INSPECTION REPORT

Hull City Council Training

16 November 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
• **learndirect** 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. Hull City Council Training (HCCT), formerly known as EDA Training, holds a contract with Humberside Learning and Skills Council to provide Entry to Employment (E2E) and apprenticeship programmes. The organisation has provided work-based learning since 1979. HCCT in its current form is part of Hull City Council's development and renewal directorate.

2. The senior management team comprises the group training manager and the quality and development team, who are responsible to the council head of service. HCCT operates from four main training centres and a head office in Hull. It provides most training directly, apart from some E2E training which is subcontracted.

3. Forty-four per cent of school leavers attained five general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above in the Kingston upon Hull unitary authority area in 2005, compared with a national average of 57.1 per cent. Unemployment rates in September 2006 were 5.5 per cent, compared with a national average of 2.6 per cent. According to the 2001 census, 2.3 per cent of the population of Kingston upon Hull are minority ethnic group members, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent. The city is ranked ninth in the national index of multiple deprivation.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS   Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of HCCT is good.** More specifically, leadership and management are good as is the provider's arrangement for quality improvement. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. Provision is good in engineering and manufacturing technologies, in information and communications technology (ICT), in preparation for life and work and in business administration and law.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.**   The process is consultative and the self-assessment report reflects much of the inspection findings. It contains particularly good analysis of data and links well to development planning.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** All quality assurance systems are well established and are effective in identifying issues and improving performance. Of particular note is the leadership focus on raising success rates for all areas of learning, which has been particularly successful for apprentices in engineering and business administration.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HULL CITY COUNCIL TRAINING:
- continue to improve success rates
- improve the sharing of good practice
- improve the quality of the progress review process for learners

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	1
Quality improvement	2

Engineering and manufacturing technologies		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Engineering Apprenticeships for young people	214	2

Information and communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ICT for users Apprenticeships for young people	130	*2* 2

Preparation for life and work		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Employability training Entry to Employment	127	2

Business administration and law		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration Apprenticeships for young people	42	2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. This was HCCT's second inspection, its first being reported on in February 2003. This inspection covered HCCT's leadership and management and provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies, in ICT, in business administration and law, and in preparation for life and work. Provision in construction and in arts, media and publishing, inspected in 2003, were not inspected this time due to very small numbers of learners.

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	32
Number of learners interviewed	73
Number of staff interviewed	68
Number of employers interviewed	21
Number of subcontractors interviewed	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	26
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic management
- very effective operational management
- good quality improvement measures
- outstanding inclusion

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Engineering

Strengths

- extensive range of additional qualifications
- inspirational teaching activities
- extensive use of information and learning technology (ILT)
- highly effective induction programme
- very good resources to support learning

Weaknesses

- some poorly planned and monitored reviews

Information and communications technology

Strengths

- good success rates for apprenticeships
- very effective development of vocational and employability skills
- good use of ILT in teaching and assessment
- comprehensive induction

Weaknesses

- low advanced apprenticeship success rates
- insufficient planning of learning

Preparation for life and work

Employability training

Strengths

- good attainment
- good progression into employment
- good range of learning activities
- exceptional support for learners
- good operational management

Weaknesses

- insufficiently precise target-setting

Business administration and law

Administration

Strengths

- very good apprenticeship success rates
- good work placements
- good progression routes for learners
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge for some learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HULL CITY COUNCIL TRAINING:

- the good opportunities to develop skills for jobs
- the very approachable manager
- the course - 'it's better than expected'
- getting a work placement quickly
- receiving lots of support

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HULL CITY COUNCIL TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of information about job options
- 'the qualification is dragged out a bit'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 2

Strengths

- good strategic management
- very effective operational management
- good quality improvement measures
- outstanding inclusion

8. The strategic planning at HCCT is good. Strategic objectives of are closely aligned to those of Hull City Council as well as regional and national objectives. Senior managers offer good strategic support and the response to the government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda is integral to HCCT's objectives and direction. Local community needs are analysed well and training is appropriately targeted to meet these needs and local economic opportunities. The organisation is also well aware of and responsive to local employers' needs. Support from elected members is good and key cabinet members attend functions to celebrate learners' success and effect appropriate governance of the organisation. HCCT works well with strategic partners in the area including the local college, schools and other providers. HCCT has close links with the city's 14 to 19 agenda with good involvement in the development of new diplomas, and is taking a lead in the provision of good vocational provision for 14 to 16 year-olds.

