

INSPECTION REPORT

Nuneaton Training Centre Limited

24 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*

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Nuneaton Training Centre Limited (NTC) is a company limited by guarantee, established in 1986 by the Nuneaton Council for Voluntary Service. It contracts with Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide Entry to Employment (E2E) and work-based learning for young people. NTC offers training in engineering, social care, business administration, customer service, retailing, hairdressing and warehousing. It subcontracts the training in lift-truck driving and motor vehicle to Automotive Transport Training. NTC currently provides training towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) on two projects jointly funded by the LSC and the European Social Fund (ESF).
2. NTC is contracted by Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce Training Limited to provide training on the project locally known as 'Skills 2 Success'. Most of the learners on this programme are employed in the care sector and are over 19 years old. The voluntary sector consortium for Coventry and Warwickshire, based in Coventry, is the lead provider for the project known as 'Recognition Plus'. It contracts with NTC to provide training in business administration for adults working in voluntary community organisations. NTC's third ESF-funded programme is known as 'On Board', and it is for learners preparing to join E2E. Government-funded training accounts for approximately 95 per cent of NTC's business.
3. NTC is managed by a board of directors, which sets the company's strategic vision and direction. A chief executive reports to the board and supervises the management of the company. NTC employs a further 18 members of staff. These include three co-ordinators for quality improvement, links with employers and NVQ training. The post of E2E co-ordinator is currently vacant. NTC has increased its staffing by four teaching and management posts since the previous inspection.
4. NTC recruits most of its learners from the borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth, although it has recently expanded its provision in social care to include learners in parts of Staffordshire. In June 2006, the percentage of unemployed people who were aged between 18 and 24 years was 30.2 per cent in Nuneaton and Bedworth, compared with 32.3 per cent nationally. Unemployment rates overall for Nuneaton and Bedworth in June 2006 were 2.6 per cent. Most business activity in the area is carried out by small and medium-sized enterprises. The 2001 census found that 4.4 per cent of the population of the Nuneaton and Bedworth were from minority ethnic groups, compared with a national average of 9.1 per cent. In 2005, 47 per cent of school leavers from the Nuneaton and Bedworth district achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above, compared with a national average of 56.3 per cent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Leadership and management are satisfactory, as are the arrangements for quality improvement and equality of opportunity. The training in business administration and law is good. Provision is

satisfactory in health, public services and care, and preparation for life and work.

6. The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process. NTC adopts a critical approach to self-assessment, which is an established annual process. Staff use self-assessment well as a tool to evaluate the quality of the provision and identify areas for improvement. They collaborate enthusiastically in teams and use an appropriate range of evidence, including data and the views of employers and learners. All staff take part in awarding each of the grades and contribute well to identifying priorities for improvement. The self-assessment report for 2005-06 provides a thorough evaluation of the provision, with a strong emphasis on evaluating how well the company meets the learners' needs. Inspectors agreed with most of the weaknesses, but a few of the strengths were overstated. Only the report on equality of opportunity was not sufficiently evaluative.

7. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements. Since 2003-04, success rates have improved significantly across all of NTC's provision. Staff collaborate effectively to monitor learners' progress, share good practice and develop new ideas to help learners stay in training and achieve their goals. Managers and staff have been successful at developing and improving most of the programmes over time. Weak aspects of the provision identified at the previous inspection that have now improved include initial assessments, internal verification and the use of data to support operational planning and management. However, the implementation of some of these developments was slow, for example the introduction of apprenticeships. NTC's quality improvement arrangements provide a satisfactory basis for further improvement of these programmes. However, action plans are insufficiently detailed and do not record the main actions required for improvement clearly enough.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NUNEATON TRAINING CENTRE LIMITED:

- continue to increase success rates and the achievement of qualifications
- improve action-planning and target-setting for staff and learners
- improve the co-ordination of E2E
- improve the management of equality of opportunity
- complete the implementation of quality improvement strategies

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

Health, public services and care			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Social care</i>		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	23	3	
Other government-funded provision	51	3	

Preparation for life and work			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Employability training</i>		3	
Other government-funded provision	7	None	
Entry to Employment	33	3	

Business administration and law			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Administration</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	21	2	
Other government-funded provision	9	None	
<i>Customer service</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	3	None	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. Inspectors reported on and graded health, public services and care, preparation for life and work, and business administration and law. Inspectors also examined evidence from the programmes in engineering, retailing, hairdressing and warehousing, which were not reported on separately, to support judgements in leadership and management.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	18
Number of learners interviewed	46
Number of staff interviewed	13
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	16
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	6
Number of visits	1

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- good development of staff
- well-resourced training programmes
- good internal communications
- good promotion of social inclusion

Weaknesses

- insufficient target-setting for staff and learners
- insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities
- slow implementation of some quality improvement strategies

Health, public services and care

Social care

Strengths

- good range of flexible training
- particularly effective individual support and coaching
- good range of resources

