

INSPECTION REPORT

Pilot IMS Limited

07 July 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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Pilot IMS Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Pilot IMS Limited (Pilot) was established in 2001, and provides Train to Gain and bespoke training. Most of its learners are working in manufacturing, and following the performing manufacturing operations national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2. Pilot has 139 government-funded learners, who are employed in the Birmingham and Black Country areas or the northwest of England. The company carries out all training and assessment on employers' premises. It has an administration centre in Birmingham.
2. Pilot has a board of two directors that supervises the management of the programme. Two of these directors are also employees of Pilot. Five managers are responsible for strategic planning, marketing, operations and systems, quality, sales and business development. Additionally, there are nine staff with direct responsibility for training, assessing and supporting learners.
3. Pilot has a contract with the Black Country Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and it is also a subcontractor for Preston College and Dudley College of Technology. The company has held an LSC contract in its own right since 2003. Pilot provides training and assessment for some learners with Polestar, a national printing company that holds a contract with the National Employer Service. Pilot subcontracts skills for life training to The Basic Training Centre. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Pilot is also involved in the Humberside Ports and Logistics Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE), but the company did not have any learners in training with the CoVE at the time of inspection.
4. The unemployment rate in April 2006 in the Black Country LSC is 4.8 per cent and in Lancashire it is 2 per cent, compared with the rate for England, which is 2.6 per cent. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in the West Midlands is 11.3 per cent and in Lancashire it is 5.3 per cent, compared with 9 per cent for England.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Pilot's leadership and management, the manufacturing technologies and health and safety/environmental health programmes are good. The company's approach to equality of opportunity and quality improvement is satisfactory.
6. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Pilot's self-assessment process is inclusive and thorough. In particular, the leadership and management report is very candid, accurate and self-critical. However, in the areas of learning, the process has not identified sufficient, appropriate strengths and weaknesses. Grading is realistic in all areas. Pilot's self-assessment process results in improvement.
7. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.**

PILOT IMS LIMITED

Pilot has good leadership and a clear focus on delivering good-quality provision. Staff development is good and well linked to continuous improvement and the growing needs of the business. Arrangements for quality improvement are good and effectively identify key areas for improvement.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR PILOT IMS LIMITED:

- continue to grow and adapt the business to meet learners' and employers' needs
- improve target-setting and use of data to contribute to monitoring and improvement
- efficiently measure the effect training has on productivity and in meeting the overall objectives of the programme

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		3
Quality improvement		3

Health, public services and care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Health & safety/ environmental health		2	
Train to Gain	17	2	

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Manufacturing technologies		2	
Train to Gain	96	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. Inspectors visited Pilot during July 2006 to inspect manufacturing technologies and health and safety. There are too few learners taking business improvement techniques to be inspected and graded. In the two weeks leading up to inspection, 25 skills for life learners started a Train to Gain literacy programme, which was reviewed as part of the evidence towards leadership and management.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	17
Number of learners interviewed	16
Number of staff interviewed	13
Number of employers interviewed	8
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	10
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Pilot has good overall success rates in health and safety qualifications.** In 2005-06, the rate was 96 per cent and it is 100 per cent so far for learners expected to complete in 2006-07. Retention rates are very good on health and safety programmes. In manufacturing, success rates are satisfactory, at 67 per cent in 2005-06. A high proportion of those learners who are retained achieve their qualification.

10. **Learners acquire new skills and an improved understanding of their role within their area of production.** They improve their knowledge effectively, particularly in health and safety in the workplace. Learners gain self-confidence and make positive suggestions for improvement at work.

11. **Learners' target achievement dates are often unrealistic and rarely achieved.** Some learners' progress reviews are ineffective in setting short-term targets. Timely success rates on both programmes are very low. However, there are early signs of improvement in timely success rates on the health and safety programme in the current year.

The quality of provision

12. **Learners receive very good-quality, regular support from Pilot's assessors.** Assessors are exceptionally flexible in working around shift patterns and the individual needs of employers and learners. Pilot provides very helpful community language support and translation services for learners and employers for whom English is their second language. Manufacturing learners receive very frequent and effective individual coaching.

13. Much of the assessment practice in manufacturing is of a good quality. Assessors pay good attention to health and safety during the assessment and in the workplace. Learners have a good understanding of the assessment process and are well prepared. Pilot records learners' assessments comprehensively and the assessors provide them with good-quality feedback. The quality of assessment in health and safety is satisfactory.

