

INSPECTION REPORT

North Humberside Motor Trades Group Training Association

08 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
- **learn**direct provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

INSPECTION REPORT

North Humberside Motor Trades Group Training Association

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for North Humberside Motor Trades Group Training Association	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
What learners like about North Humberside Motor Trades Group Training Association	4
What learners think North Humberside Motor Trades Group Training Association could improve	4

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	5
Equality of opportunity	6
Quality improvement	7
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	9
Business administration and law	13

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. North Humberside Motor Trades Group Training Association (GTA) was formed in 1972 by employers within the retail motor industry, with the support of the industry training body, the Road Transport Industry Training Board. The GTA became a registered charity in 1990 and is run by the industry for the benefit of the industry and on a non-profit-making basis.
2. GTA currently has 29 member companies with voting rights, each paying an annual subscription, and 95 associate member companies in the Hull and East Riding area of Yorkshire, which use the GTA for the selection, training and assessment of apprentices. The association currently has 11 full-time members of staff.
3. The GTA offers training in motor vehicle engineering for light and heavy vehicles, vehicle body repair and refinishing, administration, customer service and parts. Until 2002 the GTA had encouraged apprentices to work towards an advanced modern apprenticeship and a level 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ) as a milestone achievement. Most new learners are now working towards an apprenticeship and move onto the advanced apprenticeship. The GTA contracts with the Humberside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on an annual basis and subcontracts the delivery of background knowledge training with Hull College and East Riding College.
4. In June 2006 the proportion of people in Hull who were unemployed was 5.8 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 2.3 per cent in Hull and 1.2 per cent in the East Riding of Yorkshire, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** More specifically, GTA's leadership and management, its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are satisfactory. The provision in engineering is satisfactory and in business, administration and law is good.
6. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Staff at GTA are fully involved in the self-assessment process and in producing the report. The judgements in the report match those of inspectors. However, most of the grades in the report were higher than those given by inspectors.
7. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** GTA has dealt with most of the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The good provision in business administration and law has been maintained and actions taken have improved success rates significantly in engineering. The quality improvement mechanisms are in place to continue the trend of steady improvement.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORTH HUMBERSIDE MOTOR TRADES GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION:

- continue to improve success rates
- improve equality and diversity in the workplace
- improve the use of initial assessment

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Motor vehicle		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	156	3	

Business administration and law			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Administration			
Apprenticeships for young people	6	2	
Customer service			
Apprenticeships for young people	7	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. Engineering and business administration and law were inspected and graded, as were leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality improvement.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learners interviewed	25
Number of staff interviewed	20
Number of employers interviewed	19
Number of subcontractors interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	23

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- strong strategic partnerships
- good subcontracting arrangements

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good on-the-job training
- particularly good matching of learners' programmes and employment opportunities
- effective strategies to improve achievement
- good use of data

Weaknesses

- weak individual learning plans
- insufficient use of initial assessment
- low success rates of advanced apprentices

Business administration and law

Strengths

- good achievement and progression
- good learner NVQ portfolios
- particularly good training and coaching

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on long-term targets
- some inappropriate initial assessment

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORTH HUMBERSIDE MOTOR TRADES GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION:

- having a job and learning a trade
- the friendly and helpful assessors
- the off-the-job training

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORTH HUMBERSIDE MOTOR TRADES GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION COULD IMPROVE:

- the language used in paperwork
- the number of practical activities during induction
- the standard of vehicles at college
- the frequency of assessments

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- strong strategic partnerships
- good subcontracting arrangements

