

Talent Training (UK) LLP

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement	7
Main findings.....	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like.....	12
What learners think could improve	12
Sector subject areas	13
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	13
Retail and commercial enterprise.....	16
Preparation for life and work.....	19
Business, administration and law.....	22
Learners' achievements	25

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
- Retail and commercial enterprise
- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. Talent Training (UK) LLP is a limited liability partnership based in Newcastle upon Tyne and has been in existence since April 2007. It was formerly a limited company founded in 2001. It holds a contract with Tyne and Wear LSC to provide National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the workplace through Train to Gain programmes. LSC funded provision comprises all of the company's business. Talent Training is managed by two directors who are also partners in the company. The two directors together with the company's chairman set Talent Training's strategic direction. Talent Training employs 12 managers and 61 trainer/assessors, nine of whom are part-time. A team of 17 administrators and five sales executives support the company's work.
2. Talent Training offers NVQ training throughout England and in some parts of Scotland as part of an agreed contract based in England. Currently 2,745 learners are on Train to Gain programmes. Of these, 496 are in engineering and manufacturing technologies, 745 in retail and commercial enterprise, 410 on preparation for life and work programmes and 1,094 in business, administration and law.

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

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	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards and leadership and management are good. The quality of provision and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Provision is good in engineering and manufacturing technologies and in business, administration and law. It is satisfactory in retail and commercial enterprise and in preparation for life and work.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

4. Talent Training has a good capacity to improve. Directors and senior managers provide a good strategic direction that is helping to develop and improve the provision effectively. Particularly good partnerships with employers are leading to the development of programmes that enhance the NVQ provision and meet employers' business needs very effectively. Employers value the tangible benefits training has brought to their organisations, including improved productivity, a more motivated and productive workforce and a decrease in absenteeism.
5. Overall success rates are high and timely success rates are satisfactory and improving. The directors have increased staffing effectively to meet the needs of the expanding business. New appointments are appropriate and include key management roles and a significant increase in assessors and trainers. The staff training and development strategy is planned well. Managers have appropriately focused attention in the first instance on improving trainer/assessors' assessment and verification skills and qualifications. Training is imminent to improve training skills and to provide staff with a recognised teaching qualification. Regular quarterly meetings for all staff provide further training opportunities.
6. Quality improvement processes are in place and are effective in improving some aspects of provision. The increased growth experienced by the company in the last 12 months has resulted in a significant increase in trainer/assessors. The company has accurately identified that in some sector subject areas the quality procedures have yet to be established to improve performance and better achieve the company's strategic vision and objectives. Data is not yet sufficiently available to enable all staff to use it to improve performance. The self-assessment process is inclusive. The self-assessment report and subsequent updated position statement are critical, evaluative and broadly accurate. Talent Training has identified that while all areas report good or better overall success rates, some aspects of provision require improvement and this is accurately reflected in the self-assessment report and sector subject grades.

Key strengths

- High overall success rates
- Good development of learners' workplace skills and confidence
- Very flexible arrangements for assessment
- Well planned and responsive provision to meet employers' needs
- Good strategic planning to manage company growth
- Strong and dynamic leadership
- Very effective work with employers to bring about business improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of data
- Incomplete quality assurance checks on key training processes
- Insufficient promotion of Skills for Life provision within the NVQ curriculum
- Insufficient sharing of good practice between sector subject areas

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates in 2007/08 are high at 87% and the timely success rate is satisfactory at 68%. Skills for Life and business improvement techniques programmes were only introduced in 2008/09 and it is too early to evaluate success rates. Learners in all sector subject areas are making satisfactory or better progress. Learners' gains in knowledge, understanding and confidence are good. They develop good workplace skills that help them to carry out their work roles efficiently. Following their training, learners perform better at their jobs, improve their productivity and absenteeism is reduced.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall and good in engineering and manufacturing technologies, and in business, administration and law. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good aspects in engineering and manufacturing technologies and in business, administration and law. The use of target-setting at review and the quality of learning plans are areas for improvement in business, administration and law and in retail and commercial enterprise, but are good in engineering and manufacturing technologies.
9. Assessment is planned particularly well. Trainer/assessors make very good flexible arrangements to meet learners shift patterns and work commitments. They develop good working relationships with employers and learners. Assessment visits are regular, focused and purposeful.
10. Arrangements for identifying learners' additional learning needs are satisfactory overall. Insufficient use is made of the results of initial assessment to plan training and provide additional learning support in warehousing and distribution and the take up of literacy and numeracy programmes is low in this area. Talent Training's arrangements for identifying and supporting learners with language needs are incomplete.
11. The range of programmes meets learners' and employers' needs well. Talent Training is particularly responsive to employers and tailors programmes to meet their business needs. Training programmes are leading to measurable business improvements for employers. Staff are better trained to carry out their work and improvements are noticeable in their confidence and motivation levels. Programmes such as customer services and business improvement techniques demonstrate good practice which is also shared with employers.

12. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall and good in engineering and manufacturing technologies. Learners benefit from a thorough induction and receive good support from the trainer/assessors who visit them frequently in the workplace. Detailed discussions take place between the directors and trainer/assessors to agree the programme of study and plan actions to meet learners' particular needs. Employers are particularly flexible about releasing staff to complete their qualification. They provide good support for learning and are actively involved in training and supporting their learners. For example, employers ensure that appropriate resources are made available to support both current and planned future learning. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Leadership and management are good. Strategic planning is good and the rapid company growth is planned and managed well. Following the production of the company strategy to rapidly expand the business across the country, senior managers methodically planned how the process should be managed to maximise success. The planned growth was assessed carefully to determine potential problems in areas such as staffing requirements, resource needs and management structure to avoid difficulties.

14. Directors and senior managers inspire staff through a clear dynamic vision and through their enthusiasm to engage with employers and learners to develop a motivated and well qualified workforce. Directors and managers at all levels set a clear direction that leads to improvement and promotes good quality care, education and training for their learners. Talent Training's managers arrange a staff training day every 90 days to review performance and discuss any concerns. The chairman is directly involved in these events and encourages honest and constructive feedback from staff. Managers allow staff to take responsibility for their work and to inspire learners to do well and achieve beyond expectations.

15. Talent Training has developed excellent initiatives to customise training programmes to meet employers' specific needs. The company has worked with a nationally recognised awarding body to design and accredit awards tailored to employers' requirements that provide added value and enhance the NVQ training. This additional accredited training is currently operating with one large employer. Key performance indicators have been agreed with the company to assess the affect of the training. Talent Training is in the process of designing bespoke accredited awards for other employers to enhance the programmes and develop their employees for future roles within their companies.

16. Communication is satisfactory. Managers meet with individual assessors at least every two weeks. A monthly company newsletter provides staff with updated information.

17. Staff development is satisfactory. Talent Training has focused training appropriately to improve trainer/assessors' assessment and verification qualifications. Training to provide staff with a recognised teacher training qualification is planned to take place very soon. Staff have regular training at quarterly full staff meetings. The appraisal system is satisfactory but often appraisal does not identify or plan for training and development requirements. The staff training plan does not prioritise key annual training.
18. Talent Training's use of management information is insufficient, as identified in the self-assessment report. A management information system has been acquired to enable staff to better access and use data. Staff training has taken place and staff are beginning to use it effectively. Talent Training plans to improve its computer network to allow managers, and trainers in the field, to access and use data.
19. Procedures for safeguarding learners do not yet meet current government requirements. However, Talent Training has taken appropriate action to start to comply and all of its learners are adults. Staff are currently completing Criminal Records Bureau checks and have completed safeguarding training. The company has developed appropriate procedures outlining their approach to safeguarding and allocated staff responsibilities. Checks on employers' premises to assure learners' health, safety and welfare while at work are satisfactory. Ongoing promotion of health and safety is carried out at the learner's progress review.
20. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Policies and procedures are regularly updated and appropriately define the company's approach to equality and diversity for staff and learners. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in the NVQ learners' handbook. Talent Training has taken appropriate action to provide learners with support to address bullying and harassment in the workplace. However, further work is required to ensure that senior managers record incidents and action taken. Talent Training's staff provide good support for learners' additional learning needs in the workplace to make programmes accessible for all who wish to participate. For example, learners with physical disabilities have been given specific individual support and learning materials have been adapted. Course promotional materials are translated into a range of languages to meet the needs of specific groups of employees at individual employer sites. Some English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners who were identified as being very able were fast-tracked through the qualification and then given time by their employer to act as translators and mentors for other learners with language needs. However, monitoring of the accuracy and validity of the translations, particularly at assessment, is insufficient. As yet, talent Training makes insufficient use of data to review the performance of different groups.
21. Talent Training carries out insufficient quality assurance checks on some key learning processes. Observations of teaching and learning have been introduced recently to check and improve the quality of teaching but this is not happening with other training activities such as progress reviews. The content and quality of

