

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **St Helens Chamber Limited Reinspection**

**19 December 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.

## 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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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. St Helens Chamber Limited (the Chamber) is a private not-for-profit organisation that has its headquarters in St Helens, Merseyside. It was formed in 1996 as St Helens Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise by the merger of the local chamber of commerce, the Training and Enterprise Council, Business Link and the Enterprise Agency. It became the Chamber in 2001. It provides training for young people and adults in the Merseyside area in Entry to Employment (E2E), construction, business administration, management, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer service, hairdressing and beauty, childcare, and care for the elderly. Learners work towards apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships. ILM employees work in a range of occupational areas including construction, environmental work, care, customer service and catering. ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy and E2E were not inspected.

2. The Chamber's director of training services has overall responsibility for the provision and is supported by the workforce development manager, an apprenticeship/quality manager and a claims manager, who supervise the management information and administration of the training department. In 2004, the Chamber decided to move away from subcontracting to delivering the training directly. Currently, the Chamber provides 93 per cent of the provision and plans to increase this over the next year. The Chamber funds its training provision through Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Jobcentre Plus and European Social Fund initiatives.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

#### Reinspection Grade 2

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Equality of opportunity is outstanding. The Chamber's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for quality improvement and provision for health, public services and care, and business administration and law.

4. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The Chamber involves all of its processes and takes into account the learners' and employers' views. Subcontractors are also involved in the process. A well-conceived and managed action plan deals with all the key issues identified through self-assessment and links effectively to strategic, business and operational planning. The Chamber monitors progress against the plan regularly and updates the plan. The self-assessment report results from a comprehensive and critical analysis of the provision and it is mostly accurate. The report estimated the grade of the provision for business administration and law as good, and underestimated the grade for equal opportunities.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** The Chamber has taken effective action to improve success rates and deal with weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Decisive actions in the management and monitoring of subcontractors, including replacing subcontracted provision with in-house provision, have significantly improved the quality of the provision. Existing staff have been well supported and trained to carry out the new roles, and new staff have been appointed

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where necessary. The whole process has been particularly well managed and throughout the Chamber has continued to provide good support for learners moving to new providers to complete their training.

### GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

<b>Health, public services and care</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Social care</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	71	3	
New Deal for young people	2	3	
Other government-funded provision	33	3	
<b>Early years</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	11	3	
Other government-funded provision	17	3	

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Engineering</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	38	4	
<b>Motor vehicle</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	2	4	

<b>Construction, planning and the built environment</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Construction crafts</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	18	4	
New Deal for young people	4	3	
<b>Building services</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	29	4	

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> Apprenticeships for young people	23	<b>4</b> 4
<b>Business administration and law</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Administration</i></b> Apprenticeships for young people	61	3
<b><i>Business management</i></b> Apprenticeships for young people	1	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		1
Quality improvement		2

<b>Health, public services and care</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Social care</i></b> Apprenticeships for young people	85	2
<b><i>Early years</i></b> Apprenticeships for young people	13	2

<b>Business administration and law</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Administration</i></b> Apprenticeships for young people	92	<b>2</b> 2

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

6. At the previous inspection, the overall effectiveness of the provision was judged to be inadequate. Equality of opportunity, health, public services and care and business administration were judged to be satisfactory. Leadership and management, quality improvement and provision for engineering and manufacturing technologies, construction, planning and the built environment and leisure, sport and recreation were judged to be inadequate. Since the previous inspection, the Chamber has discontinued all of its provision that was judged inadequate. At the reinspection, equality of opportunity was judged to be outstanding. Leadership and management and quality improvement

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were judged to be good, as was health, public services and care. Business administration was judged to be good.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learners interviewed	30
Number of staff interviewed	28
Number of employers interviewed	9
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	19
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	4
Number of visits	3

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- good working relationship with local employers and partners
- highly effective performance management
- excellent involvement in and promotion of social inclusion and widening participation
- successful strategies for quality improvement

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient management of formal literacy and numeracy support for work-based learners