14. Pilot's health and safety programme is very effective in engaging new learners into learning. Health and safety learners have much improved self-esteem and confidence. Many learners are progressing to further education and training, including Pilot's manufacturing technologies programme. Pilot and employers celebrate the success of their learners well.

15. Pilot has very productive working relationships with assessors and employers, through a team approach in the manufacturing learning programme. Manufacturing assessors continuously improve their knowledge of the companies they work with and their production techniques, to the benefit of the learners. There are good participation rates by learners and employers in manufacturing programmes.

16. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Much of the learning in manufacturing is on the job, using resources in the workplace that are adequate or better. Health and safety learners attend appropriately planned group teaching and learning sessions that have clear objectives. Learners participate and are well motivated in group learning sessions.

17. Learners receive satisfactory initial advice and guidance at the start of their training programmes. They complete an appropriate range of initial assessment, some of which is used in planning assessment and coaching. Learners receive appropriate and helpful support from their assessors for their individual literacy needs to achieve the NVQ. A recently introduced skills for life programme is now meeting identified literacy support needs for learners with two companies. Induction is satisfactory and prepares learners well to start their learning programmes. Health and safety learners' individual learning plans do not accurately reflect the individual completion targets, and are often the same for all of the learners in a group. Pilot rarely records learners' individual needs, despite the variety in the learners' background and prior education and learning.

Leadership and management

18. Leaders, managers and directors demonstrate energy, openness and enthusiasm. Pilot's leaders have managed the growth of the business well, broadening participation and geographical provision through partnership work. They have a strong commitment to shared values, inclusiveness and meeting employers' and learners' needs.

19. Staff receive good development that supports the company's growth and improvement. Good partnership work with a local college has increased the number of assessors taking teacher training qualifications. Pilot gives very welcome and useful support to employers in identifying their own managers' development needs.

20. Pilot's managers and staff use a good range of initiatives to ensure that learners have sufficient equality of opportunity to participate. Learners have good access to diverse funding routes and Pilot works well with employers to maximise these opportunities. The selection process for learners is very fair, with all potential learners

volunteering for places on the programme.

21. Pilot has a strong ethos of equality of opportunity that is promoted well by leaders and managers. Staff training on equality of opportunity is very effective, and has now also been given to some employers' staff. Pilot's staff discuss issues in the workplace with managers and employers, ensuring that they recognise the need for action. Learners have an appropriate understanding of equality of opportunity, their rights and responsibilities and how to complain.

22. Pilot has good arrangements for managing quality assurance and improvement. Staff have a clear enthusiasm for delivering and further improving the good-quality provision. Pilot has well-conceived and comprehensive policies and procedures. Arrangements for internal verification and reviewing the programme are detailed and effective.

23. The company is introducing a thorough skills for life strategy and development plan, which includes the partnership arrangements for delivery. Support arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language learning needs are adequate. Some learners have recently started skills for life training, but it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness.

24. Communication within the company is effective, with regular meetings where good practice is shared. Management of each area of learning is satisfactory. Staff have regular and effective observations of teaching and learning, which link into the appraisal process. Pilot collects employers' and learners' feedback and uses it appropriately for improvement.

25. Pilot's managers use data insufficiently for analysing trends in recruitment, participation and performance by different learner groups. Managers collate suitable data, but the current system is too cumbersome, a weakness that the company recognises and is already acting upon. The company's analysis and use of data in quality improvement and self-assessment are insufficient. Staff targets are often too vague and general.

26. Pilot's staff carry out insufficient formal monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace. The company collects employers' equality of opportunity policy statements, but it does not check them for content or appropriateness.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good leadership
- good staff development to support growth and improvement
- good quality improvement arrangements
- good initiatives to support learners' participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data and target-setting
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace

Health, public services and care

Health & safety/ environmental health

Strengths

- good success rates
- very good specialist support for learners
- very effective promotion of training to engage new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning of individual learning

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Manufacturing technologies

Strengths

- particularly good individual support and coaching for learners
- much good assessment practice
- good team approach by assessors and employers to meet learners' needs

Weaknesses

- poor target-setting

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT PILOT IMS LIMITED:

- learning more about health and safety and the regulations relating to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and using this at work
- improving their confidence and optimism for the future
- not having to go to college to learn
- arranging visits to train and assess around shiftwork
- gaining the qualification, which helps them to progress
- very good assessors
- being able to improve their skills

