

The TTE Technical Training Group

Inspection date

21 September 2007

Inspection number

316804

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Background information | 3 |
| Inspection judgements | 3 |
| Scope of the inspection..... | 3 |
| Description of the provider | 4 |
| Summary of grades awarded | 5 |
| Overall judgement | 6 |
| Effectiveness of provision..... | 6 |
| Capacity to improve | 6 |
| Key strengths | 7 |
| Key areas for improvement | 7 |
| Main findings..... | 8 |
| Achievement and standards | 8 |
| Quality of provision | 8 |
| Leadership and management | 10 |
| Equality of opportunity | 10 |
| What learners like..... | 12 |
| What learners think could improve | 12 |
| Learners' achievements | 13 |

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Description of the provider

1. The TTE Technical Training Group (TTE) is an independent training company limited by guarantee and with charitable status. TTE was originally set up in 1990 as a training joint venture between ICI and British Steel and became independent in 1999. It provides advanced apprenticeships in mechanical, electrical, instrumentation, chemical, manufacturing and fabrication engineering, funded by the LSC. TTE works in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland College to provide a student engineering training programme for learners who are mainly aged 16 to 18, and together they were awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status in 2003. Training takes place in TTE's main training centre in Middlesbrough, in a second training centre at a manufacturing site in Middlesbrough, situated inside one of the local petrochemical complexes, and in learners' workplaces. Advanced apprentices are employed by TTE, but sponsored by their placement company.
2. TTE's training business consists of a parent company and three separate subsidiary companies. The parent company provides training in engineering and process engineering, a student engineering programme delivered as part of a franchise agreement with Redcar and Cleveland College and advanced apprenticeship programmes. The subsidiaries, TTE Scotland Ltd, TTE Consulting Ltd and TTE International Ltd, provide commercial training for UK and international organisations. All TTE's activities funded directly or indirectly by the LSC were included within the scope of this inspection.
3. The company is managed by the group managing director and a senior management team comprising four executive directors, the apprenticeships business director, the commercial business director, finance director and strategic development director. The managing director reports to a company board of six non-executive directors drawn from the process engineering industry and other local companies. TTE employs 164 staff of whom 71 are directly involved in government-funded training provision. Of these, 70 are employed full-time and one is part-time. Government-funded provision represents approximately one fifth of the total income of TTE's work. At the time of inspection, TTE had 221 learners on its advanced apprenticeship programme, and 339 learners on the student engineering programme franchised from Redcar and Cleveland College.

Summary of grades awarded

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Effectiveness of provision | Good: Grade 2 |
| Capacity to improve | Good: Grade 2 |
| Achievement and standards | Good: Grade 2 |
| Quality of provision | Good: Grade 2 |
| Leadership and management | Good: Grade 2 |
| Equality of opportunity | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |

Sector subject area

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Engineering and manufacturing technologies | Good: Grade 2 |
|--|---------------|

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are good. Provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. TTE has demonstrated it has good capacity to improve. Since the previous inspection, learners' success rates have improved and these are now very good. The organisation has also addressed weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, including inconsistencies in the application of its quality assurance system and collaborative arrangements with the local college to deliver the apprentice programme. TTE responds well to feedback from partners and individual learners to improve its programme and enhance the learners' experience.
6. Self-assessment is broadly satisfactory. The process is inclusive, and the report has been used well to plan development. The report is mostly accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development, but all aspects of provision were overgraded. Some aspects of the *Common Inspection Framework* are insufficiently covered and the document is not well structured.

Key strengths

- Very good overall success rates
- Good off-the-job training
- Very good work placements
- Wide range of training programmes which meet the needs of learners and employers
- Outstanding off-the-job training resources for chemical engineering learners
- Very effective promotion and development of safe working practices
- Good strategic management
- Very effective links with partners to develop training provision
- Good initiatives to improve quality

Key areas for improvement

- Too little planning for the development of equal opportunities and diversity
- Insufficient use of outcomes from the lesson observation system

