the-job training is of a high standard. The staff are very experienced in their engineering discipline and are skilled at training the learners. For example, one trainer has established a strong reputation for fabrication training with a major company in China. Employers as well as learners have a high regard for the training and consider the day each week spent at DTA to be of great value. Group sizes are small, typically seven learners in classroom sessions and even smaller groups in the workshops. Sessions are well planned and supported by good materials. The booklets used by learners for the

performing engineering operations NVQ are very well designed. Occasionally, sessions rely too much on a lecturing style of teaching but most use a wide variety of teaching methods and practical participation.

31. DTA gives learners good advice and support for progression to further training and career opportunities after they complete their advanced apprenticeship. When staff talk to pupils in schools, they emphasise the opportunities to progress by the vocational route to higher education. Two learners have progressed to university courses. Other learners have progressed to other higher education courses at colleges. Learners frequently return to DTA for more advanced short courses. Staff at DTA have been working towards the creation of a foundation degree with a local college. Another college has visited DTA to explain the higher-level learning opportunities which are open to learners when they complete their advanced apprenticeships. Learners regularly receive advice and guidance on their future training and careers from staff. Two learners were given support in setting up their own engineering business on completion of their programme.

32. On-the-job training is insufficiently planned, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Learners generally gain a good range of experience and a broad range of skills. The work carried out by learners often depends on the day-to-day needs of the employer and the work available. Progress review meetings do not normally involve a discussion between the provider, employer and learner. The employer is involved separately. Reviews include little discussion about opportunities for on-the-job training. They focus mainly on progress and targets for off-the-job training. Review records contain few targets relating to learning in the workplace.

33. Some learners make slow progress towards the completion of their NVQ at level 3. The collection and assessment of workplace evidence is sometimes concentrated in the latter stage of the programme. Some learners take longer than the planned period to complete the advanced apprenticeship. The opportunity to learn from the collection and assessment of workplace evidence at an earlier stage is not taken. This weakness affects the timely success rate but not the overall success rate. Learners who have left the programme early have not been adversely affected. Progress review meetings do not set sufficiently detailed, specific targets for progress towards the NVQ at level 3 by the time of the next review.

34. Applicants for the engineering programmes are invited to complete a range of tests. DTA sets high entry-level requirements. Currently, none of the learners require additional support in literacy, numeracy or language. Good informal support is available for learners who have dyslexia. Appropriate support is available for those who have a disability which might affect their performance in the tests. Learners receive a satisfactory induction at DTA which includes health and safety, equal opportunities and an introduction to the apprenticeship. Learners receive good support throughout their programme from DTA's staff and employers. Individual learning plans are designed to meet the needs of the learner and the employer.

Leadership and management

35. DTA's dedication to meeting the needs of local engineering employers, benefits the learners. DTA has a small number of staff and this resource is carefully managed and efficiently deployed. Staff and managers' commitment to the learners and to the quality of the provision is excellent.

36. The engineering programmes are well managed. Programmes are effectively promoted to young people in the area with particular measures to promote them to under-represented groups. Assessment is sound and the internal verification systems are effective. Engineering staff are involved in the self-assessment process and are keen to learn from other providers' good practice. The self-assessment process is effective.

37. The progress of learners towards their off-the-job qualifications is well monitored. There are three systems for monitoring the progress of learners towards the NVQ at level 2 in performing engineering operations. However, the system for the progress of learners towards the NVQ at level 3 is not sufficiently effective.