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity

9. Strategic partnerships are strong. Good links with employers, a strength at the previous inspection and in the current self-assessment report, remains a strength and has been expanded well. GTA's executive committee is made up of representatives from the motor industry in the region. The committee brings a useful and relevant industry and business approach to the oversight of the provision and gives guidance and a strategic direction to GTA. GTA benefits the industry by helping employers develop and train personnel to support the local motor trade economy. GTA is involved in a local centre of vocational excellence (CoVE), which comprises a consortium of colleges. GTA has particularly strong links with local employers in the motor trade industry. It contributes well to the steering committee and ensures that key issues in the industry are considered when planning its own strategic direction. GTA is a very active member of a local work-based learning consortium. For example, GTA has recently been involved in a task force advising other members on the implications of new measures of success. GTA is also involved in the piloting of a young apprenticeship scheme in motor vehicle engineering, involving Hull College and four schools. The success of the scheme depends on GTA's knowledge of and access to employers in the industry. The collaboration between GTA, the college, and schools is very good, with GTA fully involved in the key processes of recruitment and selection and briefing parents.

10. Subcontracting arrangements with Hull College and East Riding College, which deliver the technical certificate on behalf of GTA, are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The contract is particularly detailed. The service level agreement has a number of very specific and detailed requirements, which are closely and rigorously monitored. There are requirements for daily reports on attendance, weekly reports on progress, and monthly overall reports. The contract includes appropriate performance-related penalties. Since the previous inspection, GTA has also initiated a new observation of teaching and learning system in collaboration with the colleges. The colleges observe each other's provision to ensure consistency and standards. The results are, where necessary, followed up and appropriately action-planned. Communication with subcontractors has improved greatly since the previous inspection. There are regular minuted meetings with managers from GTA and the colleges and assessors and employers are better informed of learners' off-the-job training programme. The pass rates for technical certificates have improved significantly since the previous inspection, from 54 per cent to 71 per cent.

11. Communications are satisfactory across GTA. There are appropriate meetings at

every level of the organisation. The executive committee meets quarterly. The senior management team meets every two months and follows a fixed agenda, which includes equality of opportunity and the close monitoring of the quality improvement action plan. The senior management team has an open-door management policy to ensure that staff have good access to information. Communications with external partners have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

12. Health and safety is satisfactory. The health and safety officer carries out risk assessments of each new provider. These are followed up by annual checks. Assessors check learners' experience and understanding of health and safety during progress reviews. Appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place for 14-16 pupils. Every work placement with a 14-16 learner has a nominated mentor who has completed a Criminal Records Bureau check. For 16 to 18 year old apprentices, the health and safety officer has an in-depth discussion with employers about working-time regulations and the protection of young people.

13. The procedures for staff development and appraisal are satisfactory. All staff receive an annual appraisal by the general manager. Individual continuous professional development plans are then identified. There is, however, no overall staff development plan based on the business plan. Assessors are given time to update their industry knowledge.

14. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. GTA has an established set of procedures for literacy and numeracy support. All learners receive a basic skills test at the beginning of their off-the-job training at college. The tests are used to identify additional support needs, such as dyslexia. Good support is provided by the college for these learners. The outcomes of the initial assessments are shared with GTA which does not always take account of the results in supporting learners in other parts of the programme.

15. Resources are satisfactory. College facilities are up to date. Learners benefit from some of the up-to-date CoVE facilities. If required, additional specialist equipment is available for learners with additional learning needs. The training facilities at the main GTA centre are adequate and reasonably equipped.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

16. GTA has a satisfactory equal opportunities policy statement that refers to current legislation. The business plan includes a learners' statement of entitlement and equality targets for recruitment. There is a target for minority ethnic learners that reflects local averages. However, no minority ethnic learners have been recruited in the past three years. There is also a target for female recruitment, which has been more successful. There are currently three female learners in engineering. Since the previous inspection, GTA has improved its publicity and marketing leaflets by incorporating positive images of women and minority ethnic people working in the industry. GTA has also established contacts with local minority ethnic organisations, but this has had little effect on recruitment. Equality of opportunity is a fixed agenda item at senior management team meetings. GTA uses data appropriately to monitor any difference in achievement or retention by learner group.