WHAT LEARNERS THINK PILOT IMS LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the clarity of the wording of some of the pre-set questions
- the amount of information about what to do next

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good leadership
- good staff development to support growth and improvement
- good quality improvement arrangements
- good initiatives to support learners' participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data and target-setting
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace

27. Pilot's operational directors and senior staff lead with energy, openness and enthusiasm, which all of its staff recognise and appreciate. Senior managers have a clear vision for the company's development and follow an appropriate policy of flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of employers and learners. The managing director keeps the company well informed of future trends in training and funding through his involvement in the Black Country LSC's strategy board. Senior staff work very effectively to build partnerships in the Birmingham area, and across England. Pilot uses its membership of a consortium of providers in Birmingham well to share expertise. For example, the company is using the services of a basic skills provider to deliver skills for life provision at one of its client companies.

28. Staff development is strategically targeted to support capacity building, including delivering the skills for life provision. Staff receive good development to support improvement and their own development. Most staff have taken up a good range of professional development in the past two years. There is good use of the link with a local college in providing Pilot's assessors and internal verifiers with a national teaching qualification, and two of the company's staff have taken training in the observation of teaching and learning. Staff development is suitably linked to annual appraisal. Pilot has also been active in providing staff development to some of its client employers. Some of the employers and managers that they work with benefit from individual support, guidance and coaching from Pilot staff.

29. Support for the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills is adequate. All learners complete initial tests using a standard assessment tool. Pilot's staff provide informal support for learners with identified needs, which assists learners with their NVQ work but it does not always develop their literacy or numeracy skills. Pilot has recently introduced a skills for life programme for two of the companies with which it works.

30. Staff resources are satisfactory. The company employs assessors who are skilled and experienced in their specialist areas. Most of the company's management team maintain professional currency as tutors and assessors. Employers provide most physical resources for training. These are generally sufficient, and in some cases very good. Pilot provides

some laptop computers to aid assessment. There is a suitable range of handouts and workbooks, which are available in various languages.

31. Communication within Pilot is satisfactory, and it has been improved following the company's most recent self-assessment report. Staff attend useful monthly assessors' meetings, where they share good practice and information effectively. Assessors receive timely visits from their line manager to manage their performance.

32. Managers collect a suitable range of data to meet the contract compliance needs of their partners. Financial information is appropriately available, and managers are well informed regarding the company's financial position. The current management information system is, however, cumbersome and incomplete, and it does not provide a sufficient level of information on learners and their progress. Managers make little analysis of data to compare the progress of learners in different companies and locations. Pilot recognises this weakness in its most recent self-assessment report, and it has invested in a commercially produced management information system which has been installed very recently. It is too early to judge the value of this system in contributing towards improvement. Targets tend to be set for individual companies or projects that assessors work with, rather than overall success targets. While objectives are agreed during staff appraisal, these are often vague and general.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

33. Pilot's managers and staff use a good range of initiatives to ensure that the learners have sufficient and equal opportunity to participate. Learners have good access to diverse funding routes, including from the LSC, through colleges and Pilot's bespoke course rates. Where learners are not eligible for government funding, Pilot works well with employers to maximise the opportunities, including reductions in bespoke course fees. Pilot's curriculum offer has increased in occupational areas, to include learners in a non-manufacturing job role. Assessors make suitable adjustments to their visit times to meet the assessment needs of learners who work shift patterns. Pilot gives good support to learners who speak English as a second language, which is well used and advertised. Four of Pilot's staff speak community languages. Pilot and employers' information is translated into languages that the learners speak, which has been particularly effective for recruitment onto Train to Gain. The selection process for learners is very fair, with all potential learners volunteering for places on the programme.

34. Pilot has a strong ethos of equality of opportunity that is promoted well by leaders and managers. A high proportion of staff are from minority ethnic groups, creating good role models in the industry and with learners. Pilot promotes its success stories very effectively, including learners' achievements. Publicity material contains appropriate images of men, women and learners from minority ethnic groups.

35. Staff training on equality of opportunity is very effective. Equality of opportunity training for staff is ongoing, with very focused update sessions in the monthly staff team meetings. Where issues are identified in the workplace, Pilot's staff discuss these with managers and employers, ensuring that they recognise the need for action. Following an identified issue with bullying at one employer, Pilot delivered a comprehensive training programme for all of the employer's staff. It made good use of their perception and understanding of policies and procedures in devising the training.

