

The Derbyshire Network

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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 achievement 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:

- Health, public services and care
- Agriculture, horticulture and animal care
- Engineering and manufacturing technologies
- Retail and commercial enterprise
- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. The Derbyshire Network (TDN) based in Ripley, Derbyshire, is a not-for-profit, limited by guarantee organisation, which became a legal entity in April 2003. TDN is the lead provider for a consortium of training providers drawn from a wide range of private, public and voluntary organisations. The board of directors consists of nine individuals from member companies.
2. In 2006, TDN was successful in tendering for a Train to Gain consortia contract to provide Skills for Life and occupational National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) at Level 2 throughout Derbyshire. TDN currently has 18 subcontractors providing training. While some of the subcontractors have their own substantial work-based learning contracts, none have a direct Train to Gain contract with the LSC. Training takes place over a wide geographical area. TDN is solely responsible for the delivery of the programme including the quality assurance arrangements. TDN has 11 members of staff who manage the network membership service.
3. Training opportunities include: health, public services and care; agriculture, horticulture and animal care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; retail and commercial enterprise; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law. Training is also provided in: information and communication technology (ICT); construction, planning and the built environment; and leisure, travel and tourism; however, these areas were not inspected. At the time of inspection 1482 learners were working towards a qualification.
4. TDN is funded mainly through membership contributions and LSC. The lead funding body is Derbyshire LSC, through a Train to Gain contract.

Sector subject areas / training providers (sub contractors)	% of current learners
Health, public services and care	
Age Concern Training	10%
AM Training	35%
Centre for Business Development Limited	26%
HIT Training	2%
Inspire Training UK	9%
Network Learning Centre	5%
Skills Gap Training Company	4%
SLIC Training Limited	9%

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	
DART Limited	48%
SLIC Training Limited	51%

Engineering and manufacturing technologies	
Educate Limited	19%
Key Training and Learning Limited	64%
Network Learning Centre	2%
Training Services 2000	15%

Engineering and manufacturing technologies – transportation	
Skills Gap Training Company	11%
Skills UK Limited	89%

Construction, planning and the built environment	
Burton College	18%
DART Limited	10%
Educate Limited	50%
Skills UK Limited	22%

Information and communication technology	
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce	100%

Retail and commercial enterprise	
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce	9%
Educate Limited	16%
HIT Training	1.5%
Key Training and Learning Limited	3%
MIYA Training	14%
Network Learning Centre	1.5%
Premium 4 Training	4%
Skills Gap Training Company	1.5%
Skills UK Limited	1.5%
SLIC Training	44%

Training Services 2000 Limited	4%
Retail and commercial enterprise - hospitality	
Educate Limited	20%
HIT Training	61%
Skills Gap Training Company	17%
SLIC Training Limited	2%
Preparation for life and work	
Age Concern Training	17%
Acorn Training Consultants Limited	1%
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce	1%
MIYA Training Limited	2%
Options 2 Workplace Learning Limited	6%
SLIC Training Limited	73%
Business, administration and law	
Acorn Training Consultants Limited	1%
Burton College	9%
Centre for Business Development Limited	13%
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce	17%
Educate Limited	4%
HIT Training	2%
Key training and Learning Limited	3%
MIYA Training	16%
Premium 4 Training	5%
Skills Gap Training Company	2%
SLIC Training Limited	28%

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	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Retail and commercial enterprise	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards, and leadership and management are good. Overall, the quality of provision is satisfactory. Provision is good in health, public services and care; agriculture, horticulture and animal care; and engineering and manufacturing technologies. The provision is satisfactory in retail and commercial enterprise; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law. Equality of opportunity is also satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. TDN demonstrates a good capacity to improve. This is TDN's first inspection. The overall strategy for improving and developing the training programme is working effectively. TDN has made good use of the views of learners, subcontractors and employers to plan and implement a range of improvement strategies. The company has a clear direction and commitment to expanding, developing and improving the provision.
7. TDN has a well planned and particularly effective approach to quality improvement. Careful monitoring of the performance of subcontractors clearly identifies underperforming providers, who then receive support from TDN. All subcontractors are risk assessed and the frequency of monitoring is reduced proportionally according to their level of performance. Recent good developments to the programme include a range of additions and amendments to the training from which learners and employers clearly benefit.
8. TDN uses management information to good effect. Data is well presented, clear and used effectively in the regular meetings with subcontractors. It demonstrates the individual effectiveness of the subcontractors' work and the overall effectiveness of the network. Data clearly indicates that learners are improving their existing skills and acquiring new skills. Many of the areas for improvement identified in the individual subcontractors' action plans are now satisfactory or better.
9. The 2006/07 self-assessment report is TDN's first, and is evaluative and broadly accurate. The well developed action plan is thoroughly monitored and updated to indicate the development and changes to the provision. The actions taken by TDN have been effective and all the areas for improvement identified in the 2006/07 report are now satisfactory or better.
10. At the time of inspection, TDN's second self-assessment report was in draft form. The first report included information from subcontractors and employers but the views of learners were not included. However, for the new self-assessment report

TDN has collected the views of all stakeholders and the process is now fully inclusive.