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of induction training

- slow implementation of apprenticeship frameworks

Preparation for life and work

Employability training

Strengths

- good progression rates
- wide range of short courses and vocational tasters
- good personal support

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning of teaching and learning
- weak target-setting
- insufficient co-ordination of E2E

Business administration and law

Strengths

- good learner success rates
- good support for learners at work
- thorough monitoring of individual learners' progress

Weaknesses

- narrow approach to assessment

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NUNEATON TRAINING CENTRE LIMITED:

- the relaxed atmosphere and friendly, approachable staff
- the way tutors work with them and the interest they show in them
- putting background knowledge and practical work together
- 'the way my tutor talks me through things so I understand them'
- the individual support and coaching
- finding a work placement and a job that suits them
- the reviews - they keep them 'on track'
- the well-organised visits by assessors

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NUNEATON TRAINING CENTRE LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of paperwork and writing
- the number of visits to interesting places
- the range of work placements
- the spread of short courses over a longer period of time - 'it's hard to pick up everything so quickly'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of staff
- well-resourced training programmes
- good internal communications
- good promotion of social inclusion

Weaknesses

- insufficient target-setting for staff and learners
- insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities
- slow implementation of some quality improvement strategies

9. The development of staff is a high priority in the business plan. This is backed up by significant investment in training. Some mandatory training for all staff on relevant topics, such as training in equality and diversity and counselling, has led to national qualifications at level 2. Some members of staff have received good support to help them carry out different roles and greater responsibilities within the company. This has included an effective recent initiative involving an assessment of individuals' management potential and a subsequent programme of training on relevant topics, such as thinking clearly and analytically, and setting goals and standards to help them improve aspects of management identified as areas for development. Staff development is managed well. Most staff have or are working towards appropriate teaching qualifications. Staff evaluate training courses and events they attend effectively and use meetings well to share any up-to-date information, ideas or approaches. Induction for new staff is planned well. Managers allow sufficient time for new staff to familiarise themselves with all the work of the company before they take on the full responsibility of their role. Although NTC's provision against each of the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes is at least satisfactory, staff have not received sufficient training on the requirements of the Children Act 2004.

10. NTC continues to invest well to improve the quality of many aspects of the provision. The company provides a wide range of additional short courses that lead to national qualifications and are valued by learners and employers. NTC implements effective procedures for providing incentives and rewards for all learners. These include bonus payments for the achievement of qualifications or good attendance on work placement, and educational visits and field trips, as well as other visits, such as lunch in a restaurant, picnics or sports activities, to celebrate the achievements of groups of learners. Staff have realistic caseloads of learners and provide them with good support during frequent visits to their workplaces. NTC has also purchased a good range of learning resources to provide learners with off-the-job training at work, especially on the social care programmes. NTC's learning centre is bright, well equipped and well maintained, with good access to all the facilities for people with restricted mobility. Office space for staff was recently expanded effectively with the purchase of an additional building, close to the main learning centre. Financial planning and management are sound and meet the

requirements of the LSC. Managers keep good records, which the board of directors monitors effectively.

11. NTC uses meetings well to manage its programmes, particularly in social care and business administration. The network of meetings is structured well and frequent meetings take place within departments and across areas of learning. In particular, staff focus well on monitoring learners' progress and support needs, including additional learning support. Weekly meetings are also used well to identify learners who are at risk of falling behind or dropping out, and identify appropriate action to help learners catch up or increase their motivation to achieve. Staff working in different areas of learning also share ideas on different ways to support learners and develop learning activities or materials. Meetings in E2E are satisfactory. NTC's managers continue to make a good contribution to the local and regional support and development groups for local work-based learning providers.

12. NTC carries out appropriate procedures for monitoring health and safety. The company carries out appropriate risk assessments routinely at learners' workplaces and at its own premises. Staff and learners receive appropriate training on health and safety. Similarly, NTC has effective procedures for the application and administration of checks by the Criminal Record Bureau for staff and, where appropriate, for learners.

13. NTC's strategy for providing literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. The action plan has appropriate objectives. Most learners below level 1 receive satisfactory additional support in literacy and numeracy. However, NTC has not sufficiently developed expertise in providing numeracy and language support across the provision.