36. Pilot's equality of opportunity policies and procedures are comprehensive. Learners have an appropriate understanding of equality of opportunity, their rights and responsibilities and how to complain. Pilot has a clear complaints process, with managers taking responsibility of complaints. The company's policies are displayed on some employers' premises. Although it records details of the complaint and the investigation, the outcome and resolution are not always evident from complaints paperwork. Pilot is introducing a thorough skills for life strategy and development plan, which includes the partnership arrangements for delivery.

37. Pilot's managers use data insufficiently for analysing participation and performance by different learner groups, including the effectiveness of support arrangements. The company does not monitor trends in recruitment sufficiently and data about participation by women and learners from minority ethnic groups contains some inaccuracies.

38. Pilot's staff carry out insufficient formal monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace. The company collects employers' equality of opportunity policy statements, but it does not check them for content or appropriateness. There are many examples of where employers' practice has been discussed or their views challenged, but little of this is recorded. Inspectors found some examples of inappropriate materials displayed at one employer's premises. Pilot recognises this weakness in its most recent self-assessment, report and assessors have recently started asking questions about equality of opportunity during learners' progress reviews.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

39. Pilot has good arrangements to manage quality improvement. Managers and staff have a clear and enthusiastic commitment to improvement. Staff recognise the need for improvement very effectively, and the recently introduced skills for life programme is meeting well the needs of learners with two employers. Staff use well-conceived and comprehensive policies and procedures that are appropriately linked to all aspects of the learners' experience. Pilot's quality assurance manual has been frequently reviewed and developed. The company has particularly detailed and thorough arrangements for the quality assurance of health and safety, assessment and internal verification. Clear lines of responsibility are set out, and effective monitoring takes place through a very thorough review of each project. Learners, employers and assessors are all fully involved in the project review process. Learners' rate of progress is now starting to show early signs of improvement. Assessment practice has been strengthened through the introduction of good-quality guidance for assessors. Assessors' understanding and application of Pilot's arrangements have improved, but the company recognises that further work is required to harmonise the differing detailed requirements of the partners with which it contracts. Pilot has improved its initial advice and guidance and progression information for learners in response to feedback received. The company uses staff expertise well to make improvements, in particular through introducing and producing DVDs for companies to enhance their own induction and health and safety arrangements.

40. Pilot has regular and effective arrangements for the observation of training and assessment. Each assessor has an annual graded observation of their teaching and learning, resulting in helpful verbal and written feedback. This is further supplemented by annual observations of teaching, learning and assessment by the subcontractor colleges. Pilot is thorough in responding to matters that are raised. There are suitable links from observation systems into appraisal.

41. Internal verification is well planned and thorough, with appropriate formative and summative sampling of assessment. Assessors are systematically observed and receive good-quality feedback. The company provides timely information on the requirements of the awarding body to assessors.

42. Pilot collects and analyses employer feedback, showing a good level of satisfaction with the training programmes. It makes good use of the regular contact between assessors, internal verifiers and learners to make improvements. Pilot recognises the need to further develop the systems for collecting learners' feedback and has recently revised the end-of-course questionnaires.

43. Pilot's self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory, although this is still a relatively new process for the company. All staff were involved in analysing Pilot's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results were then used to develop the company's most recent self-assessment report. Pilot's self-assessment of aspects of leadership and management is particularly honest and candid, identifying all weaknesses noted by inspectors. However, in areas of learning the report has insufficient detail to support the judgements made. Some of the strengths in self-assessment are overstated and weaknesses omitted. Pilot's quality improvement plan appropriately reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the self-assessment report, although target-setting in the quality improvement plan is insufficiently focused. Monitoring of the quality improvement plan is frequent and inclusive. The company uses progress charts and displays them well at its offices.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Health & safety/ environmental health</i>		2
Train to Gain	17	2

44. There are 17 learners taking health and safety qualifications, which take on average eight to 10 weeks to complete. Learners work for one of two medium-sized companies in the north Birmingham area. Three members of Pilot's staff visit learners in the workplace where all training and assessment takes place. Most training is carried out on an individual basis, although occasionally four or five learners attend group learning sessions. A very high proportion of learners have English as a second language and some speak very little English.