progress review records varies too much and good practice is not identified and shared systematically. Talent Training has started to carry out some compliance audits, however, these are not always recorded and analysed systematically. Data is not yet used to identify trends or to set targets for improvement. Learners' views are collected and analysed satisfactorily but employers' feedback is only gained informally and is therefore difficult to quantify. Internal verification is satisfactory and effective standardisation meetings are held with all assessors and verifiers every two months. Assessors are given a risk banding score according to their experience and track record and this is used well to determine the frequency and amount of verification checks to be carried out.

What learners like:

- 'I learnt more on the course than I did at school'
- 'I now use a dictionary, and read and write words properly'
- 'When we were made redundant, I had to write lots of letters to get another job. My training helped me do this properly. I now work as a security guard'
- 'The trainer made everything easy to understand'
- 'The qualification will help me here and in the future'
- 'I have had the opportunity to learn and develop in my new role at work'
- 'The assessor is very accessible at work and can be contacted for help easily'
- 'I have much more confidence in doing my job and a much better understanding of how the company works'
- 'The assessor gives me lots of help and guidance on my portfolio'
- 'The course is very interesting and enjoyable'
- 'I enjoyed the course because it was relaxing and I could work at my own pace. I am very pleased to have passed the English exam and look forward to doing mathematics next year'
- 'Supportive and helpful assessors'
- 'The programme helped me understand how important my job is'
- 'I learned to understand the job and work better'
- 'Individual support is brilliant'

What learners think could improve:

- 'I would have liked more information on the team leading role in addition to what was covered on the course'
- 'I thought the literacy programme could have been longer. It was a one day rushed course'

Sector subject areas

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

22. Talent Training offers engineering training across England through Train to Gain programmes. Currently 310 learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2 in performing manufacturing operations. In addition, 83 learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2, and 103 towards an NVQ at level 3 in business improvement techniques. Training is provided at employers' premises using equipment that learners are familiar with, and any project-based elements of the qualifications use real employer situations.

Strengths

- High overall and timely success rates in performing manufacturing operations
- Good development of workplace skills
- Very effective programmes that benefit learners and employers
- Good operational management of programmes

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient formal support for a minority of learners with additional language needs

Achievement and standards

23. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in performing manufacturing operations are high with overall success rates of 97% and timely success rates of 83% in 2007/08. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. The business improvement techniques programme has been operating for less than a year and learners are making good progress towards meeting their target dates for achieving their qualification.

24. Learners develop good workplace skills. They gain in confidence, increase their knowledge of safe working and improve their practical skills. Learners on the business improvement techniques programme gain critical analysis skills which improve their performance in the workplace. Learners improve their motivation and develop a better attitude to their work. At some workplaces absenteeism has reduced and timekeeping has improved. Progression from the performing manufacturing programme NVQ at level 2 to the business improvement techniques NVQ at level 3 is good.

25. Portfolios are structured well. They contain detailed and diverse evidence that includes real work documentation such as audit reports, workshop organisation

charts, continuous improvement records and actual records of cost savings. Learners' ability to transfer their new skills to different situations is very good.

26. Talent Training's arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. Trainer/assessors place a strong focus on safe working practices. Health and safety are covered thoroughly during induction and learners' knowledge and understanding are developed effectively through training, assessment and progress reviews.