Key strengths

- Good acquisition and development of new and existing workplace skills
- Good assessment support for learners
- Good organisation of programmes to meet employers' and learners' needs
- Good strategic management
- Good use of management information to bring about improvement
- Well-planned and particularly effective approach to quality improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Slow progress by some learners
- Insufficient planning of individual learning
- Insufficient sharing of good practice between subcontractors
- Poor recognition of the importance of meeting learners' literacy and numeracy needs by some employers

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards are good. TDN recognises this in the individual sector subject area sections of the self-assessment report. Learners in all sectors achieved good development of their existing skills and acquired new skills during their training in the workplace. Employers were clearly benefiting from the improvement learners were able to demonstrate in their work roles. In 2006/07 success rates in health, public services and care, and horticulture and retail were all high. Many of the learners who started in the years 2007/08 and 2008/09 are not yet due to complete their qualifications. Because of the significant numbers still in learning, inspectors were unable to make judgements on the data for these years.
12. Historically, learners have made slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. TDN has recognised this in their self-assessment report. Inspectors identified some learners had been making slow progress in 2006/07. However, current learners are making satisfactory or better progress towards their learning goals. There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of learners.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. The quality of the provision is satisfactory overall. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Overall, the well managed programmes clearly support learning. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory or better in the sector subject areas. However, the planning of individual learning is variable. Learners in health, public services and care, and in engineering receive well planned individual learning opportunities. For learners in retail and commercial enterprise, agriculture, and preparation for life and work there is insufficient use of initial assessment and target-setting.
14. The programmes and activities clearly meet the needs and interests of learners and employers. The range of programmes is good and meets both the requirements of businesses and employers in the wide geographical area over which TDN operates. For example, local taxi companies whose learners have completed their training are now attracting new work and are bidding for more contracts.
15. Overall, support and guidance are satisfactory. Learners receive satisfactory support on commencement of their training and throughout their programmes. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance is satisfactory and employers provide a range of activities to support learners during their training. However, some employers do not sufficiently recognise the importance of meeting the literacy and numeracy needs of learners.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. Leadership and management are good overall. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. TDN's strategic management is good. Clear strategic and business plans demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the improvement of work-based learning in Derbyshire. TDN has aligned its activities to reflect the local and regional priorities of the funding body. To this end it has recently joined with a group of other networks in the East Midlands to form a new organisation, to respond more effectively to regional requirements. TDN selects subcontractors carefully to provide an appropriate spread of provision, provides the necessary support for those who lack the expertise or experience to run government funded programmes in their own right and encourages those who, in due course, wish to bid for their own contracts. Management of subcontractors is good. The documentation for the subcontracts is very comprehensive and issued in both hard copy and electronic form. Communications with the subcontractors are good.
17. TDN has a well planned and particularly effective approach to quality improvement. The use of thorough and detailed criteria for the acceptance of new training subcontractors is good. The judgements made on their quality systems, procedures and health and safety arrangements influence whether TDN will accept them as subcontractors. Their performance, carefully monitored, clearly identifies underperforming subcontractors, who then receive support from TDN. However, if there are no improvements to the provision TDN ceases the subcontracting arrangement. All subcontractors are risk assessed and the frequency of monitoring of the well performing subcontractors is reduced proportionally.
18. TDN uses management information to good effect. Data is well presented, clear and used effectively in the regular meetings with subcontractors. It demonstrates the individual effectiveness of the subcontractors' work and the overall effectiveness of the network. Data clearly indicates that learners are improving their existing skills and acquiring new skills.
19. TDN collects and analyses a significant amount of data about the performance of learners and subcontractors to plan and develop improvements to the provision. Underperformance is clearly identified and action plans are used extensively to guide and support subcontractors to improve their provision. From the extensive quality checks carried out by TDN, individual action plans for each subcontractor are developed and subsequently well monitored.
20. TDN is over reliant on the assessment of the quality of teaching, training and learning carried out by subcontractors and does not observe this activity itself. Plans are well advanced to introduce peer group monitoring between the individual subcontractors to assess the quality of the provision.

