

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WEBS Training Ltd**

**31 August 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*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WEBS Training Ltd

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for WEBS Training Ltd	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
What learners like about WEBS Training Ltd	4
What learners think WEBS Training Ltd could improve	4

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	5
Equality of opportunity	6
Quality improvement	7
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	8

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. WEBS Training Ltd (WEBS), founded in 1968, provides training for the furniture industry, mainly in the East Midlands. It was originally set up as a training association by four major furniture manufacturing companies. There are now 10 member companies, and WEBS provides training for more than 30 employers.
2. WEBS is a private training company with a single administrative and training centre in Beeston, Nottingham. WEBS delivers apprenticeships in furniture training for young people in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, although there are now a small number of learners from a wider geographical area. Lead arrangements are in place with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the current contract.
3. Apprenticeships are offered in a range of furniture-related qualifications such as wood machining, making and repairing hand crafted and production furniture, upholstery and polishing. All learners are employed by local furniture manufacturing companies. The off-the-job training takes place on one day a week for all learners at the training centre in Beeston, with block release taking place every three months for learners who are based in Shropshire. Formal assessments are carried out in the workplace by WEBS. There are 52 learners in four companies following non-LSC funded programmes through WEBS.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** WEBS's leadership and management and its arrangements for quality improvement are good. Provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is good and its arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.
5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is inclusive. All staff are involved at an early stage in identifying strengths and weaknesses, through working groups looking at each aspect of the provision based on the Common Inspection Framework. Learner and employer feedback is used as supporting evidence for judgements. While the report is generally well written, it does not always include detailed text to support judgements, and some strengths are little more than factual statements which do not identify how they will raise standards. Overall, the report matched the findings of inspectors and the development plan derived from the self-assessment report is being successfully delivered. However, not all objectives are sufficiently timebound.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** There have been strong actions taken by WEBS to improve the quality of the provision. Following the appointment of the current management team, significant changes across all aspects of the provision have been implemented. Procedures and documents are in place for all activities and regular audits of these processes take place and are appropriately recorded and followed up.

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR WEBS TRAINING LTD:**

- continue to increase employer involvement in all aspects of training
- further improve success rates
- improve the arrangements for the monitoring of training in the workplace
- further promote the industry to under-represented groups

**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>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Manufacturing technologies</b> Apprenticeships for young people	73	2	

**ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

7. Inspectors reported on and graded engineering and manufacturing technologies, specifically furniture programmes in cabinet making, upholstery and wood machining. A European Social Fund (ESF) programme, delivering national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in the workplace, and 14-16 school links programmes were not inspected.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	12
Number of staff interviewed	19
Number of employers interviewed	9
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	10
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	1

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Strengths**

- strong actions to bring about improvements
- good individual target-setting for staff
- good accommodation and resources

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient arrangements to monitor the quality of training in the workplace

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Manufacturing technologies***

#### *Strengths*

- good success rate for apprentices
- good development of job-related skills
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- particularly effective support for learners
- well-structured management of the programmes

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient involvement of some employers in planning workplace learning

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WEBS TRAINING LTD:**

- 'I didn't think I'd ever get decent qualifications but thanks to WEBS I'm now a qualified cabinet maker'
- doing the assignments and making a product
- 'a sense of achievement when you complete parts of the programme'
- the wider range of machines at the training centre
- very good support from training staff
- 'I'm treated with respect like an adult'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK WEBS TRAINING LTD COULD IMPROVE:**

- more support from employer, as production takes priority over the training
- some of the paperwork - it is repetitive
- more background information and theory



## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- strong actions to bring about improvements
- good individual target-setting for staff
- good accommodation and resources

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient arrangements to monitor the quality of training in the workplace

8. Target-setting for staff is good. Each training officer is set individual monthly targets in negotiation with their line manager. The targets relate to the timely achievement and progress of learners. Staff are fully aware of their targets and now work enthusiastically to achieve them. WEBS keeps accurate information to enable target-setting, and the documents used to record and monitor these targets are simple, yet effective. Subsequent monthly target-setting meetings focus on the achievement of previous targets, and the recent introduction of bonus payments for timely completion of frameworks celebrates the learners' success.

9. Significant upgrades have been made to the training centre and physical accommodation and staff resources are now good. Classroom accommodation has recently been refurbished and is equipped with the latest information technology (IT) equipment, including interactive whiteboards, data projectors, and high specification computers. Accommodation is well furnished and provide a stimulating learning environment. Workshops are well designed and recent developments include upgrades to the machine woodworking area. Consumable materials in all areas are plentiful and of good quality.