14. NTC has made significant changes to the provision from 2004 by phasing out its NVQ training programmes and developing apprenticeships. However, the implementation of some of these changes has not been managed effectively, particularly at the start of the process. Targets on initial action plans are not sufficiently detailed. Staff have not received sufficiently detailed guidance on what they need to do to implement these changes. Timescales for these developments have not been clear. Staff have been slow to provide some learners with sufficient information on the requirements of the frameworks and the integration of training and assessment of different aspects of the frameworks has also been developed too slowly. Similarly, staff have not received sufficiently detailed information on the implementation of new initiatives, such as procedures for recognising and recording progress and achievements. Managers and staff use NTC's data systems well to monitor overall success rates. However, most staff are unaware of targets to improve timely success rates, including the success rates of learners on ESF-funded programmes. Similarly, many learners do not have sufficiently challenging targets for preparing for assessments, achieving qualifications or completing their programmes. Although staff monitor learners' progress effectively, they do not monitor many learners' timely achievements sufficiently. NTC has identified that target-setting for learners on E2E is weak.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

15. NTC promotes social inclusion well. The company successfully implements its very strong strategic focus on developing people from excluded and disadvantaged groups. Staff adopt an inclusive approach to marketing. They work well with schools in deprived areas and make good use of partnerships to develop new provision, such as the ESF-funded programmes that have successfully attracted adults from minority ethnic groups to work-based learning. A wide range of flexible programmes is a strong feature of NTC's provision. Learners receive a very good range of additional training and individual coaching on all programmes. Staff provide good support to meet learners' diverse needs. This includes funding for specialist assessments, the provision of clothes and equipment for job interviews and work, and referrals to appropriate specialist support agencies. Good celebration of learners' successes includes well-planned formal award events and additional excursions for groups of successful learners. Strategies to widen the participation of young people from minority ethnic groups and combat gender stereotyping are satisfactory. Although the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is still low, NTC has recently recruited more men onto business administration programmes.

16. NTC's equal opportunities policy is satisfactory and conveys appropriate messages. The separate policies on disabilities and for the prevention of bullying and harassment are also satisfactory and refer to appropriate legislation. However, the implementation plans are not clear and are not managed or monitored well enough. Managers collect satisfactory data on learners' backgrounds and they use this information appropriately to monitor learners' progress according to their gender, race and whether they have a disability.

17. The promotion of equality of opportunity to learners at induction is satisfactory. Staff use an appropriate range of learning activities to cover many of the most significant aspects of equality and diversity. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities and the company's complaints procedure. Staff set appropriate standards of behaviour and deal with inappropriate behaviour effectively.

18. The company's monitoring of equality of opportunity is insufficient. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is not reinforced adequately throughout learners' programmes. Staff are required to include equality of opportunity in discussions during progress reviews, but this process is not used well enough. Staff use a narrow range of questions and do not sufficiently explore learners' understanding of relevant topics or challenge any assumptions they may have. Although staff respond promptly and appropriately when learners or employers raise concerns, the monitoring of employers' equality of opportunity practices is not sufficiently meaningful or fully effective. NTC's quality improvement procedures have not identified these gaps in the monitoring of equality of opportunity.

Quality improvement**Contributory grade 3**

19. Success rates are good or improving across the company. Staff frequently review their ways of working to help improve practices and the quality of the programmes. NTC uses self-assessment well as a quality improvement tool. It is an established annual process to evaluate provision and involves all staff very effectively. Staff use a satisfactory range of evidence, such as learners' and employers' views, inspection reports and

achievement data. Their approach is self-critical and they view the process as one that is constructive and developmental. Inspectors agree with most of the weaknesses identified in the most recent self-assessment report, although a few of the strengths are overstated and the report on equality of opportunity contains too few judgements. However, the link between the quality improvement plan and the self-assessment report is not clear. The quality improvement plan does not readily show how the company will maintain the strengths identified in the report or how it will improve the weak areas in each area of learning.

20. Accountability to the board of directors is satisfactory. Senior managers and staff provide regular reports on progress towards achieving the objectives in the company's business plan. The board of directors listens well and offers constructive advice. Internal verification is satisfactory, although some assessors' meetings do not use sufficient evidence to standardise assessment practices. NTC has a satisfactory range of policies which are linked effectively to detailed outlines of procedures for each aspect of learners' programmes, such as the recruitment of learners, initial assessment and support. The monitoring of subcontractors' performance against the service level agreement is satisfactory and involves an appropriate range of activities, including the use of data, visits to learners and observations of learning sessions.

21. Some of the quality improvement strategies have not been implemented fully. Procedures to observe the quality of teaching and learning are not currently meeting the agreed target of one annual observation of each member of staff. Although staff receive constructive feedback on some aspects of their work, this feedback does not focus sufficiently on how well the teaching is facilitating learning. NTC does not monitor all aspects of its programmes sufficiently, for example reviews, induction and interviews. A system involving an individual review of each member of staff's use of the company's systems and forms was introduced in April 2006. Some staff now have a better understanding of how to use the systems, but some actions to help them improve are not sufficiently clear. This process has not been effective in improving some activities, such as the use of the E2E Passport and target-setting. Managers frequently review and adapt the questionnaires they use to collect the views of learners, and employers are currently introducing six-monthly focus groups. However, the questionnaires are not sufficiently probing and managers have not carried out the focus groups with learners from all areas of learning.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Social care		3
Apprenticeships for young people	23	3
Other government-funded provision	51	3

22. Currently, nine learners are working towards advanced apprenticeships in social care, 13 are working towards apprenticeships and one is working towards an NVQ at level 3. In addition, 51 learners are on the Skills 2 Success programme, working towards the NVQ in care at level 2. They are expected to achieve this qualification within six months. This programme started in November 2005. Learners are employed in residential homes, nursing homes and domiciliary care. NTC has two premises that are close to the town centre in Nuneaton. Most learners receive training in background knowledge for the NVQ, technical certificate and key skills at work on an individual basis or in small groups. NTC's staff visit learners at least monthly for training or assessment. Learners' progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks. Internal verification is managed by a central NVQ co-ordinator and NTC has two qualified internal verifiers in the social care team.