9. Operational management within HCCT is very effective. Since the previous inspection, communication has improved through better management of information, improved management of meetings and better dialogue with staff. Staff development is very effective through regular appraisals, good assessment of training needs and encouragement for all staff to take personal and professional development opportunities. Staff are well qualified and most are taking part in additional professional development. Management of resources is good, accommodation is being improved and the wide range of learning materials is of a good standard. Teaching aids are of good quality, including interactive whiteboards, industry-standard computers and software which are used well by tutors. Partnerships are established with other providers in the area to share and ensure best use of specialist equipment. HCCT has more focused and clearer criteria for improved recruitment. Initial assessment has been strengthened with the introduction of a nationally recognised initial assessment diagnostic programme which is used for all learners.

10. A sophisticated management information system has been developed well and is used to produce good management information and analysis. Target-setting is well established throughout the organisation and is effective in measuring and monitoring the performance of teams and individual staff.

11. HCCT has effective systems to manage its subcontractors. Standard agreements are satisfactory and contain appropriate details of contractual requirements. Regular meetings examine both performance and learners' satisfaction. Appropriate records are kept and actions are followed up. Good informal meetings between staff are frequent and

effective. Health and safety is managed well. Health and safety training is given to all staff. Placements are appropriately checked by qualified staff before learners are deployed, and all placements are re-checked annually. Learners have appropriate training and have good health and safety awareness.

12. Arrangements to support literacy, numeracy and language skills are good. Although the provider does not have any formal strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support for learners, its policy and procedures are effective. Good additional expertise has been developed to provide specialist support and, when such a need is identified, HCCT responds quickly and effectively in providing the appropriate level of support for the learner on an individual basis. A good range of appropriate adaptive technology is available.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 1

13. HCCT provides outstanding inclusion in Hull. Detailed strategies reflect present and future employers' and learners' needs extremely well. Managers include astute and specific equality and diversity aims and objectives, reviewed annually. Learning programmes match very well the needs of a city with large areas of deprivation. HCCT has excellent links with a large number of local schools which all benefit from HCCT's vocational training and facilities. These links are especially strong in engineering. Employers in all subject-sector areas are included purposefully in provision. Senior managers use data extremely well to analyse the effectiveness of inclusion of different groups. Currently, they are acting on data on the participation of people with a disability. The organisation's equality working group has been established well over the past eight years. The working group members are each developing expertise in different areas of equality and diversity and purposefully to use it to work with new community groups. Learners' individual support needs, including literacy and numeracy support, are met exceptionally well. HCCT supports a range of learners, some from very disadvantaged backgrounds. Steady improvement in attainment of literacy and numeracy and key skills qualifications has been recorded over the past three years in most subject-sector areas. The organisation has a well-used initial assessment system. Learners, many with challenging behaviour, are engaging with learning and achieving good skills and qualifications. Success is celebrated very well. Successes are recorded regularly in a variety of publications and recognised in high-profile award ceremonies attended by families and employers.

14. Promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Working relationships are promoted well. In equality and diversity sessions, tutors and learners raise and discuss pertinent issues that are useful to learners' understanding. Equality and diversity are integrated well with apprenticeship programmes. The organisation has for many years produced an excellent equality and diversity magazine which is upbeat and positive and covers many salient and topical equality and diversity areas. Good information and interactive quizzes are provided to all learners on CDs. Complaints procedures are clear and understood well by learners. All learners are given discreet contact numbers in case they feel bullied or harassed or have suffered discrimination. Discussion of equality and diversity in reviews is generally satisfactory. Well-organised and established teaching and learning raises learners' awareness well, although there are insufficient examples or activities of the positive social effects of equality and diversity. Staff have received a range of training in equality of diversity and the organisation is active in incorporating new legislation and research into the provision. However, little organisational testing exists to verify staff

understanding.