Quality of provision

27. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Session planning is adequate, but trainer/assessors give insufficient consideration to meeting the needs arising from learners' varying abilities. Some sessions have too few activities for learners and tutors make insufficient use of open questions and discussions to check and develop learning. Some teaching materials are difficult to read. For example, presentation slides often contain too much information.
28. Course documentation is comprehensive. Learning plans include both NVQ and personal development targets. Outcomes from initial assessment are used well to plan learning programmes. Assessments and reviews are planned well and take account of work related activities and job roles. Learners are briefed thoroughly at the start of the programme. Resources in the workplace are good. Learners are able to relate learning to their own working environment very well. Learners' progress is monitored against previously agreed targets effectively during reviews. Target-setting is realistic and encourages timely progress.
29. Assessment in the workplace is satisfactory. Assessment is thorough and background knowledge questions are at the appropriate level and build on learners' previous learning and experience. Assessment is available on demand to suit learners' work schedules. Some training and assessment takes place outside of normal working hours. In one company, trainer/assessors provide sessions in the evening at the start of the learners' night shifts.
30. Formal support for the minority of learners with language needs is insufficient. Some learners with ESOL needs have little understanding of NVQ requirements and cannot relate their work activities to the NVQ criteria. They have little input in their portfolios of evidence. Portfolios include records of assessment and answers to background knowledge questions that are completed by the trainer/assessor. Informal support is good. Where appropriate, co-workers who speak both languages are used as translators during induction, learning and assessment activities. However, monitoring of the accuracy and validity of the translations, particularly at assessment, is insufficient.
31. The extent to which courses meet learners' and employers' needs and interests is good. The range of provision is good and takes account of learners' and employers' needs effectively. Working relationships with employers and learners are very good. Employers can identify the improvement in skills and performance

of learners and their increased interest in their own and related work processes. There are clear, measurable benefits from business improvement techniques programmes for both learners and employers. For example, in one company, scrap rates were reduced from 3.7% to less than 1%.

32. Guidance and support for learners are good. Trainer/assessors are enthusiastic and motivate learners to achieve their qualification. Visits to employers' sites are particularly frequent. Trainer/assessors are very flexible and ensure that they work around learners' shift patterns, often carrying out assessments during evening and night shifts. Employers provide good support and make flexible arrangements to allow time away from work for learners to participate in programmes. Learners receive good quality information, advice and guidance throughout their programme, including advice about training opportunities available to them if they wish to continue learning.

Leadership and management

33. Leadership and management, including operational management, are good. Managers work closely with employers to identify and develop suitable programmes then manage them effectively on employer's sites. Trainer/assessors have realistic and achievable caseloads. Management support is good and managers visit employers' sites frequently. They meet with employers, learners and trainer/assessors to monitor learners' progress and discuss the programmes. Communication is effective and staff attend regular formal team meetings. Staff benefit from regular performance appraisals where training and development needs are identified effectively.
34. Learners' progress is monitored adequately and monthly reports for each employer are collated by the Talent Training management team. Where learners are not progressing as planned, effective action is taken to provide additional support to increase the rate of learning. Internal verification is thorough, regular and structured well. Portfolios are regularly and systematically verified for progress, but this is not recorded in the portfolio. The self-assessment report was accurate and reflected most of the inspection findings.
35. Talent Training's approach to equal opportunities is satisfactory. The importance of working with and valuing colleagues is established during induction and developed during the programmes at assessment and progress reviews.

Retail and commercial enterprise

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

36. Currently 745 learners are working towards an NVQ in distribution and warehousing at level 2. Most learners work for large national distribution companies operating in England and Scotland. The learner's programme is planned by the trainer/assessor and is provided within the workplace generally over a three to six month period. Some learners benefit from additional training opportunities. Reviews of learners' progress are scheduled to take place at three points during the programme.

Strengths

- High overall success rates
- Good arrangements to meet employers' needs

Areas for improvement

- Weak use of initial assessment results to plan learning
- Ineffective checks to assure the quality of provision

Achievement and standards

37. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are high at 87% in 2007/08, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Timely success rates are satisfactory at 64%. Most learners are making steady progress towards their qualifications.

38. Many learners start their NVO with significant experience in their work roles that meets the requirements of the NVQ. Programmes are used effectively to revisit the knowledge and skills acquired, confirm competence and extend learners' understanding of key areas such as health and safety. Some learners have the opportunity to complete an additional externally accredited diploma in freight forwarding which adds value to their learning. Learners and employers recognise an increase in self-esteem, confidence and motivation as a direct result of successful completion of their programme.