Social care

Strengths

- good range of flexible training
- particularly effective individual support and coaching
- good range of resources

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of induction training
- slow implementation of apprenticeship frameworks

Achievement and standards

23. Overall success rates on the social care programmes are satisfactory. The NVQ success rates increased significantly between 2003-04 and 2004-05, when they were well above the national average. By the end of the 11th month of 2005-06, the overall success rate for the achievement of NVQs was 65 per cent. Similarly, most learners on the Skills 2 Success programme have been retained and are making satisfactory progress towards the achievement of the NVQ. However, some learners' progress is slow, and they have over-run their agreed length of stay of six months and have not achieved the qualification. Very few apprentices left the programme up to the 11th month of 2005-06. However, data supplied on inspection indicates satisfactory overall success rates for apprenticeships of around 60 per cent.

24. Learners' standards of work are satisfactory. Many learners make good use of training

that is particularly relevant to their work in social care, such as training in to how to promote infection control and good practice in nutrition. Some learners develop appropriate specialist skills in social care relevant to their place of work. For example, some learners have developed skills that enable them to support clients with complex behaviour and communication needs. Many learners feel more confident in themselves and their ability to carry out their work activities independently and with confidence. Several former NTC learners still working at the same establishments where they did their training have gained promotion to senior care positions.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	1	100	43	0	17
		timely	1	100	18	0	6
NVQ training for young	2003-04	overall	24	54	62	0	0
		timely	20	25	44	0	0
	2004-05	overall	33	76	59	0	0
		timely	32	69	40	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 following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Other government funded																
Other government-funded provision	2006-07		2005-06													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		54													
Retained*	0		12													
Successfully completed	0		12													
Still in training	9		42													

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

The quality of provision

25. NTC provides a good range of training in social care. Staff have developed a wide range of short training sessions in relevant specialist subjects, such as hand hygiene and understanding and dealing with dementia. Staff work well with employers and learners to identify topics that are particularly relevant to their area of work in social care. Courses in some areas, such as manual handling, lead to additional national certificates.

Arrangements to put on these courses are good. NTC's staff adopt a flexible approach to help ensure that this training meets the needs of learners and employers. Most off-the-job training is arranged in short sessions and is carried out at learners' workplaces at a time that is least disruptive to learners and employers. Staff also successfully adopt an inclusive approach to training and promote learning well. For example, learners working in other care settings nearby also attend these short training sessions and other staff working at the

same venue may also participate, if there are spare places. Many employers also offer a good range of training. The on- and off-the-job training is co-ordinated well to help avoid repetition and provide a cohesive learning plan.

26. Learners receive particularly effective individual support and coaching. Most learners receive frequent visits from NTC's staff for training and assessment. These visits are organised well to fit in with learners' shift patterns and include visits during night shifts. In particular, learners receive clear and detailed explanations about what they are required to do for each assessment activity. They develop a good understanding of why they need to carry out these tasks in a specific way. Many learners develop relevant skills quickly and learn how to follow standard safe-working practices appropriately, such as lifting and handing objects. Staff also use these visits well to monitor learners' progress closely and provide effective individual personal support. Employers are also supportive. Many employers offer useful additional advice and guidance and provide them with constructive feedback on their progress at work.

27. NTC provides good learning resources and equipment. In particular, the company has invested in an extensive range of specialist practical equipment for use during the off-the-job training that staff carry out at learners' workplaces. These include manual handling aids, feeding equipment and an ultraviolet light box for training in hand hygiene. Staff and learners also make good use of a wide range of portable teaching and learning aids, such as a video and DVD players, a television, an overhead projector and laptop computers. Learners also make good use of the information packs, relevant textbooks and journals NTC has purchased to develop their understanding of their specialist areas and to support their work towards their qualification, including key skills and the technical certificate. In particular, learners on Skills 2 Success use these resources well to update their knowledge. A member of the care team is a subject learning coach and has made good use of the resources of the former Standards Unit to improve NTC's learning support materials. Most employers also have a good range of training materials to support learning in the workplace.