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. As identified in TTE's self-assessment report, success rates for advanced apprenticeships are very good. In the three years up to 2006-07 overall and timely success rates for the advanced apprenticeships at TTE were well above national averages and improving over time. Success rates on key skills delivered in the training centre are also good. For engineering advanced apprentices the wider key skills are delivered in their placement companies and again success rates are good.
8. Progression rates into employment from the advanced apprenticeship programme are very high. Of the cohort recruited in 2002, over 90% of those completing the advanced apprenticeship gained employment. However, the proportion of those originally recruited onto the student engineering programme, four years earlier, who gain employment is lower at just over 50% for the same year.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

9. Off-the-job training at TTE is good. The student engineering training programme, delivered in the training centre, is well structured and managed. Training staff have appropriate industrial experience and give good vocational and pastoral support to learners. A very high proportion of teaching and training staff are qualified teachers. TTE requires that newly appointed trainers complete a teaching certificate as soon as possible and most staff have this or a higher teaching qualification. Since their previous inspection TTE has significantly improved its classroom accommodation at the South Bank training centre. Many classrooms have been redecorated and have new furniture. Most now have good information and learning technology equipment, which is used extensively by trainers.
10. Specialist off-the-job resources for training chemical engineering learners for the petro-chemical industry are outstanding. TTE has two fully operational pilot chemical processing plants, which are built to current industry standards and used solely for training and assessment purposes. Specialist resources for engineering at the training centre are good overall. The range and quantity of machine tools and other equipment are fit for purpose, but some areas of the workshop block are poorly decorated and not well lit.
11. Work placements for advanced apprentices are very good. For the duration of their advanced apprenticeship all learners are employed by TTE, but sponsored by their placement provider. Most sponsoring companies are large multi-

nationals which provide learners with good and varied training opportunities. Learners rapidly develop their practical skills and are encouraged to work independently, where safety and legislative considerations allow. The planning of on-the-job training and identification of assessment opportunities have improved since TTE's previous inspection, but some learners still do not have a written training plan for the work they will do in their placements.

12. TTE has a wide range of training programmes which meet the needs of learners and employers. The student engineering programme is well established and provides learners with good access to a range of engineering, manufacturing and chemical process advanced apprenticeships. TTE works very closely with local, regional and national partners in monitoring the needs of industry and endeavouring to offer suitable training programmes, either publicly funded or commercially sponsored. TTE staff work closely with schools in promoting engineering as a career, but the volume of vocational training delivered to 14-16 year olds is lower than at the previous inspection. Learners benefit from a good range of enrichment activities and additional qualifications. A significant proportion of learners progress to higher education, many sponsored by their employers. While employers' premises are visited frequently by TTE assessors, some employers are not well informed of their learners' attendance patterns at college.
13. The promotion and development of safe working practices are very effective. Very close attention is given to health and safety at all stages in the training programme and learners adopt very safe working practices, both in the training centre and their placements. On transferring from the student engineering programme to their placements learners' awareness of industrial health and safety is in line with best industrial practice. Staff keep detailed records of accidents and near misses. These are closely monitored and action is taken when appropriate.
14. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory overall. Learners receive objective advice regarding training and career options when they are recruited onto the student engineering programme. Learners are visited frequently in the workplace and assessors complete formal progress reviews every three months. Reviews are satisfactory overall. However, the coverage of equality of opportunity in reviews is superficial and does not effectively develop or reinforce the learners' awareness. Target-setting in reviews is variable with some learners having too few specific targets.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. As recognised in the self-assessment report, strategic management at TTE is good. TTE has a clear strategy for development that takes good account of the regional and national context in which it operates. Trustees play an effective role in ensuring accountability at strategic level and recent changes to the management structure have provided a better focus on the learner. The organisation sets challenging targets for improvement and has met most of these, including financial targets, for the current year. It is a self-critical organisation that benefits from healthy debate and a culture of improvement.
16. The organisation has very effective links with a range of partners to improve training provision, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Designated staff have responsibility to maintain and develop these. Well established work with schools, including primary schools, promotes engineering as a career route. Particularly good links with employers underpin the success of the apprenticeship programme and links with universities have strengthened pathways to higher education. The partnership with the local college to deliver the apprenticeship programme works well and this has been strengthened since the previous inspection. TTE plays an active part in a local network of work-based learning providers to develop and share good practice. Partners view TTE as responsive, open to new ideas and keen to collaborate.
17. Managers have introduced good initiatives to improve the quality of provision. The organisation has improved the quality assurance system since the previous inspection. The appointment of additional auditors and better training for new and existing staff have helped to ensure more consistent compliance with agreed procedures. A varied enrichment programme, valued by learners, is regularly reviewed and modified in response to learners' feedback. As part of a longer-term e-learning strategy TTE has improved the information and communication technology infrastructure and introduced online testing for key skills and technical certificates. TTE makes effective use of strategies to seek and respond to learners' views, including a very successful student forum and learner questionnaires. Staff respond quickly to learners' concerns. However, the organisation makes too little use of the outcomes of learner surveys to plan improvements and managers do not report back to learners on action taken as a result of surveys.
18. Self-assessment is broadly satisfactory. The report is an effective working document drawing on the views of staff, learners and employers. It has been used well to plan development. Its structure is unclear however, and it does not adequately address all aspects of the *Common Inspection Framework*. TTE correctly identified most of the strengths and one of the areas for development