10. The staff are suitably qualified. All vocational training officers have good experience of the industry and most either have, or are working towards, relevant teaching and assessor awards. WEBS also has experienced and qualified staff for the delivery and management of key skills. Many staff are former learners.

11. The board, made up predominantly of local furniture manufacturers, provide satisfactory leadership and support the two operational directors in the development of the provision. Board members bring a range of skills and expertise and are able to support WEBS in a number of ways, for example in the provision of legal and financial advice, as well as the procurement of services through bulk purchase facilities. They are not, however, heavily involved as a strategic body. The direction of the business is steered predominantly by the two operational directors.

12. Communications at WEBS are satisfactory. Staff are kept fully informed of the objectives of the organisation and its targets through regular meetings which are appropriately recorded, although they do not always identify action points and responsibilities. WEBS has satisfactory links with employers and external partners, and has

extensive involvement with the furniture training organisation. It is a major contributor to the design of the furniture NVQs, and is also an active member of local provider networks.

13. WEBS's management and its use of data is satisfactory. There is now reliable data in place which informs all staff on the progress of learners towards all aspects of the framework. Trend analysis is now possible and WEBS produces different reports to compare performance. Data is now accurate enough to support good target-setting, and all staff use data to measure performance.

14. WEBS now has very little training carried out by subcontractors. However, for the small amount that remains, satisfactory agreements are in place to ensure appropriate checks and measures monitor the quality of the service provided.

15. The arrangements for the provision of literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory. WEBS has reviewed its provision and an action plan has been devised to improve this aspect. Staff have attended training events to raise awareness of additional support needs, and learners who need additional support receive planned and structured help as part of their learning programme. The achievement of key skills and portfolios and tests have improved.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

16. WEBS has satisfactory policies on equal opportunities, including harassment and bullying. Learners receive this information at induction and the equal opportunities policy is given to employers. Appropriate information on equality and diversity is prominently displayed in the training centre. Regular visits by assessors ensure that learners are being well treated in the workplace and have access to an appropriate range of work activities.

17. WEBS has a member of staff with specific responsibility for the promotion of equality of opportunity. Learners and employers are visited regularly and satisfactory steps are taken to ensure employers are aware of their commitment to equal opportunities. There is an appropriate range of staff training and updating on equality of opportunity. WEBS has recently completed a process with a local organisation to gain accreditation as an organisation committed to equality.

18. WEBS provides a welcoming, prejudice-free environment for all learners. Diversity is respected and staff demonstrate a satisfactory commitment to equality and diversity in their work. The very good learner support helps to remove barriers to learning. For example, at one company, WEBS has worked with the employer to support a learner who has dyslexia by producing job information on coloured paper.

19. The learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. When questioned, learners are able to explain its basic concepts, but there is no evidence of a deeper understanding of equality and diversity. This is also the case with employers.

20. WEBS has a satisfactory range of programmes to widen participation. The 14-16 school links programme gives opportunities for learners to develop employability skills before being placed on apprenticeship programmes, securing employment, or moving on to further education. WEBS is also involved in projects delivering NVQs in the workplace as part of an ESF project. Attempts have been made to recruit learners from non-traditional backgrounds. However, to date, there has been little progress.

**Quality improvement****Contributory grade 2**

21. Strong actions have been taken by WEBS to improve the quality of the provision. Following the appointment of the current management team, significant changes across all aspects of the provision have been implemented. Procedures and documents are in place for all activities, and regular audits of these processes take place and are appropriately recorded and followed up.

22. The in-house delivery of all aspects of the programme now gives WEBS greater control over completion of the framework. There are now very few learners who are beyond their funding period and learners currently on programme are making good progress.

23. The observation of teaching and learning in the centre is now good. Experienced external support is used to carry out a thorough programme of observations. All teaching staff have been observed frequently, with clear feedback and guidelines for improvement, and during the process improved teaching grades have been noted. Teaching is now better planned, with course outlines and lesson plans produced. However, not all lesson planning is consistent, with some insufficient detail in the aims and objectives.

24. There are currently insufficient arrangements to monitor the quality of on-the-job training taking place throughout the employer network. Observations do take place when training officers visit learners, but they are not formally recorded. There are no plans to ensure that training in the workplace is adequately monitored.