28. Training and learning are satisfactory. Tutors plan learning sessions well and use a wide range of learning activities and equipment that are linked effectively to clear and relevant objectives. Most tutors use effective questioning techniques and an appropriate variety of exercises to check learners' understanding. Similarly, assessment practices are satisfactory. Assessors make good use of observations of learners carrying out activities at work to assess their competence and they keep satisfactory records of these assessments. Learners receive detailed feedback and constructive advice on how to improve. However, some arrangements for using learners' prior achievements and experience are not sufficiently thorough. Records of learners' prior experience are not detailed enough. Staff do not explore sufficiently whether learners have enough evidence of their attainment during previous training courses.

29. NTC also provides satisfactory support for most learners with additional literacy and numeracy needs. Some learners make good use of care-related workbooks to help them develop their literacy skills and they receive satisfactory individual coaching at work or at NTC's training centres. Initial assessments are satisfactory. Learners complete an appropriate assessment of their vocational skills to help select an appropriate programme and level. Their learning styles are also identified during the induction programme and the outcomes are recorded on the learning plans. However, most staff do not use this

information sufficiently during training and assessments. Learners on Skills 2 Success receive a satisfactory short induction, which also involves appropriate assessment of their vocational skills. The programme requires NTC to contact an external provider if learners choose to receive additional support in literacy or numeracy.

30. The induction training programme covers a satisfactory range of topics, but staff do not, at a later stage in learners' training, reinforce sufficiently the information learners receive on induction. Many learners are unclear about the requirements of their qualification several months after starting the programme. Staff do not sufficiently check that learners know the full requirements of the apprenticeships or that they know how the work they are doing at any one time fits in to the achievement of the final award. Similarly, staff do not adequately check learners' understanding of equality of opportunity, their rights and responsibilities or the appeals procedure.

Leadership and management

31. Most aspects of leadership and management of the social care programmes are satisfactory. Assessors have a realistic number of learners to support and manage their workload effectively. They also take part in a wide range of staff development activities and keep comprehensive records of their professional development. NTC communicates well with employers and learners. Employers are kept up to date with learners' progress and any changes to the programme. Staff deal effectively and efficiently with any issues that employers or learners raise. Although staff use meetings well to monitor learners' progress, they do not put sufficient emphasis on setting and monitoring challenging targets. Timely success rates are improving, but some learners progress slowly, especially those who are on the Skills 2 Success programme.

32. Staff involved in all social care programmes have a pivotal role in identifying areas for improvement and continue to search for more ways to enhance the training programmes. They make a good contribution to the self-assessment process and monitor well their progress towards rectifying identified weaknesses at monthly meetings. Internal verification is satisfactory. Staff use an effective system to help ensure that learners' portfolios of evidence are sampled at different stages of the programme. They use monthly meetings effectively to monitor systems and share good practice in assessment and training. However, standardisation of the use of evidence is not fully effective.

33. NTC has been slow to implement the apprenticeship programmes fully. The company first offered apprenticeships in 2004-05 and now no longer offers NVQ training to young people. The different aspects of the apprenticeships are not integrated well enough. Many learners complete one aspect of the framework, such as the technical certificate, before starting to work towards another aspect. Although key skills are assessed in the context of social care, learning and assessments are not linked sufficiently to learners' work towards an NVQ or the technical certificate. Key skills are often not introduced at the start of the programme. However, NTC's managers and staff have identified this weakness and are beginning to implement all aspects of the framework together.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability training</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	7	None
Entry to Employment	33	3

34. Eleven of the 33 learners on NTC's E2E programme are in work placements, four are sampling work tasters and 18 attend training at the centre for a minimum of 16 hours each week. Training includes literacy and numeracy, personal and social development and preparation for employment. The 11 learners on placement are working towards NVQs at level 1, including distributive operations, housekeeping and vehicle maintenance. E2E learners also work towards qualifications in preparation for work and literacy and numeracy. E2E learners join the programme at any time during the year and stay, on average, for 35 weeks. A further seven learners follow the On Board programme, designed for those identified as not ready to join E2E. These learners study at the centre in Nuneaton for 14 hours each week for 12 to 14 weeks. The programme concentrates on developing learners' employability, literacy, numeracy and social skills. All learners receive an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and attend an induction at the start of their programme. The learners on both programmes are referred by Connexions' personal advisers and by word of mouth. The E2E co-ordinator post is vacant and NTC's employment co-ordinator is currently responsible for the programmes. Two tutors provide the centre-based training and review learners' progress. They are supported by a basic skills co-ordinator, a work-placement co-ordinator and NVQ assessors.

Employability training*Strengths*

- good progression rates
- wide range of short courses and vocational tasters
- good personal support

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning of teaching and learning
- weak target-setting
- insufficient co-ordination of E2E

Achievement and standards

35. Progression rates from E2E programmes are good. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, progression rates at NTC were significantly higher than the national progression rates of 33 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively. In 2003-04, just over half of the 51 learners who progressed found a job and just over one-third of them started an apprenticeship. In 2004-05, of the 42 learners who left for employment or further training, 29 per cent progressed to apprenticeships, 45 per cent to employment and 26 per cent to further

education. In 2005-06, progression rates continue to be good. All of the 10 learners who completed the programme progressed to one of these outcomes. Many learners on extended work placements progress to permanent jobs in the same company. The achievement of learners working towards NVQs at level 1 is satisfactory. The achievement rates have increased from 59 per cent in 2003-04 to 63 per cent in 2004-05.