Health & safety/ environmental health

Strengths

- good success rates
- very good specialist support for learners
- very effective promotion of training to engage new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning of individual learning

Achievement and standards

45. Overall qualification success rates are very good, at 96 per cent in 2005-06 and 100 per cent in the current year. Retention rates are particularly good, and 97 per cent of the learners who are planned to achieve in 2006-07 have either been retained or have completed their qualification early. Pilot's analysis of the small number of learners who have not completed the qualification shows that most of them have left the UK.

46. Learners develop good skills and knowledge throughout the programme. They have a heightened awareness of safety in working areas. Many learners work productively with their employers to make more information available on noticeboards at work. With one employer, there has been an increased reporting of near misses and potential hazards in the workplace, through this raised awareness. Learners gain self-confidence and are eager to engage in further training.

47. The rate of timely achievement is low for 2005-06, but this is showing early signs of improvement. Ten learners who are due to complete in 2006-07 have already completed their qualification by their expected end date.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Adult training (long courses)	2005-06	overall	73	96		0	
		timely	72	6		0	

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

48. Support for learners is very good, through the very flexible and regular visits from Pilot's assessors and language speakers. One company's workforce is almost exclusively from the Punjab. Many have poor spoken or written English. These learners receive particularly effective support from Pilot's assessors and internal verifiers who speak several languages. Learning materials in other languages have been sourced and Pilot has translated promotional and induction materials. Assessors use an appropriate mix of English and Punjabi to train and assess learners. One company operates three eight-hour shifts each day. Learners and assessors plan visits carefully to ensure that all staff, including night-shift workers, have good access to training. Learners are supported very well by their employers, paying for time away from production to attend training and in some cases paying overtime for learners to attend after their shift has ended.

49. Pilot uses the health and safety programme particularly effectively to engage new learners into learning. For many learners who have not previously engaged in formal training, the potential barriers to learning are thoroughly discussed and any concerns alleviated. Learners who have completed the training with Pilot promote the training to others who may be less confident. Pilot has effective progression routes for health and safety learners onto other programmes that it offers, including in manufacturing, lift-truck operation, manual handling or first aid. For one employer, this is working particularly well, where 43 of the 53 learners that took part in the health and safety course have now progressed onto the performing manufacturing operations NVQ at level 2. Pilot and employers celebrate their learners success well, organising events and award certificates. The local or trade press often acknowledge the learners' achievements.

50. The quality of training is satisfactory. Learners receive regular training and assessment at their workplace, and managers commit to releasing learners from production to attend this. In group sessions, learners gain a better understanding of how health and safety is applied in other areas and also at home. Learning is well planned, with clear objectives. Learners participate and are well motivated in group sessions. Tutors do not always use effective questioning techniques, relying on closed or too few questions when checking learning.

51. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Assessors observe learners at work, noting how they prepare and maintain work areas. They use effective questioning techniques to check the learners' understanding. All portfolios of evidence are completed in English, with learners using scribes and interpreters appropriately. Internal verification is also satisfactory, using appropriate sampling methods. Internal verifiers with appropriate

language skills check the process when assessment in other languages has taken place.

52. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. The quality of information before starting training is informative and available in other languages. Learners complete appropriate initial assessment, which also looks at previous qualifications and learning styles. Some learners do not receive information about future training opportunities in a timely way, but at the end of their programme. Assessors give satisfactory support to help learners with their literacy and numeracy needs for the qualification.

53. Many learners' individual learning plans do not accurately reflect the individual completion targets, and these are often the same for all of the learners in a group. Pilot rarely records learners' individual needs, despite the variety in the learners' background, and prior education and learning. The company does not always ask the learners to gather evidence in between assessors' visits, which slows their progress.

Leadership and management

54. Assessors, who are largely home-based, attend effective monthly management meetings to update them on company procedures and policies. Staff development is good, with many opportunities for industrial updating. Most staff visiting learners have teacher training qualifications and all of them have appropriate assessors' and verifiers' awards. Staff took part in a reflective activity to identify strengths and weaknesses, which was relatively accurate. However, little of this was used in the self-assessment report, which did not identify any weaknesses in the health and safety programme. Learners have a reasonable awareness of complaints procedures, equality of opportunity and their rights and responsibilities.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Manufacturing technologies		2
Train to Gain	96	2

55. Pilot has 96 learners taking performing manufacturing operation qualifications at level 2. All learners are employed and training and assessment takes place within their employers' premises. Most learning is through individual coaching from assessors. Pilot works with five companies within the Midlands area and one company in the Northwest for the Train to Gain programme. Learners work in manufacturing companies that are involved in tubular fabrications, metal coating, printing and plastic pipe fabrication.