15. HCCT's response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 is good. Good support exists for learners with sensory impairments. Access for people with restricted mobility is good in some centres and satisfactory adjustment has been made at others. The organisation has a satisfactory child protection policy. All staff have undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks and a designated person is responsible for child protection. 'Every Child Matters' activities and information are included well on programmes. For example, learners are given good guidance on health, nutrition and being safe.

Quality improvement   **Contributory grade 2**

16. Quality improvement measures are good. At the previous inspection a key weakness across most areas of learning was poor achievement of frameworks. In all those areas success rates have improved significantly. Data is used well to monitor learners' progress. A wide range of appropriate data analysis provides a good basis for quality monitoring and improvement strategies. The provider makes good use of an increasing amount of feedback from employers, staff and learners to bring about change and improvement. It has implemented a rigorous system of observation of teaching and learning. This is developing and has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning, as well as in identifying progress review weaknesses identified by inspectors.

17. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and have a clear focus on increasing the benefits to the learner. Quality is a standard agenda item at regular team and management meetings. HCCT has set up effective working groups to deal with specific issues, such as an e-learning group which is developing and improving the use of ILT across the organisation. HCCT works well with other providers to both promote quality improvement and to improve its own systems and practice.

18. Quality assurance mechanisms are thorough and generally effective. Document and process audits are well planned, thorough and effective. Internal verification procedures are thorough and well documented and, together with assessment practices, meet the awarding bodies' standards well. Standardisation meetings are held regularly and are well recorded. The quality manual is thorough, regularly reviewed and updated, and understood by staff.

19. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. Each centre and area of learning develops its own self-assessment report and action plan, which the management team uses to develop HCCT's overall self-assessment report and action plan. This is, in turn, circulated to all staff for comment. All staff have good opportunities to make a contribution and comment on this draft report and feel the process is rigorous and accurate. The self-assessment process includes direct feedback from learners and subcontractors and takes into account feedback from employers. The detailed action plan arising from the self-assessment is monitored and reviewed at monthly team meetings and monthly management meetings and is used as a report to senior management. The self-assessment report broadly reflects the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspection team.

20. The action taken to resolve a few weaknesses identified during the inspection, which were also identified in the self-assessment report, have not yet had sufficient effect in

some areas of learning. For example, target-setting in reviews remains insufficient.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Engineering Apprenticeships for young people	214	2

21. Currently, 124 advanced apprentices and 90 apprentices attend engineering programmes. Apprentices take level 2 national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in performing engineering operations. Advanced apprentices take NVQs in production engineering at level 3. On-the-job assessment is carried out in the workplace by HCCT's team of field assessors. Off-the-job training is provided on a day-release basis, at HCCT's premises. The training centre has an engineering centre manager and one administration assistant. A senior instructor, four instructors, one senior field adviser and two field advisers have assessor and/or verifier responsibilities.

Engineering

Strengths

- extensive range of additional qualifications
- inspirational teaching activities
- extensive use of information and learning technology (ILT)
- highly effective induction programme
- very good resources to support learning

Weaknesses

- some poorly planned and monitored reviews

Achievement and standards

22. HCCT offers an extensive range of additional qualifications. Many learners study good-quality, useful short vocational courses in topics such as abrasive wheels and lifting techniques. They also take higher-level courses in line management at level 3. Learners take these courses purposefully and attain additional qualifications successfully. The qualifications increase learners' employability. Employers rate these additional qualifications highly.

23. Success rates for apprentices have improved significantly and are now satisfactory, having been poor at the previous reinspection. Success rates for the small number of advanced apprentices in 2005-06 are poor. Issues for seven of these learners are now resolved and they are making good progress. Learners currently on all apprenticeships are now making much better progress, compared with at the previous inspection and reinspection, and all are on target to complete their frameworks in a timely manner. Learners are no longer leaving the advanced apprenticeship early and HCCT monitors attendance well. Portfolios are structured and cross-referenced well and contain

vocational evidence at an appropriate level. Learners' and staff successes are celebrated well and there is much visual celebration of achievement around the centres visited.