36. Many learners make satisfactory progress to overcome barriers to employment and most of them improve their personal and social skills. Learners report significant improvements in their confidence and self-esteem during the programme. They develop the ability to work collaboratively and productively with others and make significant gains in the employability skills that they need for work. In work placements, learners develop good occupational and employability skills. The seven On Board learners are making satisfactory progress in their preparation to join the main E2E programme.

37. The standard of work of learners working towards NVQs is good. Their folders and portfolios of evidence are well organised and include good examples of carefully researched work. Many learners have improved their time-keeping skills but some learners arrive late or do not attend regularly.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Entry to Employment	2006-07		2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		1999-00							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		37		68	100	79	100	0	100						
Progression ¹	0		10		42	62	51	65	0	100						
Achieved objectives ²	0		10		43	63	53	67	0	100						
Still in learning	9		19		5	7	0	0	0	100						

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

The quality of provision

38. NTC offers a wide range of short courses and vocational tasters to involve and motivate learners. Recent courses E2E learners have attended include health and safety, first aid, manual handling and fire training. Some of these are accredited and enable learners to achieve national qualifications, often for the first time. These qualifications are valued by employers and help enhance learners' confidence and improve their self-esteem. A Connexions adviser provides effective motivational short courses to help learners develop their self-awareness and self-esteem and have a greater awareness of their potential. Learners' individual programmes also include a wide range of additional activities, such as vocational tasters, sports and leisure activities and visits to local employers. Learners interested in working in the building trades attend a well-planned construction module at a specialist training centre one day each week. They work in well-equipped workshops and a realistic work environment.

39. Learners receive good personal support. Staff work effectively with learners to plan a programme of work tasters and work placements. They match placements well to learners' interests and aspirations, and employers are particularly supportive. Learners on

placements also receive frequent visits from NTC's staff and provide good support to help them achieve at work. Staff respond promptly when personal problems arise and work effectively with learners and their families to resolve them. They are aware when it is not appropriate for them to provide advice themselves and make appropriate referrals to other agencies to provide learners with access to the specialist support and guidance they need to overcome difficulties with, for example, housing, and drug and alcohol misuse. Staff from these specialist organisations also contribute to learning sessions as visiting speakers. Learners and tutors work together informally, but with mutual respect. Learners speak highly of their tutors and assessors, and of the welcoming environment the centre provides.

40. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed during induction. A satisfactory programme to support learners' individual needs is developed and learners work towards qualifications in literacy and numeracy where appropriate. However, learners do not use materials relevant to their work placements or to jobsearch in the additional support sessions. NTC also provides satisfactory information, advice and guidance. Learners receive sufficient initial information and advice about the programme from tutors and Connexions' personal advisers. Information and advice is given relating to progression during the induction period and in the final stages of their programme.

41. Resources are satisfactory. NTC provides appropriate equipment and training rooms. The standard of furniture, fixtures and fittings is good. Although the training rooms have sufficient modern computers with internet access, these are not always used to their full potential. Learning materials are used successfully to encourage the development of learners' communication skills and teamwork. However, some of the contexts of the materials are not sufficiently linked to learners' individual or group learning goals. Many of the staff are new to working on E2E and have little experience of teaching or of the programme.

42. Teaching and learning are not planned sufficiently. Session plans do not meet the specific needs of individuals. Lesson plans across all three strands of the E2E programme are too generic, with no planning or consideration for learners working at different levels. Tutors do not plan learning sufficiently to meet the wide range of individual needs in groups. The more able learners are not set sufficiently challenging tasks, while less able learners do not receive the individual support they need to complete tasks successfully and to develop their skills. Aims and objectives are poorly developed in lesson plans and are not shared effectively with learners. Learners do not have sufficient understanding of the weekly programme of activities. Many lessons are based on worksheets and handouts, and some have a slow pace. Tutors do not make sufficient use of questioning techniques to stimulate discussion or to check understanding.

43. Learners understand the broad, long-term vocational and literacy and numeracy aims of their programme. Targets for learners following NVQ programmes are clear, relevant and recorded adequately on NVQ documents. However, short-term target-setting for learners attending the learning centre is weak. Targets recorded in progress reviews do not identify the small steps for learning that learners need. A high proportion of learners are identified as having literacy and/or numeracy needs. However, learners have few specific, measurable targets for literacy and numeracy skills development or for aspects of personal development other than attendance. Achievement of short-term targets is not

assessed thoroughly during learners' progress reviews. Learners are unclear about their short-term goals and they do not get sufficiently specific feedback on the progress that they have made.