39. Learners produce a satisfactory standard of work during their programme. However, work is sometimes organised and presented poorly within the learners' NVQ portfolios.

40. Learners' understanding of health and safety in the workplace is good and is developed by Talent Training's trainer/assessors effectively.

Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Individual coaching sessions are good. The best sessions are planned well and use a range of methods to engage and motivate learners. Direct questioning is used effectively to extend and develop learners' knowledge of their work roles. Learners develop a good understanding both of theory and practice which they relate to their work. The learners' induction handbook provides detailed programme information for learners and is a useful training resource.
42. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. Trainer/assessors have relevant industrial experience and appropriate assessor qualifications. They maximise opportunities for assessment by using activities to meet the requirements of more than one unit of the NVQ. Opportunities to enhance assessment through the use of technology are underused. Trainer/assessors often do not have access to digital technology to support and enhance the assessment process. The approach of handwriting the answers to background knowledge questions and recording observed assessments is thorough but time consuming, and in some instances proves a barrier to assessment. The extent to which information about individual learners is used to shape the trainer/assessor's approach to assessment varies and some learners are disadvantaged. Learners' reviews are not used effectively to evaluate progress against their individual learning plans.
43. Arrangements for additional learning support are broadly satisfactory. Initial assessment is used appropriately to identify learners' additional learning needs and preferred learning styles. A skill scan is completed to provide an overview of each learner's work role. Where appropriate, learners are offered the chance to work towards a Skills for Life qualification alongside their NVQs, but few learners choose to take this option. Trainer/assessors make insufficient use of the results of initial assessment to plan training and provide additional learning support. Most trainer/assessors fail to analyse the results sufficiently to identify areas where they can support learners' development needs.
44. The extent to which courses meet the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. Talent Training focuses its resources well. For example, at two employer sites affected by redundancy notices Talent Training prioritised assessment and learning effectively to ensure that learners had every opportunity to complete and achieve their NVQ qualification. The employer thoroughly supported this approach. Talent Training has productive relationships with employers. These partnerships are used well to ensure that programmes are tailored to business need and that learners have time away from work for training and assessment to take place. Employers recognise clear benefits in staff completing NVQs both in terms of skills development and the commercial advantage it brings in improved performance.
45. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Trainer/assessors accommodate shift patterns and other workplace requirements well when planning and carrying out

assessments. Information, advice and guidance offered at the start of the learners' programmes are satisfactory. Learners' formal support needs are identified at induction and the trainer/assessor discusses practical support that learners may need to progress smoothly through their awards. Trainer/assessors adapt their approach to accommodate learners' additional needs. Arrangements to meet identified literacy and numeracy needs through a formal qualification are in place. However, few learners choose to take this option. Learners are given insufficient information about progression opportunities.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and generally reflects inspection findings. Talent Training's arrangements for continuous professional development are broadly satisfactory. However, not all trainer/assessors are sufficiently familiar with industry specific guidance on assessment. Staff are qualified as assessors and verifiers but are not familiar with industry professional bodies which reduces their ability to provide learners with information relative to their industry.
47. Quality assurance checks on the quality of provision are insufficient. Arrangements to monitor assessors' performance are ineffective and do not identify variation in practices sufficiently. Recent verifier meetings have identified the need for better communication and sharing of best practice between sectors. Audit arrangements are weak. Internal verifiers and managers monitor learners' progress through monthly report sheets. However, trainer/assessors do not keep sufficient records that provide duplicate information should portfolios get lost in the workplace or in transit to Talent Training's offices.
48. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Talent Training develops learners' understanding of the wider issues of diversity appropriately. Learners have a good understanding of the complaints and appeals procedures.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

49. Currently 410 learners are enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses at levels 1 and 2. Of these, 360 are on literacy and 50 are on numeracy courses. Over two-thirds of learners are men and about one-third are from minority ethnic groups. All learners are employed in large companies across the Midlands, Yorkshire and Cumbria. The provision is managed by a Skills for Life manager with training provided by two tutors.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and confidence
- Good approach to meet the diverse needs of learners and employers
- Good promotion of literacy and numeracy training to employers and employees to improve workforce skills

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient contextualisation of learning materials to reflect the workplace
- Insufficient monitoring of quality processes
- Insufficient provision for ESOL learners

Achievement and standards

50. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy qualifications were only introduced this year and therefore it is too early to evaluate success rates. So far in 2008/09, 43% of learners have achieved national literacy or numeracy qualifications. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory.