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	24	38	57	21	46
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
	2004-05	overall	39	72	57	46	45
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	26	46	48	42	32
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
	2004-05	overall	70	50	52	43	41
		timely	0	0	0	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

24. Teaching activities are inspirational. Tutors plan sessions extremely well and offer learners stimulating activities. They engage learners well using a wide range of questioning techniques to check learning. In one lesson observed the tutor used innovative quizzing and gaming techniques to extremely good effect. The learners effectively took charge of the process. The tutor acted both as a skilful facilitator and coach to encourage progress through debate and discussion.

25. Very good use is made of ILT. The provision of ILT resources is good at all of the provider's centres. Smartboards are used well and effectively deployed. Tutors use up-to-date computer numerically controlled lathes and the machining centre well. HCCT provides good access for 14 to 16 year old learners who use good thermal plastic deposition and three-dimensional plotting equipment. This allows the learners to make visual representations of artefacts they have designed using industry-standard software. The provider has recently invested in a new system of computer-based learning equipment and tutors use this to add vibrancy to teaching and learning and increase the depth of learners' understanding.

26. The induction process is highly effective. Weeks before the formal induction, potential learners and parents are invited to attend an introduction to HCCT where the apprenticeship requirements are discussed in detail. Further meetings also include initial assessment where any support needs are identified and discussed thoroughly. A taster day is organised where the learners meet the staff with employers. There is also a barbeque event where the whole group meets the staff, and at which the first formal assignment is launched. The formal induction process covers six weeks and includes a two-day adventure activity which contributes to learners' wider key skills. Equality and diversity, key skills qualifications, portfolio-building and health and safety topics are also covered. Learners perform a range of tasks and attend local companies with the objective of agreeing a work placement at the end of the induction process. Learners speak highly about the induction process in developing their practical and confidence-building skills.

27. Assessment is regular and thorough. Good use is made of still and video digital imagery. Staff ask relevant questions and tailor off-the-job training to work-based requirements. Assessors use good questioning techniques during assessment to establish the depth of learners' background knowledge. Internal verification is good, with very thorough sampling plans. Portfolio evidence comes from a wide range of sources including work-based observation and witness statements.

28. Learners receive effective support from staff and employers. An open tutorial day is held every week where learners receive support from vocational staff on any aspect of the programme. Learners who have been working 'off site' and those who have missed sessions are offered support on Saturdays.

29. Some reviews are poorly planned and monitored. Reviews are frequent but the collection of review documents is fragmented. Reviews take place regularly in the workplace, usually with the learner and assessor and sometimes with the work-based manager. Some reviews do not include demanding target-setting. Equality and diversity concepts are not always sufficiently reinforced, with only simple and superficial questions being asked of the learner.

Leadership and management

30. Resources to support learning are very good. HCCT plans the engineering provision well. The new engineering centre is laid out and equipped exceptionally well, offering a full range of traditional facilities and up-to-date teaching and learning packages on industry-standard equipment. Good transport arrangements exist for learners for travelling to the new centre. The academy for 14 to 16 year olds is equipped equally well. Access to the centres is good for people with restricted mobility.

31. Engineering learning is managed well. Standardisation meetings are regular and recorded well. The managers of the engineering provision take an active approach and the learners value this greatly. Partnership initiatives are displayed clearly on the outside of the centres. All staff are appropriately qualified and are encouraged to gain further qualifications for continuing professional development. Tutors are observed on a regular basis and are appraised twice a year. A new management information system is proving a powerful tool to monitor performance and is also being used effectively to improve success rates. The provider has very good relationships with industry and local educational establishments. All staff interviewed had been consulted as part of the self-assessment report process and recognised it as an accurate assessment of the provision. The provider's literature contains good reinforcement of equality and diversity.