Leadership and management

44. Internal communication is generally satisfactory. Weekly team meetings complement the more informal sharing of views, concerns and ideas. E2E staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to the programme. NTC has good arrangements for staff to work towards teaching qualifications. However, the induction for new staff does not include sufficient information and training on the implementation of E2E, including the use of the E2E Passport.

45. Social inclusion of learners in classes is good. Staff provide good individual support and coaching, and they have a good understanding of the learners' individual personal support needs. They set and achieve appropriate standards of behaviour during learning sessions. Learners receive adequate information about equality of opportunity at induction, but this is not reinforced sufficiently during the programme or in progress reviews. Staff do not monitor equality of opportunity in the workplace sufficiently.

46. Some quality improvement arrangements are not implemented fully. All staff are aware of the self-assessment report, although some were not in post during the process. The recent report's findings match most of the strengths identified by inspectors, but it does not identify all of the weaknesses. Learners' views are collected through focus groups and regular written evaluation. However, these are not sufficiently probing and do not support effective quality improvement. Staff keep satisfactory data on progression rates and the achievement of qualifications, but they do not keep separate data on the achievement of learning objectives.

47. The E2E programme is not co-ordinated sufficiently. NTC has developed an extensive range of modules that cover personal and social skills development and preparation for work. These are not integrated effectively to produce a coherent programme for groups of learners, that is developmental and matches their particular needs and interests. Many learning activities, such as computer training, do not sufficiently link with other aspects of the programme. Similarly, training in literacy and numeracy is carried out separately to the social and personal development activities. Progress reviews do not provide learners with sufficient feedback on all aspects of their programme. The recently appointed work-placement co-ordinator and the NVQ tutor have begun to share contacts and co-ordinate their activities, but this is at an early stage of development.

Business administration and law**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration		
Apprenticeships for young people	21	2
Other government-funded provision	9	None
Customer service		
Apprenticeships for young people	3	None

48. Fifteen of NTC's business administration learners are apprentices and six are working towards the advanced apprenticeship. The three learners on the customer service programme are also advanced apprentices. The induction programme includes initial assessments in literacy and numeracy and key skills, as well as an exploration of interests, motivation and learning styles. NTC phased out its NVQ training programmes for young people during 2005-06. Of the seven learners on the ESF-funded programme known as 'Recognition Plus', four are volunteers and three are employed. The programme aims to help learners involved in voluntary sector organisations to gain an NVQ in business administration at level 2. In addition, two learners are on the Skills 2 Success programme, which aims to help employed learners achieve an NVQ at level 2 within six months. Adult learners complete a skills scan when they start the programme. This involves identifying the skills they carry out at work. All learners receive training from NTC's staff at work. In addition, some learners attend off-the-job training at NTC's training centre. Two qualified assessors provide the training and assessment. A qualified internal verifier co-ordinator samples the judgements made by assessors. The occupational area is co-ordinated by one of the assessors.

Strengths

- good learner success rates
- good support for learners at work
- thorough monitoring of individual learners' progress

Weaknesses

- narrow approach to assessment

Achievement and standards

49. Learners' success rates are good. By the 11th month of 2005-06, 65 per cent of the 20 leavers successfully completed the framework and, according to data provided on inspection, all of the additional eight leavers in July 2006 were successful. Learners' rates of progress are also good and have improved since the beginning of 2005-06. Success rates in NVQs have continued to improve 2003-04 and 2004-05, and the rate was 71 per cent for apprentices in 2005-06. However, only 43 per cent of the remaining seven learners who left the NVQ training programme in 2005-06 were successful.

50. Learners achieve satisfactory standards of work and develop good employability skills. This is a significant achievement for the many learners who feel that they achieved very little at school or on previous training programmes. Some learners develop particularly

well in their job and are given extra responsibilities or promotion at work. Many learners gain additional national qualifications in subjects relevant to their work, such as health and safety, information and communications technology (ICT), and first aid. Learners on Recognition Plus achieve NVQs in business administration satisfactorily within the agreed length of programme. These adult learners gain national recognition for the skills they already demonstrate at work.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No. of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	2	0	46	0	28
		timely	2	0	30	0	18
	2004-05	overall	1	100	47	100	31
		timely	1	0	35	0	23
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	2	50	51	50	37
		timely	1	0	25	0	18
	2004-05	overall	4	100	56	75	45
		timely	4	25	35	0	28
NVQ training for young	2003-04	overall	14	71	48	0	0
		timely	13	46	35	0	0
	2004-05	overall	16	69	57	0	0
		timely	16	56	43	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 following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Other government funded																
Other government-funded provision	2006-07		2005-06													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	0		16	100												
Retained*	0		6	38												
Successfully completed	0		6	38												
Still in training	0		9	56												

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

The quality of provision

51. Learners receive good support at work from employers, work-placement providers and NTC's staff. For example, many employers and workplace supervisors arrange for learners to spend extensive time to develop their skills through on- and off-the-job training. They also take an interest in learners' progress and take time to provide constructive feedback during progress reviews. NTC's staff make frequent visits to learners at work and they are particularly skilled at liaising effectively with learners and employers to plan

realistic individual programmes of training. They also use these visits well to provide individual training to learners who were unable to attend off-the-job training sessions. Staff also provide good personal support. Many learners confide in NTC's staff about their personal problems and the staff are professional in their response and make good use of external specialist agencies, when they feel this is appropriate. Learners promote the learning programmes well to other employees or volunteers, and in workplaces where there are several learners, they support each other very effectively.