17. Staff training in equality and diversity is satisfactory. An all-staff training event on

equality and diversity was held in 2004. Another staff development day is due to be held to update staff on new legislation and developments.

18. Learners' understanding of bullying and harassment is satisfactory. There are very few formal complaints. Those that are made are adequately dealt with.

19. There is insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity in the workplace. Learners are given detailed information on equality legislation and employment rights and responsibilities, during induction. However, this is too reliant on tutor input with insufficient engagement of the learners and insufficient employer involvement. At each review, learners are asked about how they are treated at work and have the opportunity to discuss harassment and bullying issues. However, their individual knowledge of harassment and bullying is not always tested and is weak in some cases. There is insufficient discussion with employers about equal opportunities issues. Many workplaces have inappropriate calendars and posters on view. Some learners do not have sufficient knowledge to understand when the language or behaviour they use is inappropriate or potentially offensive. Since the previous inspection a new employer pack has been developed. It includes all the equal opportunities policies and statements, learners' entitlements, an LSC equalities booklet, and magazine features highlighting harassment cases in the industry. Inappropriate posters are discussed. Since the previous inspection the number of work placements with inappropriate images has halved.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

20. GTA has a comprehensive set of quality assurance policies and procedures. They are based on the key aspects of the training cycle and on the Common Inspection Framework. The central process is the continuous improvement action plan, which draws on issues identified in the business plan, and the self-assessment process. The continuous improvement action plan is the main mechanism for driving forward organisational improvement. Key weaknesses from the previous inspection have been tackled on an ongoing basis. Action points are sufficiently detailed and closely monitored by the senior management team and committee.

21. The self-assessment process is inclusive. All staff complete a questionnaire with prompts to elicit their judgements on the five key questions of the Common Inspection Framework. These form part of the discussion of a team meeting and are then compiled by the quality assurance manager. The drafts are sent out to all staff for their opinions. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and reflects many of the judgements of inspectors. However, not all stakeholders are sufficiently involved in the report.

22. GTA has a good focus on quality improvement. The provision has steadily improved over the past three years since the previous inspection. Overall success rates have improved across all the provision in the past three years, but especially in the past year, which has shown significant improvement. There is a developing culture of continuous improvement in the organisation. A feature of this is the open-door policy. Staff are able to discuss ideas for improvement with members of the senior management team with confidence. For example, GTA implemented a suggestion by a member of the administrative team to have a chart that logs the attendance of all learners and provides a good visual representation of learners' progress.

23. GTA collects a range of feedback. All employers are sent annual questionnaires. Apprentices provide feedback after induction and on an annual basis. The feedback is appropriately collated, analysed and action-planned.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle Apprenticeships for young people	156	3 3

24. GTA has 133 apprentices and 23 advanced apprentices on learning programmes in the service and repair of light and heavy vehicles, vehicle body repair and paint, and retailing of vehicle parts. All apprentices start on an apprenticeship, and can then progress onto an advanced apprenticeship.

25. All learners are employed. Learners attend either Hull College or East Riding College for one day a week to study for an appropriate technical certificate and key skills. Learners have an induction with the GTA and with their employer. They complete an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills at the college. Learners' progress is reviewed every six to eight weeks or more often if required. Three learners are women and none are from minority ethnic groups.

26. GTA also works in partnership with Hull College to provide pre-apprenticeships for 14-16 years old pupils from local schools.

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good on-the-job training
- particularly good matching of learners' programmes and employment opportunities
- effective strategies to improve achievement
- good use of data

Weaknesses

- weak individual learning plans
- insufficient use of initial assessment
- low success rates of advanced apprentices

Achievement and standards

27. The overall success rate for work-based programmes has risen consistently over the past three years. However, the overall rate is still low at 41 per cent. The success rate for advanced apprentices has risen from 11 per cent in 2003-04 to 24 per cent in 2005-06. The success rate for apprentices has risen significantly from zero per cent in 2003-04 to 69 per cent in 2005-06. The average time to complete an apprenticeship has fallen over the past four years from over 40 months to 31 months. Most learners now achieve on time.

28. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners are able to talk confidently about their work using relevant technical language. They confidently use tools and equipment and work safely to industrially acceptable standards. Apprentices regularly win awards in regional and national motor industry competitions.

29. The standard of learners' portfolios in engineering is satisfactory. Learners collect job cards and produce written explanations of tasks they perform. Assessors make good use of photographic evidence and observation. Learners maintain their written work in a portfolio and assessors maintain an electronic portfolio consisting of scanned written work, digital photographs and assessors' notes.

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	47	36	55	11	45
		timely	40	13	38	5	31
	2004-05	overall	49	31	54	12	42
		timely	46	13	40	9	31
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	28	0	39	0	26
		timely	28	0	14	0	9
	2004-05	overall	7	14	45	14	36
		timely	8	0	19	0	15

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).

The quality of provision

30. Learners receive good training in the workplace. They are initially assigned to a qualified technician and are effectively coached in the skills and knowledge of their trade. They quickly develop confidence and the ability to work independently on a range of tasks. Learners receive good feedback from their employer and are given good opportunities to learn a wide range of complex tasks. Employers are effective in identifying tasks that apprentices need to develop their skills and demonstrate competence for their qualification.

31. Programmes and activities are well matched to the needs of learners and employers. GTA takes great care to understand the interests of learners and to provide appropriate employment and qualifications. Learners are quickly put in contact with potential employers and are well supported throughout the selection process. GTA has very close links with the industry and provides a good range of qualifications to meet its needs. Most motor trades are available including the maintenance and repair of light vehicles, maintenance and repair of heavy vehicles and military vehicles, repair and painting body work and vehicle parts retailing. The qualifications and experience offered to learners is appropriate for a career in the motor industry.

32. The verification and assessment of NVQs is satisfactory. Assessment is regular and uses an appropriate range of methods with a good number of direct observations by assessors. Internal verification is ongoing and covers an appropriate sample of assessors' work, including the observation of assessment. Assessors and verifiers meet regularly to discuss standards and better ways of working.

33. Assessors provide learners with effective ongoing personal support. Learners are able to contact assessors by mobile telephone to request assessment, but also if they have any personal concerns. However, the support for basic skills is insufficiently developed. Employers provide good support to learners ensuring that they are safe at work. All GTA staff have been Criminal Records Bureau checked.

34. Progress reviews have been significantly improved since the previous inspection. Reviews are carried out regularly and frequently, usually every six to eight weeks. They are more often if a learner is judged to need additional support or not progressing well. Assessors understand learners' progress at college.

35. GTA makes insufficient use of the results of initial assessment. Learners are assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills when they start college. These results are used by the college to identify where specific support is required. The results are sent to GTA, which does not make enough use of the information. The results are not recorded in, or used to produce, individual learning plans. Employers and assessors do not adequately use these results to plan and provide individual support. Progress and support in literacy and numeracy are not evaluated at reviews. Where a significant concern is identified the college, GTA and employers provide adequate support. For example, one learner with dyslexia is receiving good support from his employer and at college and is progressing well with his apprenticeship. His portfolio is of a high standard.

36. Individual learning plans are weak. An initial individual learning plan is produced at the beginning of the apprenticeship, which includes general information about the learner and basic information about the apprenticeship components. However, there is little planning, with only a single end date included, which is based on the average time to complete, not on an individual's qualifications, abilities or circumstances. Little account is taken of learners' prior knowledge or of initial assessment results. The plans do not set out separate target dates for different components such as key skills or provide interim achievement points to measure progress. Individual learning plans do not give sufficient information about how learning will take place or who is responsible. An ongoing individual learning plan is kept by learners in their portfolios. However, this is a simple monitoring sheet that records aspects of the apprenticeship that have been completed. There is no information about when or how components are expected to be completed.