21. TDN's strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. The strategy is two years old and is under review. Staff development is satisfactory. TDN has recently increased the number of staff to deal with the higher workload imposed by managing the Train to Gain contract. New staff receive an appropriate induction and are well supported during their probationary period.
22. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. All of TDN's employees who may have contact with learners have had appropriate vetting checks. As part of their comprehensive audit procedures, TDN staff examine their subcontractors' safeguarding arrangements including their policies and procedures for the identification of vulnerable learners and vetting of staff. Staff undergo appropriate safeguarding training. At the time of the inspection no vulnerable adults had been identified among the learners.
23. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between subcontractors. When there is more than one subcontractor providing training in the same vocational area, they rarely share their training practices. Similarly TDN does not sufficiently promote the good training practices identified in one vocational area or in one subcontractor's provision to other areas of the contract. TDN has recognised this as an area for improvement and is working to promote greater cooperation between its subcontractors.
24. TDN's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The network's equality and diversity policy adequately reflects the relevant legislation. Appropriate equality and diversity action planning is incorporated in the organisation's overall quality improvement plan. Staff receive training at induction and through discrete short courses. TDN has recently appointed an equality and diversity champion who is kept aware of new developments in equality practices through a subscription to a specialist subcontractor. They then pass on this, and other information obtained from attendance at equality and diversity conferences, and workshops, to subcontractors as required. TDN scrutinises subcontractors' policies and procedures when they apply to join the consortium and audits them as part of the regular quality improvement audits once they have joined. These audits include checks on training materials and the promotion of equality and diversity to learners at review. TDN uses management information well to monitor the recruitment and subsequent relative progress and achievement of groups of learners categorised by ethnicity, gender, age group and disability. TDN's current office premises are not compliant with current disability legislation. TDN is aware of this issue and will be moving to new premises with appropriate access for people with restricted mobility in early 2009.

What learners like:

- 'The employer's commitment to our training'
- 'Excellent trainer who makes me think about my learning'
- Great to work and learn at the same time
- Achieving a qualification while at work
- Helpful and supportive assessors
- 'Adding to my curriculum vitae'
- Valuable feedback after assessment
- Very experienced assessors
- Fits in well with work patterns
- Training is very enjoyable
- 'Provider helped me at my lowest ebb'

What learners think could improve:

- 'Knowing where I am on my course'
- Too many worksheets
- Questions could be on a CD
- 'I would like time to do my NVQ at work'

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

25. TDN subcontracts its Train to Gain NVO training and assessment arrangements to eight individual training subcontractors who offer a range of programmes in health and social care, childcare, learning and development, and cleaning and support. In health and social Care, 184 learners are working towards an NVO at Level 2 and 78 learners towards an NVO at Level 3. Two learners are working towards an NVO at Level 2 in childcare and learning and six learners are on cleaning and support NVO programmes. All learners are in employment.

Strengths

- Good progress for learners
- Good acquisition and development of new and existing workplace skills
- Good matching of vocational programmes to learners' individual circumstances
- Particularly good support for learners
- Good management of subject area by subcontractors

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs
- Insufficient resources to promote independent learning

Achievement and standards

26. Achievement and standards are good overall. In 2006/07 overall success rates were high. A high number of learners enrolled in 2007/08 are still working towards their qualification and are not yet due to complete.

27. Learners are making good progress. They maintain progress through their NVO at a good pace which is very well matched to their prior attainment, experience and their current job role. A very large majority of learners who have successfully achieved their qualification did so before their expected target date. Most others learners are on target to achieve on time.

28. Learners in the workplace clearly develop their existing skills and acquire new skills. They develop a good understanding of the importance of background knowledge and its importance in improving their work practice. Learners develop confidence in dealing with clients and meeting their needs. Both learners and managers are able to identify the improvements in practice and the increasing ability to work to a good professional standard. Learners are confident, well motivated and demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for their programme. They develop a greater awareness of organisational needs and their individual roles and responsibilities.

29. Portfolios are very well organised and evidence of learners' knowledge is at an appropriate level. Learners produce a high standard of written work demonstrating good understanding of the subject matter and are able to critically reflect on their practice.

Quality of provision

30. Teaching, training and learning are good. All learners receive individual coaching with a good variety of assessment methods, for example professional discussion and the development of reflective accounts.
31. Vocational programmes are well matched to learners' individual circumstances. Learners undergo an effective skills scan during the induction period and programmes are carefully matched to their individual work environment and job roles to ensure that learners are able to fully meet each aspect of the programme. This is achieved by an in-depth discussion with each learner.
32. Subcontractors have insufficient resources to promote independent learning. Although learners make good progress with the collection of NVQ evidence, staff do not encourage learners to develop independent learning skills. Access to learning resources is limited and tends to rely on what is available in the workplace. Opportunities are available for learners to borrow books from the training centre but this is not easily accessible to most learners. There is limited access to remote training materials through information learning technology. However, not all learners have access to this or are confident with this form of learning.
33. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are not supported sufficiently. The initial assessment used does not effectively identify learners' literacy and / or numeracy needs, to aid effective development. All learners complete a very basic test. Insufficient consideration is given to learners' prior attainment or current job roles in the approach to initial assessment. Assessors are unaware of other, more detailed diagnostic tools available for those learners who may have additional basic skills needs. The results of literacy and numeracy assessments are not used effectively to support learning. Subcontractor staff who assess the NVQ do not consistently refer learners for Skills for Life support.
34. The range of programmes offered is good and meets the needs and interests of the learners and employers. Many learners have progressed from an NVQ at Level 2 to an NVQ at Level 3. The induction programme is effective and learners are very clear about the contents and requirements of their programme.
35. Learners receive particularly good support. Learners have a work-based assessor and receive frequent and appropriate assessment. They are able to contact their assessors by phone and email easily and out of office hours. Learners receive planned visits every two weeks and more frequently if needed. Learners who need additional support are identified and are able to attend off-the-job sessions. Employers and assessors are committed to learners achieving and provide good support within the workplace to maintain their learners' progress.

Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management are good. The management of the subject area by subcontractors is good. Learners' programmes are well managed. Assessors plan assessment visits effectively, identify learners who are making slow progress and actively encourage the involvement of employers. Communication is very effective. Meetings are frequent and effective sharing of good practice between assessors contributes to continued quality improvement. Learners' progress is monitored effectively and recorded. Sampling of learners' work is carried out effectively.
37. The outcomes of the well planned observation of individual assessors are linked appropriately to the staff appraisal process. Assessors are well qualified and undertake continued professional development. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Good: Grade 2

Context

38. TDN provides Train to Gain NVQ amenity horticulture training and assessment through two subcontractors. One hundred and twenty-three learners are working towards the amenity horticulture qualification at Level 2. Sixty learners are enrolled with one sub contractor and are aiming to complete their training in 12 months. The 63 learners at the second sub contractor aim to complete their qualification within six months. All training and assessment is carried out in the workplace.

Strengths

- Good overall success rates
- Good acquisition of new skills and development of existing skills
- Good organisation of programmes to meet employer and learner needs
- High levels of support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Some slow progress towards completion within planned end dates
- Insufficient use of initial assessment to plan individual learning programmes
- Insufficient sharing of practice within the sector

Achievement and standards

39. Achievement and standards are good. In 2006/07, a very large majority of learners achieved their planned qualification. During 2007/08, all the first intake of learners at one subcontractor achieved their qualification. Retention of learners on programmes is good. Between 2006 and 2008, almost all learners remained in learning.

40. Learners develop good skills and knowledge. Many learners have substantial experience in horticulture and benefit from having this formally recognised. Many learners also develop new skills and knowledge and are able to widen their work roles and responsibilities. Some learners recognise that some of their normal work practices are poor and are able to rectify these through training and assessment. Employers benefit from the learners' personal development and increased pride and understanding in their work.

41. At some employers, learners make slow progress and do not achieve their qualification within the planned timescales. In 2006/07, less than half of learners achieved on or before their planned end date. In 2007/08, most learners at both the sub contractors completed their qualification late. Many of the learners who do not complete on time work for smaller organisations and, during busy periods, are unable to devote sufficient time to their training and assessment. Learners in

larger organisations have better opportunities to demonstrate their competence. Their progress is at least satisfactory and good for some learners.

Quality of provision

42. Teaching, training and learning are good. Assessment practices are thorough. There is a satisfactory range of evidence in learners' portfolios. Reviews of progress are generally satisfactory with appropriate input from employers. Assessors focus well on health and safety issues and also satisfactorily question learners about aspects of equality of opportunity such as, harassment and bullying in the workplace.
43. Learning resources are satisfactory. Learners have access to appropriate written resources such as plant identification books and maintenance manuals through their assessor or employer. The quality of worksheets such as job logs and background knowledge questions is satisfactory; however, there is little use of ICT. Worksheets are not provided electronically. Where literacy and numeracy needs are identified, support arrangements are satisfactory.
44. Insufficient use is made of initial assessment to plan individual learning programmes. One subcontractor does not carry out initial assessment of vocational skills or literacy, language and numeracy. Learning plans lack detail and targets on assessment plans following reviews are not sufficiently specific. For instance, a target for one learner was to study the lawn expert book, but did not make the objective of the study clear. The lack of literacy and numeracy initial assessment hinders support for those learners who might benefit. Initial assessment of vocational and literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory at the second sub contractor. However, there is insufficient use of the results of the vocational skills and knowledge assessment to plan individual programmes, accredit prior learning and identify potential barriers to meeting completion date targets.
45. Learning and assessment programmes are well organised and meet the needs of employers and learners well. The subcontractors are responsive to employers' needs and circumstances. Assessors at both subcontractors establish good communications with employers and supervisors. This ensures that opportunities for assessment are maximised. For some employers, training and assessment of their employees assists them in maintaining and improving the standards of their horticultural services. At one subcontractor there are good arrangements to give learners access to facilities and resources at alternative locations if they are not available at the learner's place of work. Well-managed programmes meet the needs of learners who work in more specialist employment such as sports turf maintenance.
46. Guidance and support are good. Learners receive high levels of support from assessors and employers. Assessors visit learners in the workplace frequently and often spend up to six hours carrying out training and assessment with individual learners or in small groups. Assessors carry out assessment visits to the workplace during unsociable hours, for instance to assess the watering of hanging basket early in the morning during the summer. At one large employer learners

benefit from mentors who are very well experienced horticulture supervisors and qualified assessors. There is good liaison between these mentors and the subcontractor's assessor who coordinates the assessment programme. Assessors give good encouragement to learners who have the potential to progress to a qualification at Level 3.

Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are good overall. TDN carries out thorough audits of the health and safety, and quality improvement arrangements of the subcontractors. These arrangements have accurately identified difficulties around initial assessment and learning plans at one subcontractor. TDN communicates well with the network. Subcontractors receive useful clarification on contractual issues through regular subcontractor meetings and are responsive to queries as they arise.
48. Equality of opportunity and diversity are covered appropriately during induction and learners' knowledge is developed using leaflets at one subcontractor or through information in the learner handbook at the other subcontractor. There is a good focus on the link between health and safety and equal opportunities at one subcontractor.
49. TDN does not sufficiently promote the sharing of good practice between the two subcontractors delivering amenity horticulture. A culture of competitiveness exists rather than a partnership to benefit all learners in the network. Although this does not have a significant impact on learners, there are missed opportunities to improve aspects of the provision and ensure that all learners have equal access to a flexible service.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

50. There are currently 172 learners on engineering Train to Gain programmes. TDN subcontracts with six other training providers. The number of learners varies from three in one subcontractor to 89 learners in another. A range of nine NVQs at Level 2 and one NVQ at Level 3 are currently available across manufacturing technologies and transportation. Most learners are following the NVQ at Level 2 in performing manufacturing operations, manufacturing textiles and road passenger vehicle driving. Most of the training and all assessments are completed in the workplace. One subcontractor hires a local venue to provide short group workshop training, when appropriate.

Strengths

- Good development of new and existing skills in the workplace
- Well-managed programmes to support learning
- Good range of programmes to meet needs of learners and employers
- Good communication and training from the network

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in the workplace
- Insufficient sharing of good practice between subcontractors

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are good. In addition to recognising and developing existing skills, learners are acquiring new skills relevant to the workplace. For nearly all learners the main benefits are working more effectively and improving their knowledge of health and safety at work, especially manual handling. For the taxi drivers, managing the movement of people with restricted mobility and knowledge of relevant legislation are the most common new skills being developed. For many learners this is the first time they have achieved any qualification. Learners gain significant confidence and have a higher level of self-esteem.

52. Success rates for 2007/08 are high, and most learners complete within their planned time. Current learners are making good progress working towards their qualifications. The standard of portfolio work is appropriate, with a suitable range of evidence.

Quality of provision

53. Teaching, training and learning are good. Training, assessment and learning are well managed. Learners receive good training from their assessors and workplace supervisors. Visits by assessors are regular and learners are given meaningful and achievable short-term targets to promote their progression. Training is arranged to meet the learner's preferences, including individual training and group workshops, to suit shift patterns. For the passenger transport qualification, the subcontractor has developed a workbook with activities to support the training.
54. The assessment process is satisfactory. Well-planned assessments ensure learners are fully aware of the assessment criteria. The judgements made are fair with supportive feedback, provided verbally initially and followed by written confirmation. Internal verification practices are satisfactory.
55. Initial assessment for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The results, recorded on the individual learning plan, lack detail about how support will be provided. In some learners files details are recorded of a skills scan that determines levels of prior knowledge. Assessors provide support for identified additional learning needs on an individual basis. Subcontractors use other partners in the consortium for the provision of more specialist needs. When one employer would not support additional training for literacy and numeracy, the subcontractor arranged for this to be provided in their office in the learner's free time. Skills for Life support materials in the context of transportation are available to assessors to support learner needs.
56. The range of provision is good. The specific NVQ and option choices within the NVQ are decided in discussions with employers and learners, based on the learner's work role and responsibilities. In the textile industry, many learners complete a NVQ in manufacturing operations at Level 2 and follow this with a second NVQ in manufacturing textiles at Level 2, more closely related to their individual work. Many employers, although initially sceptical, now recognise the value to their business of having a more confident and knowledgeable workforce. For the taxi companies it has brought in new work and enabled bids for more contracts. Those employers with only a few employees on programme are now requesting that all their staff be given the opportunity to be trained.
57. Guidance and support are good. Carefully arranged assessment visits fit work patterns, avoid busy periods and reduce as much disruption as possible to the earning potential of the learners. Most assessors are in the workplace at least once each week and each learner is seen at least every two weeks. Assessors' mobile telephone numbers are readily available for learners to arrange assessment visits. The employers regularly allow their staff time within the working day to attend short training sessions and to gather evidence for portfolio-building.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The training workshops provided by TDN are a real benefit to improving their performance and would not be affordable if arranged independently. The ability to meet with other subcontractors in a non-competitive environment is an advantage. The quality checks by TDN, and resulting action plans are leading to improvements, such as promoting equality and diversity awareness at one subcontractor.
59. There is some basic information on equal opportunities given to each learner at induction accompanied by a learner booklet. Not all subcontractors use the questions on the review form sufficiently well to raise learner awareness of the wider equality and diversity issues. Some aspects of equality form part of the passenger transport NVQs but the wider aspects are not always considered.
60. There is insufficient sharing of good practices between subcontractors delivering the engineering programmes. One subcontractor has recently devised an equality and diversity calendar where every two months a topic is discussed at reviews, with posters for display by employers, to raise awareness. This has yet to be shared with other subcontractors. One subcontractor has produced a very readable learner guide, easily adaptable for all similar programmes. Standardisation meetings for assessors across subcontractors do not take place. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate although not all the strengths and areas for improvement have been identified.