52. NTC's staff monitor learners' progress thoroughly at all stages of their programmes. Each member of staff keeps detailed records of their learners' progress towards qualifications. The large chart displayed on the training room wall is updated frequently and provides a useful summary of learners' overall progress. Staff use the frequent meetings very well to go through each learner's records and to share ideas on how to support their development. They keep good records of these meetings, including agreed actions to resolve identified problems or to help learners tackle any barriers that may prevent them from successfully completing their programmes. Staff are also familiar with NTC's management information systems and use the data well to monitor the success rates for the programme.

53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A flexible programme of off-the-job training takes place at learners' workplaces or at one of NTC's training centres. Learning sessions are planned well and tutors are skilled at using a good range of methods and learning activities. These activities are linked effectively to the background knowledge required for NVQs, technical certificates and key skills. Staff make effective use of a diverse range of learning resources. One of the assessors is taking part in the former Standards Unit learning coach programme and has already shared some useful ideas and materials with colleagues and learners. Learners use the activities well to develop their vocational skills and knowledge and to gain confidence in relevant communication skills, such as presenting group work. In particular, young learners also develop behaviour patterns and attitudes that are appropriate in a work environment.

54. Initial assessment of learners is thorough and takes place during satisfactory induction programmes. Staff use an appropriate range of initial and diagnostic assessments and keep good records of learners' support needs. Learners receive satisfactory additional literacy and numeracy support, either at work or at NTC's training centre. This training includes the use of computer programmes that are particularly effective in helping some learners develop their literacy skills.

55. NTC's Recognition Plus programme provides training and assessment in a good range of organisations in the voluntary sector. In particular, NTC's staff have built good working relationships with organisations working with minority ethnic groups. People working in or supporting these organisations receive good opportunities to enhance their existing skills and gain a national qualification. Training includes a short satisfactory induction to the programme. Staff make good use of the results of the skills scan to effectively match the activities learners carry out at work to the NVQ units. External provision is arranged for learners who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

56. NTC's staff take a narrow approach to assessment. They give too much emphasis to the use of written summaries of activities learners have carried out at work. Although some learners are given the opportunity to show how they understand and use the

activities they have described, this does not happen often enough and it is not recorded sufficiently. The use of evidence is not planned in sufficient detail. Significant amounts of evidence in some learners' portfolios only demonstrate that they have achieved a narrow range of competences. Assessors do not provide learners with sufficient guidance to help them prepare evidence that demonstrates a wide enough range of their skills. Target-setting is not sufficiently challenging. For example, timescales set for assessments are too flexible and are extended too readily, if it is agreed that learners have not prepared for the assessment sufficiently. Some learners have good potential, but their progress towards the qualifications is too slow. Implementation of the new assessment guidance has been slow.

Leadership and management

57. Staff have developed the implementation of apprenticeships effectively. They have frequently reviewed and modified systems for teaching and assessing the learners' key skills and the knowledge they required for the technical certificates since NTC first offered the qualification in 2003-04. The current systems are effective and the programmes are managed well. For example, key skills and technical certificates are now started at an appropriate time in the learners' training programmes. Staff take part in a wide range of training and professional development. Staff have or are working towards appropriate qualifications and have appropriate caseloads of learners to support and assess. The accommodation and ICT facilities at the training centre are appropriate for the development of essential office skills.

58. Learners have an adequate knowledge of their rights and responsibilities. They agree a learning contract that requires them to treat others with respect. Visual messages about equality of opportunity at the training centre are reassuring for learners. However, their understanding of equality and diversity is not reinforced or monitored sufficiently throughout their training programmes.

59. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Staff use the self-assessment process well to evaluate their programmes. Many of the weak or satisfactory areas identified at the previous inspection have improved, especially the management of teaching and learning, and the involvement of employers in work-based assessment. Inspectors agreed with the grade awarded in the company's most recent self-assessment report, but some of the strengths were overstated. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements. Non-compliance is clearly identified and resolved quickly. Observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but it is not used sufficiently early to support the development of new staff. NTC has recently begun to use focus groups to collect learners' views, in addition to the use of questionnaires. Managers analyse the information they collect effectively, but systems for implementing, recording and evaluating action identified as a result of the analysis are not clear.