Information and communications technology   **Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ICT for users		*2*
Apprenticeships for young people	130	2

32. Twenty-two advanced apprentices and 108 apprentices are currently attending ICT training at HCCT. Of these learners, 14 are women and four are from minority ethnic groups. Almost all learners are in work placements and others are employed mostly in the local small to medium-sized businesses in Hull and the surrounding areas. Learners apply directly or are referred from Connexions services. Following the assessment of learners' training and developmental needs, they attend a three-week induction at HCCT's training centres. Off-the-job training is offered one day a week at these centres or at employers' premises. Progress reviews and assessments are carried out every six weeks.

33. Nine members of staff have direct responsibility for this area of learning. Eight are the assessors and one has an overall management role.

Strengths

- good success rates for apprenticeships
- very effective development of vocational and employability skills
- good use of ILT in teaching and assessment
- comprehensive induction

Weaknesses

- low advanced apprenticeship success rates
- insufficient planning of learning

Achievement and standards

34. HCCT provides very effective development of vocational and employability skills. Nearly all learners who join HCCT are unemployed, and some come from deprived communities. These learners have some knowledge of using specific software packages but little experience or familiarity with the skills required by businesses. During their training, in addition to significantly enhancing their existing ICT skills, learners develop good employability skills such as team working, communication, punctuality, self-confidence and completing projects to a deadline. Most learners apply these skills well in their work placements or employment, and employers highly value the contribution these learners make. Learners are also offered additional training by the placement providers and HCCT to further develop these skills.

35. The overall apprenticeship success rate is currently good at 61 per cent in 2005-06 and has been good for three years. Approximately half the apprentices who come to HCCT with barriers to learning also have low educational attainment at the end of their key stage 4 education. These learners travel a considerable distance in terms of their professional and personal development. They go on to contribute positively to local employers and have higher aspirations than when they started their programmes.

36. The numbers of advanced apprentices have declined steeply and form a small proportion of the overall ICT provision. The overall success rate for these learners is currently low at 27 per cent in 2005-06. However, the success rate has significantly improved since the previous inspection in 2003.

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	24	75	57	50	50
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
	2004-05	overall	18	56	56	33	49
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	62	66	67	66	54
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
	2004-05	overall	59	64	64	63	49
		timely	0	0	0	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

37. The use of ICT in teaching and assessment is very effective. Electronic boards are used well to demonstrate the features of various software packages to the learners, and to draw the learners' attention to the more complex features of these packages. Video cameras are used extensively to record the competence of learners as part of the assessment process. The learners benefit from the good computer facilities, especially for learning about computer networking software.

38. Learners' induction is comprehensive, helping them to settle well on programmes and develop skills relevant to progress. During the three-week induction period, the learners develop their personal profiles to gain employment or placements. They are also offered training sessions to help them develop job interview techniques and awareness in health and safety and equality and diversity. Learners are also offered taster sessions to familiarise them with aspects of computer software and hardware.

39. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory, with learners receiving effective individual coaching and support in most sessions. In the better sessions the learners are provided with good-quality hand-outs and learning materials. Learners participate well in the session activities and discussions. In some sessions there is insufficient explanation of the main software concepts such as fields within databases, and some learners do not sufficiently understand these concepts. Initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Learners are given a diagnostic assessment to evaluate their prior knowledge of ICT and also their literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs.

40. Support overall is satisfactory. All learners who require support with their literacy and numeracy skills receive it. HCCT provides a wide range of information to inform the learners about their career and progression options. This includes newsletters, display

boards and e-mails. However, a few learners do not have sufficient information about their future career and progression options.

41. Individual learning is not sufficiently planned. The link between on-the-job and off-the-job training is insufficiently developed. Individual learning plans are not always updated. Although the tasks for the next visit are discussed during progress reviews, there is insufficient clarity about how the learners are expected to gain the required knowledge and skills, and to what standard. Most learners have insufficient awareness of their learning plans and their purpose.

Leadership and management

42. Staff effectively resolve operational matters and agree on actions at regular meetings. Staff development is satisfactory and is managed well to raise the effectiveness of staff. The reinforcement of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

43. Quality improvement is good. HCCT has taken much action successfully to improve the quality of provision since the previous inspection. For example, success rates are now good for apprentices and improved for advanced apprentices. The weakness of insufficient work placements for ICT servicing has been rectified. All learners are now placed quickly. Many aspects of apprenticeship programmes have been improved, including resources and staffing. Some issues with reviews remain.

44. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. A satisfactory sample of learners' portfolios is assessed at regular intervals. HCCT's response to the external verification reports is adequate, and the standardisation meetings are effective at improving assessment practices.

Preparation for life and work   Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Employability training		
Entry to Employment	127	2

45. HCCT has 127 learners currently on its E2E programme. In 2005-06 there were 344 learners on this programme. Learners are referred from Connexions, local youth offending teams and schools. Some learners spend time on a pre-E2E scheme.

46. Learners spend up to 30 hours a week in training, including work placements. The programme is nominally 26 weeks in length. Learners can receive vocational training in painting and decorating, catering, health and social care, pre-armed forces training, computer repairs, engineering and retail trades. Life skills and literacy and numeracy support are integrated with the programmes. Training takes place on six main sites. Three subcontractors provide training in addition to HCCT's own staff, led by the E2E manager.

Employability training

Strengths

- good attainment
- good progression into employment
- good range of learning activities
- exceptional support for learners
- good operational management

Weaknesses

- insufficiently precise target-setting

Achievement and standards

47. HCCT provides good progression to employment for learners. At the time of inspection, 35 per cent of learners had already progressed to employment and 21 per cent were still in training. Many learners progress to employment while on placement. Learners are supported well by employers during their placement and are encouraged to develop good vocational and employability skills. Employers are very supportive of the employment aims of E2E learners and usually offer placements that offer natural progression to employment. Learners are employed in a range of occupations that cover the engineering, hospitality and care sectors. Many learners are able to continue their training in employment and complete NVQs. The overall progression rate for both employment and training is satisfactory.

48. Learners' attainment is good. Most learners achieve their learning aims and during 2005-06, 66 per cent of learners achieved their planned targets. Learners across all vocational areas are encouraged to gain qualifications. A significant number achieve level 1 units and in some cases a whole NVQ qualification. For example, learners in catering

have achieved food preparation qualifications. Learners also achieve qualifications in health and safety, food hygiene and customer care. Learners are well motivated and have a clear sense of direction, working towards clearly defined employment goals. While on the programme, learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. Although they do not register for external tests, their achievement levels are tested on entry to the programme and then re-tested. Most learners attain good literacy and/or numeracy skills.

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	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	344	100	342	100	438	100										
Progression[1]	128	37	120	35	188	43										
Achieved objectives[2]	180	52	126	37	143	33										
Still in learning	71	21	7	2	0	0										

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

49. HCCT provides a good range of learning activities on the programme which match the needs and interests of learners well. The main vocational routes offered are health and social care, engineering, painting and decorating, catering and armed forces preparation. However, there is also provision for learners who are interested in business administration or retail. Most vocational strands offer learners the opportunity to achieve NVQ units or qualifications. The curriculum also caters for learners who need additional support and preparation before embarking on the vocational strand of the programme. Personal and social development is integrated well into the vocational strands of the programme rather than being offered as a discrete subject. There are good placement opportunities on the programme. For example, one learner on the painting and decorating route has a placement with a small company and has completed good-quality decorating work in private homes. HCCT also provides good enrichment activities.

50. Literacy and numeracy skills are established within the vocational strands but additional discrete support is available when learners need it. There is a wide range of enrichment activities such as team-building trips and visits within the local area and to national exhibitions. For example, the week before inspection, a group of learners visited a food show in London. Other learners have visited Romania as part of an ongoing project to support orphanages.

51. Support for learners is exceptional. HCCT has a clear strategy to provide learners with extensive support. The system for monitoring attendance is good. Retention of learners on the programme is improving. A support officer provides integrated support and uses a wide range of external agencies and resources to support learners with personal and social issues. Learners who set up home while on the programme are given practical resources such as food packs and furniture. Free lunch days are offered on a regular basis. The support officer collects and stores homeware and household equipment such as saucepans, cutlery and other items that will be of use to learners who

live independently. All sites and subcontractors receive a booklet which lists external contacts for support. Learners who leave the programme are monitored after the first two months and then after six months.