Retail and commercial enterprise

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

61. TDN provides Train to Gain training and assessment for 111 learners, in two distinct areas within this sector subject area, retailing and wholesaling and hospitality and catering. Provision in both areas is subcontracted to a range of providers. In retailing and wholesaling, there are 70 learners, trained and assessed by staff from 11 subcontractors. Staff from four subcontractors train and assess the remaining 41 learners. Employers carry out much of the on-the-job training, while staff from the subcontractors complete assessment and progress reviews in the workplace. Subcontractor staff provide off-the-job training, particularly in relation to the essential knowledge section of the qualifications.

Strengths

- Good overall success rates in 2007/08
- Good development and acquisition of workplace knowledge
- High level of management support

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning of individual learning
- Insufficient opportunities to share good practice between subcontractors
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity for some learners

Achievement and standards

62. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are high and improving. Timely success rates are lower, but also improving. Current learners are making satisfactory or better progress through their qualification.

63. The development and acquisition of workplace knowledge is good. Learners acquire new knowledge, for example, understanding the legislation relating to the analysis of critical control points in relation to food handling. Learners' understanding of their working practices also improves significantly, and they develop a good understanding of the reasons behind the actions they take in their workplace. The essential knowledge aspects of their qualification are used well to develop their practical skills. Some learners also benefit from an improved level of self-confidence, making them more able to deal with potentially stressful situations in the workplace.

Quality of provision

64. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is also satisfactory and meets the requirements of the NVQ. Assessors ensure learners make good use of knowledge and understanding of theory to develop their practice and performance in their work roles. Assessment portfolios contain a variety of diverse evidence including learners' statements and witness testimonies, along with assessor reports. For a few learners the planning of assessment is weak consisting only of actions to be completed before the next visit, rather than an effective preparation for assessment. However, for most learners the planning of future actions to support learning is satisfactory with assessors providing advice on how to collect and verify portfolio evidence. Internal verification is satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory overall but variable, the best being colourful, easy to read and well presented and the worst are poor quality photocopies, which are difficult to read.
65. The planning of individual learning is insufficient. The quality of initial assessment varies between subcontractors. Few use the results of initial assessment well to plan individual learning. The initial assessment of language, literacy and numeracy is often at a basic level, regardless of the current skill level of the learner. Individual learning plans record the level of literacy and numeracy skills, but provide little detail of where additional development is required. The learning plans and progress reviews do not adequately show how staff will provide any additional support. Some initial assessment activities help learners identify additional areas of support, for example, assertiveness, but provide no information about how subcontractors will provide this. TDN has recognised much of this area for improvement in its own self-assessment report.
66. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers satisfactorily. Learners are on programmes that are relevant to their job roles, identified through an analysis of the work activities, against the evidence requirements of their NVQ. Subcontractor staff work well with employers to minimise disruption in the workplace. Employers allow assessors access to learners on all shift patterns to ensure assessment covers a range of activities.
67. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff provide learners with the support necessary to safeguard their welfare and promote their development. Information on progression opportunities is made available although there is some over-reliance on the use of handouts directing learners to relevant organisations and websites. The support from employers varies considerably. Some actively encourage learners to work on their qualification while at work and allow time for this to happen. Others are reluctant to allow learners away from their duties to complete activities such as progress reviews.