51. Learners develop good skills and confidence. Some recently unemployed learners have used their new literacy skills to apply for jobs and managed to secure new employment. Learners develop useful skills, such as being able to use the dictionary and write coherently. Some learners use their new confidence to move onto further training courses. Learners understand the importance and benefits of improving their literacy, language and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Trainers share the aims of the session and planned learning outcomes effectively with learners. Sessions are interactive, engage learners and include a range of tasks. Trainers put learners at ease. Learners ask questions confidently and seek clarification. In the best sessions, teaching is planned and paced well, and linked to learners' jobs roles. Trainers are very aware of learners' differing abilities and needs and meet these well.

Learners are encouraged to use e-learning to develop their skills. Trainers give useful website addresses to learners to enable them to learn and practise skills independently.

53. In less successful sessions, tasks and activities are unrelated and the sessions lack coherence. Too much emphasis is placed on teaching grammar rather than on developing reading and writing skills.
54. Learning materials are insufficiently contextualised to reflect the workplace. Trainers do not use learning materials from occupational NVQs or workplaces to develop the literacy or numeracy skills of learners. In some cases, ESOL learners do not understand the language used in the learning materials.
55. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Trainers provide ongoing feedback to learners. Learners keep of a record of learning and evaluate their learning at each session. However, they do not always know which skills they need to develop and practise to successfully prepare for the national tests.
56. Initial and diagnostic assessments are satisfactory in literacy and numeracy. They identify learners' starting levels and areas they need to improve. However, this information is not always used to plan for individual learning. Trainers use inappropriate literacy reading and writing assessment materials to assess the needs of ESOL learners.
57. The extent to which courses meet the diverse needs of learners and employers is good. Courses are planned and provided to suit learners' shift patterns. Employers' busy and quiet periods are considered when planning the training so that learners can be released to attend sessions. Employers recognise the improvement in their employees' literacy and numeracy skills citing as an example the improvement in the quality of written reports produced by their employees.
58. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Trainers are aware of their learners' support needs and work closely with employers to ensure that these needs are met. They provide sensitive support, ongoing assurance and encouragement to learners to develop their personal skills and confidence effectively. Learners receive satisfactory information, guidance and advice throughout their programme.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior managers in Talent Training have worked effectively with three major employers to introduce literacy and numeracy qualifications to large numbers of the workforce in a positive and productive way. Talent Training is strongly committed to developing the literacy and numeracy skills of the workforce. The Skills for Life strategy promotes the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills as central to learners' overall development, but has yet to be thoroughly established in practice.

60. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Tutors promote respect for learners from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds satisfactorily. Posters and some NVQ materials are translated into other languages to improve accessibility to training for those in the workforce with ESOL needs.
61. ESOL provision is insufficient. No systematic approach is taken to meeting learners' language needs in the workplace. A significant number of Eastern European migrant workers attend literacy sessions when ESOL courses would better meet their needs. Tutors are not always aware of learners' language needs.
62. The use of quality monitoring processes to assure the quality of courses is insufficient, as identified in the self-assessment report. Data is not used routinely to evaluate achievements or the overall performance of courses. Little formal evaluation was carried out at a recent one-day intensive literacy and numeracy course. The observation of teaching and learning is yet to be implemented to secure improvements in teaching and learning and to identify and share good practice. Staff qualifications are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. It identified some of the strengths and areas for improvement found through inspection.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

63. Currently 1,094 learners are on business, administration and law programmes. Most are working towards NVQs at level 2 in business administration, customer service and team leading. Learners are employed in a number of businesses throughout England.

Strengths

- High success rates on team leading
- Very flexible arrangements for assessment
- Particularly responsive provision to meet employers' needs
- Good operational management

Areas for improvement

- Some ineffective planning and recording of individual learning
- Insufficient use of data to support improvements

Achievement and standards

64. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are good at 78%. On the team leading programme, success rates in 2007/08 are high at 87%. In 2007/08, timely success rates were satisfactory at 64%. Current learners are making very good progress towards completing their NVQ by the planned date.