### **Health, public services and care**

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement
- good progress by learners
- good vocational support for learners
- highly effective management of equal opportunities

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate additional learning support

### **Business administration and law**

#### *Strengths*

- very good progress by current learners
- particularly good support for learners
- highly effective target-setting for learners



*Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

#### Strengths

- good working relationship with local employers and partners
- highly effective performance management
- excellent involvement in and promotion of social inclusion and widening participation
- successful strategies for quality improvement

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient management of formal literacy and numeracy support for work-based learners

7. The Chamber has maintained its good working relationship with a large number of local employers and other providers. It continues to provide particularly good support for employers in a variety of ways, including help with equality and diversity policy formulation, recruitment, and formal training in these matters where necessary. Local focus groups, partnerships and committees benefit from the Chamber's membership and good attendance at meetings and events. Local providers and other organisations are finding the Chamber's excellent links with employers increasingly valuable as local and national priorities change. The Chamber uses these external contacts to achieve very good support for learners from employers and to increase its learners' work-placement opportunities and job prospects.

8. Performance management strategies and methods adopted by the Chamber are highly effective in helping staff and learners meet their targets and improve the training provision. The appraisal system is very well managed and is effective in setting and monitoring individual and group targets, and in identifying staff development needs and responding to requests. Staff development is particularly good. It strikes an appropriate balance between individual and organisational needs. It is well linked to strategic and operational plans and provides the staff development necessary in order to achieve strategic and business objectives. The Chamber monitors individual staff performance effectively and sensitively through individual appraisal meetings and monthly performance and planning reviews. Group and team performance is well managed, mainly through monthly 'keep in touch' meetings involving all staff and managers. Staff find these meetings useful to help them manage their caseloads. Staff and managers make good use of a variety of data in reviewing and managing performance. The staff development programme is well managed and takes account of team strengths, weaknesses and development needs, as well as those of individuals.

9. The director and managers set a clear strategic direction for the training section of the Chamber. The strategy is well understood and supported by staff at all levels. The strategic plan is well conceived and written, and it clearly sets out the vision, mission and aims of the organisation. The plan is managed effectively, with regular reviews and clear links to operational plans. Communications within the Chamber are particularly good.

Staff are well informed on plans and developments. There are sufficient productive and well-recorded staff meetings focused on learning and the learners to ensure that the whole organisation has improving the learning experience and the learners' success as a key organisational goal. The Chamber sets appropriate organisational targets and gives staff good support to help them achieve these targets.

10. The Chamber's management of training is satisfactory. The standard of teaching, learning and training is good in one occupational area and satisfactory in the other. Resources overall are good. The Chamber's learning centre provides good accommodation and information technology (IT) facilities. The resources at the Chamber's other learning centres are of a suitably high standard. Appropriate investment is made in teaching and learning equipment when staff produce sound justification for the equipment required. There is sufficient focus on learners and training in the targets set for staff. Managers provide good support for staff. Managers at all levels are well known to staff and interested in their work and well-being. The Chamber has effective systems to collect and record retention and achievement data. Managers review retention and achievement rates each month and use the data to develop strategies to improve them. The management information used is current and accurate, and managers have a good understanding of the data. The analysis of progression and destination data has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

11. Managers have not given sufficient attention to the management and strategy for providing formal additional learning support, particularly in health, social care and public services. The Chamber is aware of its shortcomings in providing formal learning support and it is taking appropriate steps to improve this aspect of its operations.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 1**