found during inspection, but gave higher grades to all aspects of provision and omitted to grade equality of opportunity.

19. Arrangements for promoting learners' awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity issues are satisfactory and TTE makes good use of group training sessions for this purpose. Assessors use progress reviews to check understanding, but this is not always carried out effectively. TTE has satisfactory procedures in place to support learners with additional needs, through, for example, the provision of extra equipment or specialist support through the local college. TTE has taken steps to redress the low recruitment of women, setting targets for improvement and using successful female TTE apprentices as role models. Most staff have attended recent in-house training in equal opportunities. The building is not fully accessible and has not yet been assessed for compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
20. Planning for the development of equal opportunities and diversity is insufficient. No senior member of staff has responsibility for this area. The equal opportunities policy is out-of-date and it makes no reference to legislation or to other relevant TTE policies, such as harassment or complaints procedures. There is no implementation plan and the policy has not been reviewed. In its self-assessment report TTE recognised equality of opportunity as an area for development, but did not award a grade for this aspect of provision.
21. TTE makes insufficient use of the outcomes of lesson observations to raise the quality of teaching. While this does lead to action for improvement by individual teachers, TTE does not use the collated information to identify trends in the quality of observed lessons, set targets for improvement at departmental or corporate level, prioritise professional development, or share good practice. This area for improvement was not identified in TTE's self-assessment report.

What learners like:

- 'The way they helped me when I wanted to change employer'
- 'You know who to go to when you need help'
- 'You really learn about the job'
- Having instructors who have spent a lot of time on-site in industry
- The opportunity to use the pilot rig in the training centre before going on site
- 'I like being able to get in touch with someone at TTE when I need them'
- 'I enjoy the work at Corus and like the people I work with'
- Learning all the different trades, and the background theory
- 'I'm very happy with everything at TTE'
- 'You get very good information on options and choices for sponsorship and work experience'
- 'The hands-on approach at Corus, I'm learning a lot'

What learners think could improve:

- The number of instructors at the training centre, especially process
- 'The amount of time we get to spend on the pilot rig – why can't more staff be trained up to run the rigs?'
- The organisation and management of staffing. Too much time is wasted when staff don't turn up, or trainees are sent to the wrong place
- Some courses at the training centre have too much time and others not enough
- 'Although I can always get in touch with my assessor, communications between TTE and trainees generally need to be improved'
- 'The organisation could be improved, you don't always know what you will be doing next when you finish a module'

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes managed by the provider 2004 to 2006

| Programme | End Year | Success rate | No. of learners* | Provider/college NVQ rate** | National NVQ rate** | Provider/college framework rate** | National framework rate** |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Advanced Apprenticeships | 04-05 | overall | 50 | 82 | 48 | 62 | 34 |
| | | timely | 44 | 75 | 31 | 59 | 21 |
| | 05-06 | overall | 74 | 82 | 54 | 70 | 44 |
| | | timely | 97 | 64 | 34 | 53 | 27 |
| | 06-07 | overall | 55 | 72 | 64 | 72 | 59 |
| | | timely | 58 | 67 | 44 | 64 | 40 |

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

LSC data for 2006-07 has yet to be validated