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors have a good working relationship with their learners and a good understanding of their needs. In the better sessions, tutors use a variety of strategies to engage learners and capture their interest. There is good use of questioning to check on learners' understanding and progress. In these sessions, activities are varied and learners participate well. Learners are able to develop their vocational knowledge and skills during these sessions. In the weaker sessions, teaching strategies are limited with insufficient opportunities for interactive learning. In some sessions, insufficient attention is paid to the development of specific skills.

53. Target-setting is insufficiently precise. Targets set for many learners during progress reviews are vague. Learners are working towards clearly defined learning goals but short-term targets lack precision. For example, targets are sometimes described with a single word such as 'confidence' or with a very general phrase such as 'improve literacy'. The learning review process does not always monitor progress against specific targets.

Leadership and management

54. Operational management of E2E is good. Staff are well qualified. Most have teaching qualifications and many also have additional qualifications or have completed training in areas such as child protection, counselling and occupational safety. All staff regularly participate in continual professional development activities and the effect of their staff development activities is monitored and evaluated.

55. Staff at HCCT and its subcontractors have a good understanding of their client group and a strong commitment to help learners succeed in employment or training. There are effective strategies for widening participation and creating employment opportunities for learners from disadvantaged or disaffected groups. For example, learners who for a variety of reasons are not ready to progress onto all three strands of the E2E programme are able to follow a pathway which gives them the opportunity to improve their behaviour and develop their personal, social and employability skills.

56. Accommodation is good, particularly at the provider's main sites. Facilities have been provided to create an environment that is comfortable. At one site, there is an e-learning zone which is equipped with up-to-date multi-coloured computer base units and a classroom with bean bags and kitchen facilities. At another site where painting and decorating is offered as a vocational route, industry-standard equipment and resources are available. At this centre, particularly effective e-learning resources and learning packs are also offered and regularly used. Learners perform integrated activities from these packs to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

57. HCCT monitors its subcontractors well. It holds meetings with subcontractors' staff regularly and progress reviews incorporate views and information from staff at the subcontractors as well as the learners and HCCT's staff. However, some subcontractors do not provide enough information about the quality of teaching and learning.

Business administration and law   **Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration		
Apprenticeships for young people	42	2

58. Currently, 42 learners are following programmes in business administration and law, 12 as advanced apprentices and 30 as apprentices. Most learners are on work placements, with employers ranging from small offices to large organisations. Most learners attend off-the-job training sessions weekly. Progress reviews are conducted every eight weeks. Four assessors and three internal verifiers work for HCCT in this occupational area.

Administration

Strengths

- very good apprenticeship success rates
- good work placements
- good progression routes for learners
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge for some learners

Achievement and standards

59. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes are very good. HCCT has improved the overall success rate from 41 per cent in 2003-04 to 55 per cent in 2004-05 and 86 per cent in 2005-06. Success rates on advanced apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory.

60. Learners attain improved personal and occupational skills. They are well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Learners have gained in confidence and self-esteem and many have moved from work placements to permanent jobs before completing their programmes. Many learners are developing a wide range of job-specific skills in the workplace. For example, one employer supported a learner by frequently moving her into different job roles to ensure that she quickly gained experience across a range of skills. Employers speak very positively about the improved skill levels of their learners and their improved effectiveness in their work roles. For example, one employer stated that their learner's skills were invaluable to the organisation.

61. Learners are making satisfactory progress. HCCT has reduced the number of learners working beyond their expected completion date and many learners now complete their qualification earlier than expected. Portfolios are satisfactory and contain work at the national standard. Learners are making good progress in their job roles. Many are progressing to other qualifications or higher levels of the same qualification.