12. The arrangements for ensuring social and educational inclusion and widening participation are outstanding. The Chamber promotes and engages in widening participation and social and educational inclusion very successfully. It is considered by its partners and other community organisations to be a valuable asset to the community. Its arrangements for engaging learners who would not normally participate in education and training are outstanding. For some time now the Chamber has been developing valuable provision for learners with serious barriers to learning. Provision in its Starting Point centre is extremely successful in engaging and supporting these learners through the expertise and approach of staff, the excellent support provided, the high number of learners who achieve positive outcomes, and the attractive environment and good resources provided for these learners in common with all other learners in the Chamber. Links with other specialist organisations working with learners who are difficult to engage are particularly good. Good practice is shared across a variety of agencies. For example, the Chamber has prepared a multi-agency training and support directory that has rapidly become the definitive source of reference across the borough for learners with particular learning and/or social needs. Very good training is provided for staff to help them to help this particularly demanding intake of learners, both in their initial programmes of study and when they progress to more advanced programmes such as work-based learning. In addition to the broader, more strategic activities, the Chamber successfully provides valuable support to help individual learners join and stay in training. For example, the Chamber provides financial subsidies to bus companies to keep a number of routes open for learners to travel to various centres for their training. It has provided funding to a number of individual learners for protective clothing, travel subsidies, equipment and

materials. The Chamber is particularly successful in raising funds to keep many projects alive after initial funding has run out and other providers have ceased to offer the programmes.

13. The Chamber continues to display its strong commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity through its actions and policies. There is a detailed set of policies and procedures that refers to relevant legislation which is regularly reviewed and carefully implemented. The use of data to monitor equality of opportunity is now established and is used to measure and monitor the effectiveness of its promotion. Promotional materials for employers are well produced and those for learners have been revised and improved.

14. Training in equality and diversity is particularly good, with good resources, including a very good and informative workbook for learners. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is good. They know what to do if they encounter discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying in the workplace or during off-the-job training. The Chamber has a clear and easily understood and applied complaints procedure, and if complaints are made, the organisation records them correctly and deals with them effectively.

15. The monitoring and promotion of equality of opportunity are good at subcontractors, employers, and in progress reviews. There is regular and adequate staff training and development in equality of opportunity. Staff receive useful training on race relations, disability, human rights, age diversity and in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Good practice in equality of opportunity is effectively shared within and outside the organisation. For example, the selection and recruitment process for staff and learners is carried out appropriately and consistently across the divisions of the Chamber internally, and it often shares its own procedures with employers to ensure their recruitment meets the applicants' diverse needs.

16. Accommodation is good and in some cases outstanding. The Chamber provides appropriate access and is adapted to meet the needs of people with restricted mobility. There is sufficient and suitable equipment available in classrooms and workshops to meet the needs of learners. The proportion of the Chamber's staff from minority ethnic groups matches the local population. Staff who have children can work flexible hours to meet their family commitments.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

17. The Chamber's strategies and actions to improve the provision since the previous inspection have been particularly successful. Success rates have improved and are now good in health, social care and public services, and they are rapidly improving in business administration and law. The Chamber has dealt with many of the key weaknesses that the inspectors identified. Arrangements for quality assurance have improved significantly since the previous inspection, where this was identified as a key weakness. The Chamber has an appropriate range of quality assurance policies and procedures that staff use to manage and monitor their daily activities related to learning and assessment. Most aspects of learning and assessment are now formally and effectively quality assured, and the new arrangements are having an effect on the quality of the provision in general and on improved success rates in particular. The Chamber has taken decisive action to deal with weaknesses in the performance and management of subcontractors. Four of the five subcontract arrangements have been discontinued, with appropriate ongoing support from the Chamber for the learners involved. New and effective service level agreements

and monitoring arrangements have been introduced for the remaining subcontractor.

18. The Chamber continues to improve the use of its management information systems to improve quality assurance. Use of data in quality improvement is now good. Managers continue to review retention and achievement rates on a monthly basis and use the data to develop strategies to improve them. The management information provided to them is current and accurate. Good links are now made between quality assurance processes and outcomes in terms of quantitative analysis of learner success and more detailed analysis of many of the quality assurance processes used, such as monitoring of reviews and teaching and learning observations.