25. Feedback is collected regularly from learners and employers, and analysed well through a software programme to identify trends in customer satisfaction. Feedback has been used to make improvements, for example in the purchase of IT equipment, and is also used in self-assessment to evaluate the provision.

26. Internal verification is satisfactory. It is well planned and supports assessment practice effectively. It takes place during and at the end of the training programme and includes the direct observation of assessors. Appropriate records are maintained and staff are suitably qualified to carry out this activity. Internal verification contributes satisfactorily to the standardisation of assessment practice between individual assessors.

27. The self-assessment process is fully inclusive. All staff are involved at an early stage in identifying strengths and weaknesses, through working groups looking at each aspect of the provision based on the Common Inspection Framework. Learner and employer feedback is used as supporting evidence to judgements. While the report is generally well written, it does not always include detailed text to support judgements, and some strengths are little more than factual statements which do not identify how they will raise standards. Overall, the report matches the findings of inspectors and the development plan derived from the self-assessment report is being successfully delivered. However, not all objectives are sufficiently timebound.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Manufacturing technologies</b> Apprenticeships for young people	73	2

28. WEBS has 73 learners on work-based learning programmes, 22 of whom are advanced apprentices and 51 are apprentices. WEBS provides a wide range of programmes in furniture manufacturing. Thirty-four learners are on a cabinet making programme, 21 are in wood machining, 13 are in upholstery, three are on a polishing programme and two are on a cutting programme. All learners are employed at a range of furniture-related companies. WEBS work with employers nationally, although most learners are based in the East Midlands. Training is individualised to suit learners' and employers' needs. Learners attend the training centre in Beeston, for background knowledge training, practical training and key skills training. Attendance is normally one day a week, but block release is also available for learners whose company requires it. Most assessments are carried out in the workplace by WEBS's training officers. Most learners need additional support in literacy and numeracy. All learners are visited in the workplace every 12 weeks to review their progress, and more frequently for assessment and action-planning.

#### **Manufacturing technologies**

##### *Strengths*

- good success rate for apprentices
- good development of job-related skills
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- particularly effective support for learners
- well-structured management of the programmes

##### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient involvement of some employers in planning workplace learning

#### **Achievement and standards**

29. The overall framework success rate for apprentices is good. It has improved from 39 per cent in 2004-05 to 73 per cent to date for 2005-06. The provisional success rate on the cabinet making programme in 2005-06 is high at around 90 per cent. Timely success rates are still low, but they improved in 2005-06 to 44 per cent which is above the national average. All learners are making satisfactory progress and few now exceed their expected end dates. A few learners complete key skills at a level higher than that required for the framework. Several learners have progressed onto a second apprenticeship to increase their skills in wood machining and cabinet making.

30. The number of advanced apprentices has increased from 8 per cent of learners in 2003 to 30 per cent of learners in 2006. The overall framework success rate for advanced apprentices is satisfactory and improving from 40 per cent in 2003-04 to 53 per cent in 2005-06. A few learners still complete their key skills late in the programme.

31. Learners machine, make, repair and install items of furniture to a high standard. They demonstrate good practical skills and maintain high levels of performance in the workplace. Most employers speak highly of the skills the learners have developed and are confident enough to allow learners to carry out most work activities with minimal supervision. Most of the learners achieve skills operative status during their programme. Learners take pride in their work and are motivated to maintain high standards.

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	5	60	48	40	31
		timely	4	50	30	25	19
	2004-05	overall	2	0	48	0	34
		timely	2	0	31	0	21
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	50	64	47	60	32
		timely	43	14	24	12	16
	2004-05	overall	28	39	57	39	38
		timely	28	18	29	18	21

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

32. Learners develop good job-related skills in the training centre and workplace. Experienced training officers teach learners a wide range of skills in the training centre. Wood machinists learn a variety of wood machining techniques and how to operate a wide range of equipment. Upholstery learners are taught cutting and sewing techniques to allow them to complete projects for their NVQ. In the workplaces, learners are frequently moved around different jobs to ensure they learn and understand the relationship between the different tasks involved in producing a finished product. Learners develop good levels of confidence and teamwork skills during a residential course at a specialist outdoor training centre.