Leadership and management

37. GTA has implemented some effective strategies to improve the achievement of learners and the performance of programmes. Prior to 2002, few learners achieved their full apprenticeship. Many learners were on programmes for far too long without achieving. GTA has introduced significant changes to the way apprenticeships are managed. All learners now start an apprenticeship before progressing to an advanced apprenticeship. Much analysis of the performance of programmes has highlighted that achieving the NVQ was a key weakness and as a result reviews are more frequent and focus more closely on evidence collection and assessment. Assessors frequently visit

learners and maintain very close contact with learners and employers. Recruitment processes focus more closely on matching learners to programmes and employers. The average completion time for apprenticeships has significantly reduced over the past four years and success rates have risen in all areas. Although the success rate for advanced apprentices is still low, data and interviews with learners indicate that most are on target to achieve their qualifications.

38. GTA makes good use of data to monitor programme performance and aid improvement. Data is used effectively to inform judgements about performance, particularly within the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis is used to inform managers about improvements in performance and to identify areas of weakness. GTA has investigated why learners leave early and made changes to the way programmes are structured and managed. Data is used to inform assessors about learners expected to achieve and these are monitored. GTA receives weekly reports from Hull College and is developing similar reporting from East Riding College. These reports identify each learner's achievements and use a colour code to highlight learners at risk. Assessors make good use of data to monitor learners' achievements.

39. GTA has adequate resources and makes effective use of them. Most training and learning is carried out by two local colleges and at employers' premises. Employers are well resourced to provide the learning and assessment required for the NVQ. GTA has sufficient well-qualified assessors and other staff to operate the programme. Induction is carried out at GTA, which has adequate facilities.

40. The self-assessment report made good use of data to identify the standard of achievement. It accurately identified key strengths and weakness in the provision and clearly explained these judgements. However, it failed to identify some significant weaknesses in the planning of learning and the use of initial assessment results.

Business administration and law**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration Apprenticeships for young people	6	2
Customer service Apprenticeships for young people	7	2

41. There are seven learners on customer service apprenticeships, one at foundation and six at advanced level. There are also six apprentices working towards administration frameworks, two of them foundation and four advanced. All learners are employed in the motor industry and work in large and small car dealerships or commercial vehicle repair firms. Learners receive induction training at the association's training centre and continue with off-the-job training every two weeks. They are assessed at work each month by their assessor. One assessor, supported by a part-time internal verifier, provides all the training, support and assessment.

Strengths

- good achievement and progression
- good learner NVQ portfolios
- particularly good training and coaching

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on long-term targets
- some inappropriate initial assessment

Achievement and standards

42. Overall achievement and progression by learners is good. In 2005-06, 88 per cent of advanced apprentices completed their framework, compared with 63 per cent in 2003-04. Apprenticeship success rates have improved from 50 per cent in 2003-04 and 2004-05 to 67 per cent in 2005-06. The overall success rate for this area is 74 per cent. Of the current group of learners, 61 per cent have progressed from level 2 frameworks to level 3. Learners also progress well at work and many now hold responsible roles as team leaders. Half of the current learners have achieved additional qualifications such as key skills and computer literacy.

43. Learners produce good work for their portfolios of evidence. Assignments for the technical certificate, key skills and NVQ are highly relevant to their employers. Examples include learners' research into competitors' prices and collecting customer feedback on their company's performance. Learners' knowledge and understanding of good practice in business administration and customer service is particularly good, enabling those at higher levels to propose and handle change confidently.

NORTH HUMBERSIDE MOTOR TRADES GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION

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	15	20	46	20	28
		timely	20	10	30	10	18
	2004-05	overall	8	75	47	63	31
		timely	4	75	35	75	23
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	6	50	51	50	37
		timely	8	13	25	0	18
	2004-05	overall	4	75	56	50	45
		timely	2	50	35	50	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).