Manufacturing technologies*Strengths*

- particularly good individual support and coaching for learners
- much good assessment practice
- good team approach by assessors and employers to meet learners' needs

Weaknesses

- poor target-setting

Achievement and standards

56. Overall qualification success rates on the performing manufacturing operations qualification are satisfactory, at 67 per cent in 2005-06. At 95 per cent, a good proportion of the learners due to complete their qualification in 2006-07 have been retained on their programme. A good proportion of the learners that are retained achieve their qualification. Pilot has good awareness of the reasons why learners do not complete their programme, with many leaving their employer before achieving the NVQ.

57. Learners acquire new skills and an improved understanding of their role within their area of production. They develop a greater understanding of the importance of adhering to health and safety requirements and their own responsibilities within current legislation. Learners develop confidence and make positive suggestions to their employers about production and improving overall performance. Learners are extremely positive about their experience, and some progress to further training at local colleges or career advancement.

58. Most learners have inappropriate targets, including for completion dates on their individual learning plans. These targets do not take sufficient account of the many factors at work that influence learners' achievement, including changing learners' shift patterns, moving to different work situations, holidays and production requirements. Target-setting in some reviews is insufficient to guide the learners towards timely achievement or reflect on their own progress towards this. There have been no timely achievements to date, but

some target completion dates are unrealistic, being based on funding end dates.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Adult training (long courses)	2005-06	overall	66	67		0	
		timely	63	0		0	

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

59. Learners receive particularly good, individual support and coaching, which is identified early in their programme. A team of assessors with community language skills provides effective language support for learners whose first language is not English. Many learners are working within shift patterns and assessors regularly carry out assessments during anti-social hours. Learners receive very frequent and effective individual coaching to improve their understanding of their role within the area of production. Assessors ensure that learners fully understand concepts and use a range of techniques well, including drawings, pictures, descriptions and real-life items. Assessors support the learners in developing a range of skills and attributes, including a greater awareness of their position and importance within the company, and the benefits of working with colleagues as a member of a team.

60. Much of the assessment practice is good, very regular and takes sufficient account of the working environment and employers' business needs. Assessors visit learners very regularly, usually each week. Assessments are well planned and learners are well prepared. Learners fully understand the process and are very much involved in assessment. Assessors ensure that learners strictly adhere to health and safety procedures throughout assessment. Assessors check the learners' understanding thoroughly and appropriately. Learners receive good-quality feedback, which is critical where appropriate, but supportive and constructive throughout. The company records assessments comprehensively.

61. Assessors, learners and employers work very productively to ensure the success of the manufacturing programme. Assessors' visits are managed well to ensure that the company's production is not disrupted. Assessors have a broad range of experience within their industries and use this well in developing good working relationships and effective lines of communication with employers. Assessors continuously improve their knowledge of each employer's business, manufacturing techniques and working practices. One assessor took part in work tasters with the company before starting working with learners. Employers encourage their staff to take part in the manufacturing programme. There are good participation rates by learners and employers.

62. Assessors use a sufficient range of techniques and tests to identify any additional support that learners may need to achieve their qualification. Many learners who have weak literacy skills receive effective support towards their NVQ from assessors. Learners

receive clear information, advice and guidance at the start of and throughout their programme. Learners receive appropriate and impartial advice about further training opportunities on completion. All learners take part in an effective induction at the start of their programme.

Leadership and management

63. Assessors and managers demonstrate good teamwork and share best practice effectively. The communication of new policies and procedures is effective. Assessors receive regular training, including in health and safety and equality of opportunity. Managers have a good awareness of the difficulties of assessors working in isolation within companies spread over a wide geographical area, and they ensure that they make regular contact by visits, telephone calls and e-mails. Arrangements for internal verification are thorough and effective. Many assessors have upgraded their assessment qualifications and are gaining a teaching qualification. All staff are fully involved in identifying strengths and weaknesses, but these have not been used effectively in the self-assessment report. Learners have an adequate understanding of equality of opportunity, which has been introduced recently as part of the review process.