33. Resources for teaching are good. The classroom area has recently been refurbished, and is now equipped with digital projection facilities, interactive whiteboard and sufficient modern computers for each learner. There is a well-equipped practical training area that includes a full range of relevant machinery to enable the learners to complete the qualification. Some of the machinery training is carried out on employers' own machines in the workplace at the request of employers. Training officers have achieved, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. Training programmes are well designed and

comprehensive. There are schemes of work and lesson plans in place. Teachers are observed and given critical feedback to improve their teaching.

34. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Learners and assessors make very effective use of action plans to identify what they need to achieve and when. These action plans are frequently reviewed and updated and there are specific action plans for key skills. Learners fully understand what they need to do and find the action plans useful. Managers maintain a detailed computer monitoring system which is printed off at regular intervals and displayed in the training centre. Learners refer to the charts to see how they are progressing compared with others. Clear targets are set for training officers and learners.

35. There is very good support from training officers and employers. There are particularly effective working relationships with learners as all training officers have completed an advanced apprenticeship with WEBS in the past. Learners are given trainers' telephone numbers and are able to contact them at any time. All learners speak highly of the support from their employers and WEBS's staff. Staff have helped learners with personal problems, and some of the support takes place outside normal working hours. Prompt action is taken when requests for support are received. The company has helped unemployed learners find new employers. The provider arranges for learners to spend time in other companies if they cannot cover the full range of the NVQ at their own company.

36. WEBS has a clear strategy for skills for life and a well-structured approach for helping learners develop skills in literacy, numeracy, language and information and communications technology. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. All applicants complete a screening test and when they start the programme, a diagnostic assessment is taken. A suitably qualified tutor prepares a learning programme for each learner to outline the type and level of support they will receive. Good additional support is provided during key skills sessions and this is recorded in the learners' skills for life file. The skills for life tutor also provides good support during the vocational sessions in the classroom, but this support is not always recorded in the learners' file. One learner who had completed his key skills was struggling with numeracy skills which were affecting his ability to do his job. WEBS developed a personal scheme of work for him and his employer and the skills for life tutor helped him to improve and his employment prospects are now more secure.

37. NVQ assessment is good with regular visits to the workplace by assessors. Learners are able to telephone the assessors when they are working on a practical task that is suitable for assessment, and, when possible, assessors visit the workplace at very short notice. Assessment methods are sound and appropriate. Assessments are correctly recorded, and are often supported by photographic evidence.

38. The monitoring of health and safety is satisfactory. The company induction contains some health and safety training and this is reinforced in the workplace. Learners are able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the standards required. Most employers demonstrate satisfactory standards of health and safety. Each employer is visited annually for health and safety monitoring.

39. The involvement of some employers in planning workplace learning is not sufficient.



Most employers are involved in completing the skills checks to ensure learners are ready for assessment, but they do not always plan ahead. Some employers do not plan or structure the training for learners in the workplace. Only a few employers plan learners' workloads to build on the skills they are developing at the training centre. There are insufficient medium-term targets for learners and employers to focus on. There are schemes of work which outline the unit learners will be working on each month, but these are not always used effectively to co-ordinate the on- and off-the-job training. The information contained in the schemes of work is inconsistent and does not always guide employers.

### **Leadership and management**

40. The management of the programmes is good and managers have taken a more structured approach to the delivery of the programmes. All training is now delivered in the training centre and all training officers have achieved, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. Schemes of work and session plans have been developed for all programmes. Learners feel their feedback and views are effectively acted on by management. There has been a continued improvement to resources at the training centre.

41. Many initiatives have been effectively implemented to improve the retention and achievement rates. Initial assessment now includes diagnostic assessments and all learners receive additional support which is outlined in individual learning plans. Practical assessment tasks have been introduced so that applicants can try the different trades before starting a programme. WEBS has well-developed systems to ensure that it maintains good working relationships with employers. The approach to the recruitment of young people is effective. The company also provides commercial courses as required.

42. The monitoring of learners' progress, which was previously a weakness, is now very robust. Few are continuing beyond their expected end dates and some are now finishing early. When learners complete their first unit they are given a WEBS tee shirt which gives them a sense of achievement.

43. Managers and staff fully understand their individual roles and responsibilities and how these potentially affect learners. Internal departmental communication within WEBS is effective. There are monthly meetings and detailed minutes are taken, including a review of previously agreed action points.

44. Internal verification is effectively organised. Sampling plans are prepared in advance and records are kept up to date, including informative feedback to assessors and learners where additional work is required to ensure compliance with the awarding body standards.