The quality of provision

44. There is particularly good training and coaching, especially at an individual level. Learners receive individual training during frequent off-the-job sessions at the association's premises. The training typically includes structured coaching on subjects within the framework, guidance on completing portfolio work, and supported self-study. While training modules are well planned, the training and support is highly flexible to meet learners' work needs. For example, one learner moved into a new sales job and received coaching in presentation skills. She is now undertaking a project to design a company presentation as an optional unit in the administration NVQ.

45. Assessment is well organised by assessors and directly related to learners' work. Learners are effectively engaged in frequent short-term action-planning and employers are satisfactorily consulted about work-related projects. Assessors are quick in responding effectively when opportunities for assessment arise. In one example, a learner informed her assessor about a task involving reorganising her employer's filing system. The assessor promptly attended the workplace to carry out an assessment by observation. There is good use of monitoring systems to indicate to learners their precise achievements to date. Key skills are adequately co-ordinated through a subcontractor. Teaching for the technical certificates is good and plays a significant part in the development of learners' occupational knowledge. There is effective use of exemptions from key skills, and projects are carefully integrated with the NVQ and technical certificate.

46. Induction is satisfactory. Learners receive instruction on key aspects of legislation affecting them, such as that related to sick pay and disciplinary processes. However, there are insufficient participative activities and discussion during induction training sessions. Learners' understanding of health and safety, welfare issues and equal opportunities is sufficiently reinforced throughout the training programme. Learners have a good understanding of the ways in which equal opportunities topics are relevant to their job roles. For example, learners are aware of the need to work well with diverse customers and not to make assumptions based on appearance.

47. Overall, employers are satisfactorily engaged in learning and have a sound

understanding of frameworks. They support learners in identifying suitable projects for learning and provide feedback on learners' work. In one case, a managing director reviewed with a learner his findings from a survey of customers and discussed the merits of the learner's proposals for improvements. Learners' workplaces provide good opportunities for learning and assessment.

48. Assessors carry out satisfactory progress reviews with learners. Target-setting relates mainly to NVQ assessment rather than overall progress. Assessors place very high emphasis on learners' welfare and fair treatment at work and do not hesitate to challenge employers where there are issues. Assessors effectively convey feedback between learner and employer to promote their welfare and achievement.

49. There is insufficient focus on long-term targets. Learners' individual learning plans are not always used to give them a broad picture of how and when key milestones in the framework might be achieved. During progress reviews, assessors focus on short-term target-setting. Since the reinspection, when long-term planning was identified as a weakness, the provider has introduced a new review document and action plan. However, this serves only to place further emphasis on short-term targets.

50. There is some inappropriate initial assessment. Applicants sit tests which have little bearing on the requirements of the two frameworks. The results are sometimes used as a guide when learners are referred to employers for job interviews. There are no arrangements for key skills or literacy and numeracy initial assessment. For a small number of learners recruited at the same time as engineering groups some aspects of initial assessment are undertaken at inappropriate stages. For example, these learners' job roles and responsibilities are analysed after they have filled out an overall learning plan. Occupational assessors are not sufficiently involved in the selection, recruitment, initial assessment and planning stages of the programme.

Leadership and management

51. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of learners. There is a range of workbooks and handouts to support learning, and learners make good use of the internet for research. Training rooms offer sufficient space and comfort for classroom sessions and individual coaching.

52. Internal verification is satisfactory. Verifiers give better feedback to assessors following observations of assessments, while written evaluations of portfolios are not detailed. Verification is limited to a focus on NVQ assessment and does not extend to wider quality improvement of other learning processes.

53. Self-assessment is inclusive of all relevant staff and the report is reasonably accurate, although no weaknesses were identified. The report is insufficiently evaluative. While there are good and improved achievement rates, some aspects of the previous inspection have not been resolved, such as overall planning of learning. Although equal opportunities is promoted well to learners, there is little focus on widening participation to potential learners.