19. The Chamber's collection and use of feedback from learners and employers is improving. Feedback is collected from employers through the completion and analysis of employer questionnaires. At the previous inspection it was difficult to identify trends, as the previous three questionnaires issued to employers in November 2002, June 2004 and September 2005 asked different questions. The response rates were low and had declined over the previous four years. The Chamber is taking appropriate action to improve response rates and standardise questions to allow long-term analysis of responses. Work in this area continues.

20. The self-assessment process is good. Most staff are involved in the self-assessment process, which takes into account the learners' and employers' views. The remaining subcontractor is also involved in the self-assessment process. An action plan deals with all the key issues identified through self-assessment. Progress against the plan is regularly monitored and the plan is updated. The self-assessment report is critical and mostly accurate. Grading of provision in the self-assessment report often matched those of inspectors.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Health, public services and care

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Social care</b> Apprenticeships for young people	85	2
<b>Early years</b> Apprenticeships for young people	13	2

21. There are 98 learners on health and social care learning programmes. There are 85 learners in care and 13 in early years care and education, of whom 78 are apprentices and 20 are advanced apprentices. All learners are employed in a range of occupational settings. There are four assessors and three internal verifiers. Learners are recruited to the programme through contacts with workplaces. Early years childcare and education is delivered through a subcontract arrangement with Willows Training. The care learners are taught directly by the Chamber. Evidence of practical learning is gained in the workplace. Induction is provided and learners' progress reviews take place every 10 to 12 weeks.

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement
- good progress by learners
- good vocational support for learners
- highly effective management of equal opportunities

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate additional learning support

### **Achievement and standards**

22. Retention and achievement have improved significantly since the previous inspection and overall success rates are now good. Since the Chamber has withdrawn its contract with the care subcontractor and taken over the control of the care programmes, achievement has improved significantly. In 2005-06, 69 per cent of learners achieved their full framework. There is also good progression from national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 to level 3, and on to higher professional qualifications such as nurse training.

23. There is good development of skills for work. Learners develop good practical skills and work confidently with people in care settings. Managers in the workplace confirm that learners are able to work to a good professional standard. Learners have grown in personal confidence, and show greater self-awareness and improved understanding of their work.

### **The quality of provision**

24. Learners progress well. Many learners are on target to achieve their qualification

ahead of their agreed target date. Several learners have achieved their full award before their target completion date. There is good integration of key skills with vocational training. Learners are introduced to key skills during their induction. Key skills are taught and assessed at the same time as their NVQ. Learners are encouraged to gather evidence of their acquisition of key skills through their everyday tasks at work and their work for the NVQ. Key skills are now taught as an integral part of the work-based learning programme and learners are better able to appreciate the relevance of key skills to their work for the qualification and to the world of work. Employers have a good understanding of key skills and allow ample time to prepare for and attend the external key skills assessment tests. The retention rate has improved each year since 2002-03. For example, in 2003-04 the rate improved significantly to 56 per cent, with 33 per cent still in learning. From 2004-05, the retention rate has remained high.

25. Vocational support is good. All learners are allocated to an assessor who visits them regularly. All visits are planned and are arranged to meet the needs of the learner. Assessors work to fit in with learners' shift patterns. Working relationships are good between assessors and learners and this helps improve learners' self-esteem and confidence. Assessors also provide good advice and guidance on employment and further achievement. Work placements are of a high standard. Workplace supervisors and staff provide learners with effective support and encouragement. Learners are encouraged to improve their practical skills, understanding and knowledge, and are given every opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt. Learners value the support they receive and recognise that it helps them to stay in training.

26. Induction is satisfactory. It provides a good foundation for learners' NVQ programmes. Learners receive a useful detailed information pack. They are aware of equal opportunities and the appeals/complaints procedure. Learners appreciate their induction and feel it gives them more confidence at the start of their programme and ensures they have a full understanding of all aspects of their training.

27. Assessment practices are satisfactory across care and early years care and education programmes. Assessors have a good understanding of the qualifications and framework. Portfolios of learners' evidence are well presented and contain a good range of evidence. The Chamber uses a variety of assessment methods to assess the learners' competence. All relevant documentation is completed and signed. The Chamber keeps detailed records of observations of assessments that have been completed and links them clearly to the NVQ standards. They also receive prompt and constructive feedback on assessment outcomes at the earliest opportunity. Learners receive effective support with portfolio-building and collecting evidence.

28. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress are satisfactory. All learners complete an individual learning plan that identifies previous knowledge, skills, expectations and review arrangements. Learning outcomes are identified at the start of the programme, which are used to monitor learners' progress. A monitoring document of achievement is completed, which is updated after every review. The short-term actions for NVQ and key skills are specific and measurable, with clear realistic targets that challenge the learners' abilities to improve their skills. All parties sign in agreement. Equal opportunities and health and safety are monitored.

29. There are satisfactory resources to support learning. Learners are taught their

practical skills and related background knowledge to a good standard on an individual basis in the workplace. Staff use a satisfactory range of learning materials. Learners have access to books, journals, handouts, leaflets, computers and the internet. There are also some satisfactory resources within many workplaces to support learners who are unable to attend training. Assessors are easily accessible and responsive to the learners' needs. There are also some good-quality work placements. Employers have a good understanding of the NVQ requirements and are supportive of the learners. Learners are provided with good supervision, which develops their practical skills, and have additional training/workshops to support their knowledge base and job role. All staff are occupationally competent and experienced.

30. The Chamber provides its learners with inadequate learning support. There are 29 learners in learning at the time of the inspection who have been identified with literacy, numeracy and language needs. Learners receive a diagnostic assessment to identify the support required. They receive a basic skills workbook, which is ill-matched to their needs and abilities. Support is provided by assessors who increase the frequency of their visits, but they are not trained in teaching basic skills and their support is often inappropriate. Support is given to complete their NVQ assessments but it does not equip the learners with the skills they need to progress in the workplace. There is one designated basic skills training adviser to support the whole organisation. Some learners are not aware of the help available to them. Most learning plans do not record the learners' additional learning needs or contain an action plan. Additional learning support progress is not discussed at reviews.

### **Leadership and management**

31. The management of equal opportunities is highly effective. Managers make good use of data in successfully achieving the equality and diversity impact measures agreed with the LSC. Staff development in equality and diversity is good and prepares them to help the learners to understand equality and diversity issues. Learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities and are well briefed on their rights and responsibilities, and how to deal with issues such as harassment, bullying and complaining effectively.

32. The Chamber has satisfactory internal verification processes across care and early years care and education programmes. It has clear monitoring matrixes and regular sampling of assessment activity, which includes observations of assessor practice, regular NVQ portfolio sampling, and sampling of assessor/learners' meetings, which include assessment plans and assessment feedback. The internal verifier completes monthly reports of the internal verification activity that is discussed within the monthly moderation meetings that are used to standardise practice. There is effective communications within the team that enables them to share best practice and resolve areas of concern quickly.



**Business administration and law****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Administration</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	92	2

33. There are currently 92 learners on work-based learning programmes in business administration, of whom 60 are apprentices and 32 are advanced apprentices. Three advanced apprentices are working towards a management qualification and six apprentices are working towards a team leader qualification. All learners are employed in a range of local companies, local authorities and other organisations. Every two weeks, training advisers from the Chamber visit the learners at work for training and assessment. Employers are involved in formal reviews of learners' progress. Most learning takes place on the job but learners are encouraged to attend structured off-the-job training session on the Chamber's premises.

*Strengths*

- very good progress by current learners
- particularly good support for learners
- highly effective target-setting for learners

*Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses

**Achievement and standards**

34. Since the previous inspection, achievement and progress towards qualifications in business administration have improved and they are now satisfactory. Overall achievement rate for all apprentices currently stands at 60 per cent with the potential to improve to in excess of 80 per cent in the current year. At the time of the previous inspection, framework achievements for the year 2004-05 were 22 per cent for modern apprentices and 10 per cent for advanced apprentices. Success rates for 2005-06 currently stand at 40 per cent for advanced apprentices and 62 per cent for apprentices. Overall success rates for apprentices are 57 per cent. Strategies introduced by management to remedy earlier poor performance continue and the latest provider data shows an overall achievement rate for all apprenticeships of 60 per cent for the year 2005-06.

35. The standard of work produced by learners is at an appropriate level. Their portfolios are well organised, with an appropriate range of evidence including witness testimony and professional discussion. Learners in the workplace acquire a range of employability skills. Job roles provide the opportunity to use and develop communication, time management and IT skills. Learners are part of workplace teams and are involved in contributing towards targets and meeting organisational objectives. Line managers confirm the contributions learners make and their willingness to assume responsibility for tasks and roles. One learner has responsibility for maintaining work schedules relating to the cleaning of premises. Other learners serve as key contact points for members of the

public seeking information on housing and other welfare projects.

### **The quality of provision**

36. Support for learners is good. Training advisers visit learners very frequently at work and are available by telephone and e-mail for advice and support at other times. Support provided by training staff has been the key element in retaining learners in training. Advisers work closely with line managers in the workplace. They ensure that managers are aware of learners' progress and any issues arising from the training programme. Employers understand the requirements of the framework and their role in helping learners to achieve it. Together, advisers and management create a workplace environment that encourages and facilitates learning. Off-the-job training is satisfactory. It is structured and supported by learning plans and clear objectives. Learners are aware in advance of the content of sessions to be offered on a specific date, and can tailor their attendance to match their learning needs. Off-the-job training includes individual coaching in key skills and the sessions are also used as a key component in helping learners to prepare for the technical certificate element of the framework qualification. Training staff also provide advice and guidance to learners aiming to progress to either further training or education.

37. Review of learners' progress is part of each visit by advisers. This process is closely linked to action-planning and the setting of targets. Target-setting for learners is highly effective in promoting learning and progress. Targets are agreed and recorded as part of the learners' portfolios. Targets are measurable and focus, for example, on a specific unit or element of the target qualification. Employers are made aware of the requirements of the targets and can be involved in helping learners to meet them, for example through the provision of witness testimony. At each meeting with an assessor, targets are reviewed and revised if necessary. When a target is met, this is clearly recorded in the learners' portfolio. Learners interviewed have a good understanding of the progress they are making. In the judgement of inspectors, the regular setting and monitoring of targets contributes to this understanding.

38. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessors use an appropriate range of methods, including workplace observation, questioning and professional discussion. All assessments are planned and take place in the workplace. Following assessment, the learners receive verbal feedback.

39. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Internal verification procedures are clear and there is an appropriate sampling strategy and plan. Verification is ongoing throughout the programme and includes assessors' observations and learners' interviews.

40. Induction is satisfactory. A comprehensive induction pack is provided for each learner. Staff provide learners with advice and clarification on current health and safety, and equality and diversity legislation. Learners are encouraged to relate this learning to their own work environment. Learners' recall of the induction process is satisfactory.

41. All learners complete an initial assessment and this helps develop the individual learning plan provided for each learner. The current state of individual learning plans sampled is satisfactory.

42. Arrangements to support learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory. Staff hold appropriate qualifications to support literacy and numeracy needs. None of the current learners in administration require additional support.

43. Resources are satisfactory. IT hardware and software are to commercial standards and learners have the opportunity to use the internet during off-the-job training sessions. A wide range of suitable learning materials are used to support learning, including textbooks and handouts. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and have experience of the area of learning.

### **Leadership and management**

44. At the previous inspection this area was judged to be satisfactory. Since then all the weaknesses identified have been dealt with. The current team responsible for delivering this area of learning have been together for a number of years. Morale and teamwork are good and staff interviewed have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff feel well supported by management and have the opportunity to gain additional qualifications. Examples include certificate of education and verifier awards. One member of the team is being supported on a master's degree programme. There are regular team meetings with management present and staff feel well informed about developments within the Chamber. All staff make an effective contribution to the self-assessment process.

