

North London Garages GTA

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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' monitoring 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. North London Garages GTA (NLGGTA) is based in Enfield, North London. NLGGTA is a limited company employing 16 staff; these include a managing director, 4 managers, 5 technical tutors, 3 assessors, 1 basic skills tutor, 1 training and 1 administrative staff. The provider offers apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship training programmes for learners in light and heavy vehicle maintenance and body repair.
2. Some 80 employers are active; these range from independent garages to large franchised organisations including national transport companies. The provider has expanded its provision since the previous inspection and has reduced its reliance on LSC funding to 68% of its income. At the time of inspection 65 apprentices and 24 advanced apprentices were enrolled. Of these; 15 learners were aged over 19, 69 learners were following light vehicle maintenance programmes, 12 were on heavy vehicle maintenance and 8 were on body repair and paint refinishing programmes.
3. As of April 2008 the group of young people Not in Employment Education or Training, (NEET) in Enfield was 6.5%, this is the fourth biggest group in London. The unemployment rate of 4.4% is higher than the London average of 3.3%.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject area

Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision of apprenticeship training is satisfactory. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity. Learners are well supported and gain useful skills from good practical training in the workplace. Employer relationships are strong and programmes meet the needs of the wide range of placements.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. Capacity to improve is good. NLGGTA has taken effective steps to improve the provision since the previous inspection. Overall success rates have improved significantly year by year from a rate of 26% in 2005/06 to 49% in 2006/07 and 56% in 2007/08. Retention rates have improved from 80% in 2006/07 to 96% in 2007/08. Timely success rates have also improved significantly from 10% in 2005/06 to 33% in 2006/07 and to 45% in 2007/08. This is at the 2007/08 national average of 45.5% for the sector. Learners are making good progress through their programmes in all areas. The provider has focused on improving success rates as a priority since the previous inspection. Insufficient progress has been taken to address some issues and this remains as an area for further improvement. For example, the improvement in the consistency of learners' reviews and the development of observation of training as a tool for continuous improvement. Development plans have been accurate in identifying the issues.
6. Self-assessment is good. The self-assessment process is well developed and understood by all staff. Detailed self-assessment reports are prepared by senior managers and circulated to other staff for comment. Learners and employers are consulted regularly and their views taken into account when reports are produced. Regular contact with learners and employers enable staff to be continuously aware of views. The reports include success rate progress and trends. These are used well to focus staff on continuous improvement. Action and development plans are well written and contain realistic targets with clear responsibilities and timescales. The plans are frequently reviewed. The latest self-assessment report correctly emphasises many of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision, many of which were found by inspectors.

Key strengths

- Good achievement of a range of additional qualifications
- Good practical training in the workplace
- Particularly effective strategies to improve success rates
- Good partnership work to support learners

Key areas for improvement

- Success rates
- Co-ordination of theory and practical training
- Target-setting during learners' progress reviews
- Implementation of some quality assurance processes

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection success rates have improved each year. The overall success rates have improved from 26% to 56% over the last three years and are now satisfactory. Rates for 2007/08 are near the national average. Timely success rates have improved significantly from very low at 9% in 2005/06 to the national average of 45% in 2007/08. Retention is good on all programmes.
8. Key skills are delivered early in the programme and achievement is high, 84% in 2007/08. Approximately 15 learners are working towards key skills units above their framework requirements. Key skills are integrated very effectively into the vocational qualification with tutors making good use of motor vehicle related topics that interest and engage the learners in the activities.
9. All learners benefit from achieving good additional qualifications that enhance their employability. Learners gain certificates in the use of abrasive wheels and as appointed persons for first aid in the workplace. These are delivered while attending theory training at the start of their programmes. Subsequently some employers have nominated their learners as the appointed workplace first aid person. Learners employed at a major bus company are given appropriate driver training to obtain the necessary driving licence for public service vehicles.
10. Learners make good progress in the workplace and are able to perform to commercial standards early in their programmes. They develop good practical skills and some demonstrate high levels of technical competency. Many learners are given early responsibility for carrying out complex work on customers' vehicles with minimal supervision. Learners place great importance on being treated as valued and trusted employees early in their careers. Career progression for learners is good. Former apprentices have progressed to become workshop managers, master technicians and garage owners. Others have qualified as assessors and tutors with NLGGTA.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory. Learners benefit from good practical training in the workplace, which are well equipped garage workshops. Many have highly experienced workplace mentors who provide assistance and supervise the learners' activities in gaining relevant technical skills. Some employers provide additional technical training beyond the framework requirements to meet their specialised needs. Learners in light vehicle engineering receive good opportunities in the workplace, to develop their practical trade skills and competency by working on a wide range of vehicles in a diverse range of maintenance and repair activities and using modern diagnostic equipment. Learners work confidently on vehicles, such as articulated buses equipped with state of the art transmission and steering mechanisms. The arrangements for practical learning in the workplace are also good.
12. Very effective use is made of a bus company's own vehicle workshops by NLGGTA staff, to provide theory training to the apprentices. The workshop provides good opportunities

for practical demonstrations. The training resources at the provider's training centre are satisfactory for the delivery of light vehicle programmes. Only a limited range of practical training activities is carried out in the centre. Some investment has been made on modern diagnostic equipment for engine management systems. Facilities for the delivery of the heavy vehicle programme are poor and are mainly limited to classroom based activities. The centre also delivers lift truck training adjacent to the classrooms and training space is limited.