Leadership and management

68. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. TDN provides a high level of support to its subcontractors. TDN uses highly valued monthly performance meetings to update subcontractors in relation to their success rates and to plan for effective progress. Using the results of their quality audits, TDN provides a series of workshops to improve performance and provide training on new or changing areas. Recent examples include support for the provision of more effective progress reviews. Informative newsletters are used well to keep subcontractors up-to-date with what is happening at TDN. Subcontractors' staff are appropriately qualified as tutors or assessors, and have a wide variety of relevant vocational experience.
69. Subcontractors have insufficient opportunities to share good practice. Although TDN has done much work to support subcontractors on an individual basis, there are few opportunities to meet and share best practice within the sector subject area. Some subcontractors have developed good quality resources dealing with generic areas such as equal opportunities or learners' welfare, or projects for specific areas such as the development of numeracy skills. These are not shared effectively with other subcontractors for the benefit of learners.
70. TDN does not develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently. Induction materials, including learners' handbooks, refer to equal opportunities but there is little opportunity to discuss any questions this may raise. Staff do not use progress reviews well enough to develop learners' understanding. Some make no provision for checking learners' understanding, while others focus only on bullying and harassment. Some subcontractors have developed set questions that they use, but these focus only on learners' rights, usually using legislation as the main topic. There is little focus on learners' responsibilities to their customers and colleagues. Some subcontractors however, have developed good resources to promote equality and diversity, though these are not always used with Train to Gain learners.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

71. TDN has 474 learners working towards literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners undertake literacy and numeracy training as part of their Train to Gain NVQ programme or as a separate discrete qualification. Subcontractors responsible for vocational training refer learners to the four main providers of literacy and numeracy training or they provide the qualifications as part of their own contract.

Strengths

- Good development of new skills
- Good training and development for training subcontractors
- Strong and supportive partnerships

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress of learners
- Insufficient short term targets
- Poor recognition of the importance of learners' literacy and numeracy needs by some employers

Achievement and standards

72. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners' development of new skills is good. They are able to practice and demonstrate these skills in their workplace and in their communities. Learners' self-esteem and confidence has improved through the development of literacy and numeracy skills. For example, they are able to accurately measure distance and calculate volumes for use in their work and are able to write detailed reports and comprehensive care plans.

73. In 2006/07, the success rates were satisfactory, but only around half of learners achieved within their planned time. A significant number of learners who started in 2007/08 are not yet due to complete their training or achieve their qualification.

Quality of provision

74. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory. Schemes of work are relevant to the main qualification and in the best subcontractors are linked very closely to the vocational NVQ. Subcontractor staff integrate literacy and numeracy well with the learners' vocational learning. Resources are used well to stimulate and promote learning. Learners benefit from a good range of textbooks and learning materials. Good use is made of computers with access to the internet for research activities.

Teaching and training staff offer good individual support in classes and guide and support learners well throughout their training.

75. Short-term target-setting is insufficient. There is little use of the results of initial assessment in the development of the learners' individual learning plans. At some subcontractors, short-term targets are often not focused on the learners' previously identified needs and aspirations. However, in the better subcontractors, targets closely linked to the results of initial assessment clearly describe the steps individual learners need to complete to make progress and achieve their qualifications.
76. Learners regularly record what they have completed in their training sessions, but rarely identify the new skills they achieve. Some trainers' records do not sufficiently record the learning completed or where activities need repeating to ensure learners understanding of their subject.
77. The range of courses provided in the workplace is satisfactory and assessment is provided at times suitable to the learners and the employer. However, some employers have poor recognition of the importance of learners' literacy and numeracy needs. Employers provide time for their employees to carry out their vocational study, but do not recognise that initial assessment may identify learners with literacy and numeracy needs. Where the integration of literacy and numeracy with the sector subject area takes place, learners clearly benefit and extend their skills. However, where the provision of literacy and numeracy is discrete some employers either do not understand the importance of skills for life or do not recognise and support the learners' needs.
78. Learners benefit from satisfactory guidance and support. They receive clear and relevant information about skills for work and pastoral support. They receive clear advice, information and guidance about training opportunities before they join their NVQ programme. At induction, the learner's individual interview provides the opportunity to identify, record and plan appropriately for individual support needs.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are good. TDN provides good training and development to support the improvement of subcontractors and employers who clearly benefit from the well planned training and assessment opportunities. The opportunity to share good practice is promoted strongly. One of the subcontractors has organised training on Skills for Life for all the members of TDN and to employers. This is beginning to raise awareness of the need to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills to support their vocational training and assessment.
80. TDN promotes and encourages strong and supportive partnerships. The opportunity for business support is good. When new subcontractors join TDN they receive good support to develop their business and the quality of their provision. TDN actively promotes the literacy and numeracy training organisations to other network members through the regular and informative subcontractor and employer meetings. Communication is effective and the sharing of good practice

is routinely an agenda item at staff meetings. All staff are suitably qualified or are working towards their teaching qualifications, they are an enthusiastic team who work closely together to develop the provision. Trainers have a strong commitment to continuing professional development and have the opportunity to gain further professional qualifications.