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	11	45	46	27	28
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
	2004-05	overall	13	100	47	46	31
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	29	69	51	41	37
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
	2004-05	overall	31	77	56	55	45
		timely	0	0	0	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

62. HCCT provides good work placements for learners. It carefully assesses the workplaces for their suitability to provide relevant experience and training. A wide range of employers is involved in HCCT's programmes and offers a diverse spread of experiences and roles. All learners interviewed spoke positively about their work placements. HCCT encourages learners to move work placements if there is a better opportunity of permanent employment. For example, one apprentice moved workplace after completing the apprenticeship programme and is working as an administration manager, supervising other staff while working towards the advanced apprenticeship.

63. Support for all learners is good. Assessors frequently visit the learners every three to four weeks with additional visits taking place if required. Learners have access to good-quality advice and guidance from training officers by telephone and e-mail. Many learners have found this to be very helpful in between visits. Learners with numeracy and literacy needs are supported well by the assessors, tutors and the key skills co-ordinator. Pastoral support for learners who experience personal problems is good.

64. Progression routes for learners are good. Learners are encouraged appropriately to progress from level 2 to level 3 programmes. Advanced apprentices are purposefully made aware of further opportunities in further and higher education, such as higher national certificates and foundation degrees. Learners also have good progression opportunities in the workplace with qualifications which are delivered within the work placements. For example, one learner was encouraged by her employer to take industry-specific professional qualifications at the end of her apprenticeship programme. Programmes meet learners' and employers' needs well.

65. Assessment is satisfactory. Learners and employers have an effective understanding of the assessment process. Assessments are well planned and feedback is prompt. HCCT has been slow to adopt electronic methods of collecting evidence for assessment. However, ICT is being introduced to the assessment process in the form of audio and video recordings. Good training-related dialogue exists between the assessors, learners and the employers. Learners' progress reviews and action-planning are satisfactory.

Employers participate well in learners' reviews and workplace supervisors are very supportive of learners and appreciative of the skills they are developing.

66. Initial assessment of learners is satisfactory. HCCT uses a range of initial assessment methods to identify a learner's needs as they enter the learning programme. Individual learning plans satisfactorily record the outcomes of the initial assessment. Learners are encouraged to use any concessions or proxy qualifications towards the key skill qualification requirements of their frameworks.

67. Induction is satisfactory. Learners attend a four-week foundation programme before commencing their work placements. During the foundation programme, learners develop good employability skills. For example, their personal confidence is improved through group discussions and giving presentations. These activities are built around the requirements of the key skills qualifications that are part of the apprenticeship requirements. Learners are very positive about the foundation programme and the help and support they receive. Topics included in this programme are health and safety, equality of opportunity and diversity, jobsearch skills and interview skills. Learning styles are also identified at this stage but are not then used in developing individual learning plans.

68. The quality of training and learning is satisfactory. HCCT uses a range of approaches to ensure that effective learning takes place. Off-the-job sessions are held at HCCT's training centre. Learning sessions are planned for learners to gain the knowledge required for the technical certificate tests and, where required, the key skills tests. These are well attended by the learners, who receive support from their work placements. Learners benefit from the wide range of learning support resources such as ICT, interactive whiteboards and paper-based resources.

69. The few learners who may already have achieved higher-level qualifications are insufficiently challenged. For example, some learners who have achieved AS levels in business studies attend sessions relating to the level 2 technical certificate in business administration. One learner reported that they did not feel stretched or challenged by the programme and another felt that it was very basic. This had not been identified on the individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

70. HCCT's staff are well informed and attend monthly team meetings. On-the-job and off-the-job training are co-ordinated well. Data is used effectively to monitor learners' progress. Managers use data effectively to monitor performance, and improvement targets are set which are monitored every six weeks.

71. The internal verification is systematic. It includes standardisation, monitoring of assessors and interviews of learners. Sample sizes are determined in accordance with the internal verification policy. Clear records are kept, including of actions taken in line with feedback from the internal verifiers. Internal verifiers observe all aspects of the learning programmes and give good feedback and support to the assessors. Standardisation is planned and occurs regularly to reinforce the sharing of good practice in assessment. Staff are well qualified and occupationally competent in their area of learning. They have good access to continuous professional development and regularly take part in training.

72. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Any problems are dealt with promptly. Staff have all received training on equality. The self-assessment report is effective and inclusive and mostly reflects the inspectors' findings.