13. Learner progress reviews are satisfactory. They are conducted regularly and meet funding body requirements. Assessors make frequent visits to the workplace to review progress and carry out assessments. Employers are consulted and contribute to the review process but they are not always present when NLGGTA staff meet with the learner to discuss and set targets. Targets set for learners are insufficient in detail. Completed progress review forms containing targets such as, "collect more job cards" or "assessments still to do" do not give sufficient guidance and are unhelpful.
14. Support for learners with additional learning needs is satisfactory. The provider has recently attained a national Matrix award for learner advice and guidance. Learner needs are identified during the induction period and suitable additional support is made available to those who require it. The recruitment system has improved since the previous inspection. The provider makes good use of on-line recruitment and initial testing of applicants. NLGGTA makes very effective use of the information it receives at recruitment to ensure that applicants are guided to the most suitable career route for their development needs. The range of programmes offered by NLGGTA is well recognised within the local garage network and meets local employer needs.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The organisation has clear and effective strategies for improvement and has clearly focused on the areas for improvement identified in the previous reinspection, particularly success rates. The functional teams are strong and have clear tasks and responsibilities and all staff are committed to continuous improvement. Staff communicate well with college training staff and closely monitor learner's progress, attendance and punctuality. NLGGTA has identified weaknesses in key skills delivery by one college and now delivers the theory training and key skills on its own premises using its own qualified teachers and resources. Timely success rates are monitored closely.
16. Partnership work between NLGGTA, employers and other agencies is very effective. Close links with the Arriva bus company provide opportunities for NLGGTA apprentices to benefit from participating in theory and practical training at the Arriva workshops in Tottenham. Approximately 40 staff from Arriva are waiting to be enrolled on a Train to Gain Programme. Relationships with the Connexions service are good. Strategic partnerships with local schools and providers are strong and NLGGTA offers taster programmes and courses up to NVQ level 1 for young people aged 14 – 16.
17. Strategic and business planning is effective and the self-assessment and action planning process is particularly clear. Performance, in terms of recruitment, achievement and

financial stability is closely monitored. The self-assessment process is realistic, and includes the views of staff, learners and employers. The report is structured around the common inspection framework. Judgements are sufficiently critical and focus on areas for improvement, many of which were identified by inspectors. Development action plans are well structured and clearly identify actions, responsibilities and timescales. However, some of the quality improvement arrangements have yet to be fully implemented.

18. Staff appraisal and development are satisfactory. All staff receive a performance appraisal and staff training is clearly identified in an organisational training and development plan. Teacher training and assessor and internal verification training are provided.
19. Internal verification is generally satisfactory and meets the awarding body requirements. Assessments and verification activities are planned and effectively monitored. In most placements learners are visited and assessed frequently and make good progress through their NVQ.
20. NLGGTA has effective data collection systems and a comprehensive set of information is collated for each learner. The organisation has recently invested in an electronic database, which provides monitoring of learners' progress through their frameworks. This gives assessors a clear picture of those learners at risk of not completing on time. Targets for overall and timely success rates are set and monitored by the provider. Some assessors are unclear about their individual targets for improvement. However, there is little comparative analysis of the performance of groups from different engineering disciplines and no analysis of the performance of those learners who receive additional support and those who do not.
21. Some quality improvement processes are not yet fully implemented. A quality assurance and improvement manager has been appointed and has begun a programme of quality audits of training activities. The quality documents are comprehensive and cover key learner activities such as induction and the review process. There remain inconsistencies in the target-setting of learners' progress at reviews and observation of training has not yet been fully implemented for all staff. Learners and employers are consulted and arrangements for off-the-job training have been changed following monitoring of provider performance.
22. The provider's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The equal opportunities policy is thorough and detailed and contains a clear commitment by the provider. An 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) policy statement has been written and circulated to staff for comment. Staff have received ECM awareness and equality and diversity training from an external consultant and are knowledgeable about equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is covered during the learners' induction but is insufficiently reinforced during their training. Learners' understanding is satisfactory and checked at reviews using a prepared bank of questions. Learners understand grievance procedures and how to deal with bullying and harassment if it arises. The NLGGTA employer's manual contains copies of its equal opportunities policy and employers are encouraged to use their own. Awareness raising or promotion with employers is limited. At the time of the inspection, no learner or employer complaints were on record. Learners felt safe in the training centre and in the workplace. The company collects a wide range of data on the ethnicity, gender and disability of learners, which it retains and monitors for participation by different groups. NLGGTA works closely with Connexions and the local community to increase participation by under-represented groups, by arranging taster programmes and attending careers briefings.

23. The provider self-assessment report clearly identifies many of the strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors.
24. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Documentation for all staff has been submitted to the appropriate authority and priority clearance provided for those who are in direct contact with learners. The remainder are being processed.

What learners like:

- Helpful and supportive staff
- Knowledge and experience of staff
- 'Learning new things every day'
- 'Working with different cars in the garage'
- 'Having a day at college/training centre'

What learners think could improve:

- 'More time in the training workshop'
- 'More practical training with the theory training'
- Too much noise from lift truck training is distracting'
- 'Some of the videos are a bit long and boring'
- 'Shorter hours at work'