81. TDN successfully promotes equality and diversity and provides learners with satisfactory opportunities to develop their potential. Many learning activities promote cultural awareness effectively. The Skills for Life strategy is satisfactory. However, TDN has recognised it is two years old and it is now under review.

82. TDN carries out a detailed monitoring visit where the quality of each subcontractor's provision is carefully scrutinised. A detailed and thorough action plan is developed and monitored well to support the subcontractor to identify actions to bring about improvements to the learners' experience. TDN's self-assessment report is broadly accurate. It is evaluative, informative and recognises many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors. Subcontractors regularly observe their training staff and implement measures to develop and support trainers.

Business, Administration and Law

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

83. TDN subcontracts business administration programmes to 11 subcontractors for the Train to Gain provision. Overall, there are 279 learners working towards business qualifications. Administration programmes have 95 learners working towards qualifications at Levels 2 and 3. The NVQ team leading qualification at Level 2 has 55 learners and 21 learners are working towards an NVQ in business management at Levels 2 and 3. Fifty-nine learners are enrolled on customer service NVQs at Levels 2 and 3. Seven learners are taking qualifications in accounts at Levels 2 and 3. Additionally 42 learners are on a further broad range of courses with small numbers working towards each qualification. Subcontractors cover a wide geographical area around Derbyshire and surrounding counties. Train to Gain learners receive individual tuition in their workplaces. Some learners attend training centres for specific subjects or additional help.

Strengths

- Good development of a range of workplace skills
- Good assessment practices
- Good management of subcontracted provision

Areas for improvement

-
- Slow progress by some learners
- Insufficient sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

84. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The development of a wide range of workplace skills is good. Learners demonstrate improved levels of confidence, and are able to use their decision making skills well for overcoming work related problems. Following training, learners' supervisors need to intervene less often in difficult situations. Learners have more knowledge and confidence to try alternative approaches when dealing with difficult phone calls in call centres. They are able to evaluate their performance, work more efficiently and explain to managers clearly how they think they can further improve. As their existing skills develop further, many of the learners on the Train to Gain programme gain increased responsibility in their work role.

85. Overall, some learners make slow progress. Few learners who started their programme in 2006/07 successfully completed their qualification within the planned time. However, the overall success for the year is satisfactory. A significant number of learners from 2007/08 and 2008/09 are still working towards their qualification and are not yet due to complete.

Quality of provision

86. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory, as is coaching and individual support for learners. Learners can attend additional drop-in training sessions with some subcontractors.
87. Assessment practices are good with the use of well planned and thorough assessment plans. Learners are clear about their assessment plan and the criteria the assessor is using. Assessors use appropriate assessment methods. Learners gather and record satisfactory evidence that supports their claims to competence for individual tasks. Many learners have weekly assessments and appropriate action plans containing short-term, achievable and meaningful targets. Supervisors have a good understanding of NVQs, though some employers do not fully understand the requirements of Train to Gain
88. The standard of individual learning plans in both layout and content differs widely. Some are informative and describe an accurate picture of the learners existing skills and qualifications while others contain very little information about the learner's progress. The better individual learning plans fully and accurately record the learners' acquisition of new skills and development of existing skills. However, a few training subcontractors fail to record accurately the skills learners gain or when help with literacy or numeracy is provided.
89. Generally, initial assessment tests correctly identify learners' needs. Initial assessment results are recorded accurately in the learners' individual learning plans. Learners receive appropriate and targeted support for literacy and numeracy, computer training, and confidence building.
90. The extent to which courses meet the needs and interests of learners is good. A wide range of carefully matched business related qualifications are available to meet the needs of the employer and the learner. The initial assessment and interview provides an appropriate opportunity to ensure that learners are on the correct level and type of qualification.
91. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Subcontractor staff support learners' well. Learners are well supported by their supervisors, but less so by some of their managers. Access to the internet for information for background knowledge questions is not available for all learners.

Leadership and management

92. Leadership and management are good. The subcontracted provision is well managed. TDN carries out detailed monitoring visits of the subcontractors. Data is carefully checked and evaluated and there is further monitoring of the quality of the provision against targeted improvements. TDN examines progress review records, learning plans and assessment records. They check on the promotion of equality and diversity to learners and examine relevant data. After the monitoring visit, an action plan is drawn up, and over time thoroughly monitored to ensure

that corrective actions develop and improve the provision. Specific training sessions, for example, for equality of opportunity, help subcontractors produce their own individual self-assessment reports. Overall arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

93. Subcontractors have effective communications with TDN and receive good help and support.
94. The 2006/07 self-assessment report was broadly accurate, but at the time of inspection, much of the information was out of date. Many of the strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors were identified in the self-assessment report.
95. Good practice is not shared between the training subcontractors. Staff have few opportunities for sharing good practice within their subject area. Few chances exist to share useful contacts that can provide specialist support for learners.