65. Learners increase their confidence and workplace knowledge and work well on their own and in teams. They gain an improved awareness of legislation, and of appropriate working principles and practices. Employers recognise the improved contribution learners make to their workplaces. In many cases, gaining the NVQs improves learners' promotion and employment prospects.

66. Portfolios of evidence and standards of written work are satisfactory. Learners have little opportunity for progression onto higher level programmes. Talent Training has identified this area for improvement and is developing provision at level 3.

Quality of provision

67. Overall teaching, training and learning are good. Training sessions are good. Learners benefit from good individual coaching. Learners revisit company policies and procedures to improve their performance in the workplace. Many trainer/assessors are based at employers' sites, giving them increased flexibility to provide training and assessment opportunities for learners. Resources to support

learning are satisfactory. Some trainer/assessors use technology very effectively during professional discussions to record evidence for the NVQ portfolio.

68. Arrangements for assessment are very flexible, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Trainer/assessors are based at employers' premises. They quickly develop a good understanding of the company's needs and working practices. Good working relationships develop quickly and communication is good. Trainer/assessors meet with learners regularly and the visits are focused and purposeful. Arrangements to identify learners' additional training needs are satisfactory.
69. Trainer/assessors make insufficient use of individual learning records to plan and monitor training. Learners are set long-term targets, but many plans include the same unit end date that only reflects the maximum time allowed for training. Medium- and short-term targets are not identified clearly and most do not include sufficient detail to enable progress to be measured and monitored. Some learners' reviews lack detail on the learner's progress and individual development needs. A recently introduced visit plan is proving useful in identifying what training and assessment activities will take place, however, not all trainer assessors use this documentation.
70. The extent to which programmes meet learners' and employers' needs is good. The provision is particularly responsive to employers' needs. Programmes are provided in a very flexible way to best meet both employers' and learners' needs. Talent Training actively engages with employers and communication is very good. Effective partnership arrangements have led to the design and delivery of an accredited programme in freight forwarding which is now a part of one large employer's internal training process. Another qualification is currently being developed focusing on credit control functions. The customer service qualification standards have been adopted as a minimum standard by some employers. Talent Training's staff are responsive to the impact of the recent economic downturn and have worked well with one employer to offer learners under potential threat of redundancy specific support in curriculum vitae writing and interview techniques.
71. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners benefit from a thorough induction which clarifies qualification requirements and focuses sufficiently on diversity and health and safety issues. Employers are particularly flexible about releasing staff to complete their qualification. Advice and guidance for learners are satisfactory and initial assessment is thorough. Where literacy and numeracy needs are identified, support is offered and provided in the workplace.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management, including operational management are good. New managers have been appointed and are providing effective support for trainer/assessors in the workplace. Communication is particularly effective. Managers meet regularly with their teams and give good guidance.

Trainer/assessors attend whole company meetings each quarter for training and development which provide good opportunities to network with colleagues from other regions. Talent Training provides good induction and ongoing support for new staff. The appraisal process is effective in reviewing performance. However, it does not identify individual staff training and development needs sufficiently. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identified the strengths and some areas for improvement accurately.

73. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements. Assessors benefit from thorough written feedback on their assessments. Some staff have been observed in the recently introduced observation of training process. The process is being further developed to share good practice.
74. Talent Training makes insufficient use of data to support improvements. Data is not analysed or shared sufficiently to identify where improvements can be made and to share good practice consistently. Trainer/assessors have individual achievement targets and provide information to managers weekly on assessment activities. However, this information is analysed insufficiently to monitor performance or to make improvements.
75. Talent Training's approach to equal opportunities is satisfactory. The importance of working with and valuing colleagues is established during induction and developed during the programmes at assessment and at progress reviews. Health and safety compliance is satisfactory with comprehensive assessment carried out on all employers' premises.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2007 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2007/08	overall	532	87%
		timely	305	68%
	2008/09 (7 months)	overall	3074	93%
		timely	594	22%

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

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection