

VT Training

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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 at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

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

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

- Health and social care
- Early years and playwork
- Engineering and manufacturing technologies
- Retailing, wholesaling and warehousing
- Hospitality and catering
- Sport, leisure and recreation
- Literacy and numeracy
- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. VT Training is part of the VT Group plc, which is a large provider of support services to customers worldwide. With headquarters in Great Britain and the United States of America and over 14,000 employees, VT Group has a turnover of more than £1 billion per annum. With a heritage based in the engineering sector, the organisation, through various acquisitions, is now a major provider in the supply of vocational, trade and technical training.
2. VT Training was established in 2007 as the result of a merger between VT Plus, Touchstone Training and the Hotel Catering Training Company. More recently VT Training has taken over key employer contracts in the motor vehicle sector.
3. VT Training is one of Great Britain's largest work-based learning providers, delivering National Vocational Qualifications (NVO) to over 20,000 learners across the hospitality, engineering, retail, leisure, care (adult and children), business administration, customer service, team leading and management sectors. VT Training offers vocational qualifications for apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships, Train to Gain and commercial programmes throughout the United Kingdom. The organisation is currently working within approximately 9,000 employer sites across England and Wales, 35% of which are from national employer contracts. VT Training has a £42 million turnover and employs over 1,000 staff. Regionally based vocational coaches train and assess learners, and vocational coordinators manage the coaches.
4. This inspection reported on VT Training contracts in England and Wales. In England, VT Training has a national contract with Hampshire and Isle of Wight LSC for approximately 16,000 apprenticeship and Train to Gain learners. VT Training also holds subcontracts in England with a number of national employers. In Wales the contract is held with the Welsh Assembly Government for circa 1,000 apprenticeship learners on retail, engineering, warehousing, hospitality and catering, sport and leisure, business administration and customer service courses. Inspectors working for the Welsh inspectorate Estyn contributed to the inspection.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Health and social care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Early years and playwork	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Retailing, wholesaling and warehousing	Good: Grade 2
Hospitality and catering	Good: Grade 2
Sport, leisure and recreation	Good: Grade 2
Literacy and numeracy	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, whilst the quality of provision and leadership and management are good. VT Training's arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Provision in early years and playwork, engineering, retail, wholesaling and warehousing, hospitality and catering, and literacy and numeracy is good. Provision in health and social care and business, administration and law is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. VT Training has a good capacity to improve. Success rates show a steady trend of improvement. Overall apprenticeship success rates have risen from 50% in 2007 to 70% in 2009. Overall success rates for Train to Gain learners have risen from 77% in 2007 to 80% in 2009. Although the progress of some learners is slow, definite improvements are evident. For example, the proportion of learners on Train to Gain programmes who have gone beyond their planned end date has reduced from 27% in October 2008 to 8% currently. The proportion of learners on apprenticeship programmes who have gone beyond their planned end date has fallen from 9% in October 2008 to 4% currently.
7. VT Training has good-quality assurance processes. Many improvements are being made in achievements, teaching, assessment, progress monitoring and in the overall management of programmes. VT Training identifies good practice effectively and ensures staff share this to further improve the quality of their work. This is the first inspection of VT Training and there are no previous reports or grade profiles with which to compare performance or grades.
8. The self-assessment process is good. The process is inclusive, involving all staff and learners. The report is well presented, with clear judgements in most areas and VT Training makes good use of graphics and data tables to emphasise and clarify the information. The self-assessment report proposed many of the strengths and areas for improvement that inspectors identified. Managers ensure that the monitoring and updating of improvement action plans takes place at staff meetings and that new actions are added when identified through good-quality monitoring processes. Communications across the company are good. VT Training monitors staff performance regularly and staff receive good individual development to address any identified needs and to enhance their future progression in the organisation.

Key strengths

- Good learner gains in confidence and workplace skills
- Good training
- Good learning resources
- Very responsive programmes which meet the needs and interests of learners and employers
- Good support for learners
- Very clear strategic planning and direction
- Well planned and delivered programmes with very effective employer engagement and learner recruitment
- Good use of quality improvement arrangements
- Good reinforcement and promotion of equality and diversity in Wales

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of workplace evidence towards achievement of the learners' qualification
- Inadequate Skills for Life qualifications of many vocational coaches
- Insufficient management of the slow progress of learners
- Insufficient rigour in some aspects of self-assessment and action planning

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The overall standard of learners' work is good and learners demonstrate good gains in confidence and workplace skills.
10. Overall success rates are satisfactory on apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. In 2008/09, 75% of advanced apprentices and 65% of apprentices successfully completed their qualification. During the same period, 81% of learners on Train to Gain courses achieved their intended qualification aim of an NVQ at level 2 and 78% were also successful at level 3. However, the progress of apprentices and Train to Gain learners is slow. This is recognised in the self-assessment report and staff are working hard to improve learners' timely completion. Of the full framework achievements for apprentices in 2008/09, just 58% were completed within the planned time and for Train to Gain NVQs at level 2 and level 3 it was 56% and 45% respectively. Managers routinely check the performance trends of different groups of learners by age, gender, ethnicity and disability, and of those receiving additional support. VT Training has not identified any differences in the performance of different groups of learners.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
Train to Gain
Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Teaching and learning are good overall. Training is good. Resources are good both in the workplace and at VT Training's learning centres. Staff are generally well qualified. A good selection of high-quality learning materials are available through the organisation's own virtual learning environment. The good teaching and learning and good resources were all identified in the self-assessment report.
12. Internal verifiers regularly check the quality of vocational coaches' teaching and assessment decisions and provide good feedback and support. Internal verification is thorough and results in well-planned and good assessment practice.

13. Learner's progress reviews are frequent and regular. They usually involve employers and carefully monitor the treatment and welfare of learners. During progress reviews assessors set clear targets for learners, and check and enhance learners' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity.
14. Learners enjoy their training programmes and value the qualifications. Employers take interest, are involved with the training, and provide good support and encouragement for their learners.
15. Assessors make insufficient use of workplace evidence in some vocational training areas. They miss opportunities to use naturally occurring evidence of learners' competence in performing tasks in the workplace. Some of the evidence captured by assessors also proves learners' competence in elements of other units of the NVQ; however, assessors do not always ensure that this happens.
16. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is good. VT Training is very responsive to the needs of learners and employers. Learners enjoy their training programmes and train in good-quality work placements. Programmes encourage learners to reach their potential.
17. Guidance and support are good. In particular support for learners is good. Learners receive good care, advice and guidance from VT Training staff and from their employers. Vocational coaches give safeguarding and the welfare of learners a high priority and additional support for learners is effectively organised and carefully monitored.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. Leadership and management are good. VT Training has very clear strategic planning and direction. Managers use relevant marketing and detailed research information particularly well to identify and support business needs and develop training programmes. The marketing plan clearly identifies a range of strategies on commercial activity, operational planning, employer engagement and resources. VT Training has clear and well-developed criteria for business development to support training in a range of high-profile national employers.
19. VT Trainings' programmes are well-planned and delivered to meet the needs of learners and employers. VT Training has a very effective employer and learner engagement strategy, which it uses well to guide and develop its

business direction. Managers use a sophisticated range of activities to target new business and increase the number of learners on programmes. Staff are well motivated and use well-planned techniques to identify employers' training requirements and ensure that potential learners are eligible for programmes. VT Training communicates well with employers, regularly informing them about the progress of their learners.

20. VT Training uses its quality improvement arrangements well. It has developed a detailed and thorough range of policies, procedures and software systems that effectively support its business and training activities. Particularly comprehensive operating procedures and policies provide detailed and thorough guidance to staff at all levels in the organisation. A well-designed intranet site for staff and learners provides easy and fast access to the full range of company documents and is an effective virtual learning environment.
21. Managers work hard at developing and improving communications both internally and externally and in establishing accurate recording systems. These systems have improved the gathering of data, its accuracy and its use in quality assuring training activities. VT Training uses an extensive range of quality improvement activities. Much work has gone into standardising the organisation's processes and procedures inherited from the three merged companies. VT Training uses compliance audits and observations of learning activities as major tools in monitoring and checking the quality and standards of the provision.
22. Staff development is generally good. All internal verifiers and assessors in Wales have completed teaching and key skills qualifications. VT Training is at an advanced stage of planning to provide this training to all staff in England. Action plans for staff development are clearly based on observations of an extensive range of training activities. However, trainers on literacy and numeracy programmes do not have suitable qualifications to teach and are at an early stage of their development as teachers. Many vocational coaches have inadequate Skills for Life qualifications. Often they are only qualified to the same level as the programme they are teaching. A minority of vocational coaches lack in confidence when teaching Skills for Life.
23. Until recently VT Training has managed some learners' progress insufficiently. For Train to Gain learners, 27% of those who achieved their qualification completed their NVQ beyond their planned end date. Of all the learners currently in training, 4.5% have exceeded the planned end date. However, VT Training has recognised this and measures are in place to improve timely achievement. An analysis of the recently introduced electronic progress monitoring system clearly indicates that the rates of progress of learners on this system are significantly faster.
24. Self-assessment is a key tool for the quality improvement of VT Training's programmes. The self-assessment report, which managers regularly review and update, forms the basis for the quality improvement plan. The self-

assessment report is well presented, evaluative and judgemental, and identifies many of the strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors. However, some newly developed sector areas were insufficiently thorough in identifying accurately the quality of the provision. Although the views of key people within the training programme teams are sought, the process is not fully inclusive. VT Training does not always seek the views of employees and learners or use their feedback to contribute to the report.

25. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. VT Training promotes and develops learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity well in the workplace and in training and review sessions. Managers make good use of the regular internal and external magazines and bulletins to promote equality and diversity to staff and learners. Recent examples include articles on welfare, information on *Every Child Matters* themes, a multi-faith calendar and articles on equality and diversity. Learners make good use of a secure electronic mailbox to report any issues about welfare and equal opportunities. A trained member of staff carefully and sensitively deals with the issues raised and shares best practice in the organisation to improve the approach to dealing with learners' concerns. The equality and diversity welfare group is made up of senior managers and team members from all job roles they meet regularly to update policies and procedures. Discussions include new and impending legislation and reviewing the training needs, and analysis of staff and learners' profiles and success rates of different groups of learners. In Wales, good promotion of the Welsh culture is provided through publications that describe the rich aspects of their heritage. However, learners are not sufficiently encouraged to use the Welsh language while working in their workplaces.
26. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet government requirements. Staff and learners have a good knowledge and understanding of the well-written policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. VT Training has carried out appropriate vetting checks on all staff involved in the training of young people and vulnerable adults.

What learners like:

- Learning lots of new information
- 'The excellent tutors who are very down to earth and push you to achieve'
- 'Gaining more confidence in what I am doing'
- Getting a qualification, and then progressing on
- 'Improving my knowledge helped me to better myself'
- 'They care about you as an individual, you are not seen as a form of income'
- 'Doing written work for my NVQ has improved my English'
- 'Learning again, it's the first time for several years'
- 'The broad range of skills that I am gaining'
- The chance to complete additional qualifications
- 'The fact that before the training it was a job but now it's a career'

What learners think could improve:

- The rushed teaching sessions
- The noisy and distracting sessions in public environments
- The number of training sessions for developing underpinning subject knowledge – 'There are not enough'
- The time given to reflection on achievements during the NVQ at level 3
- Relating the NVQ standards to job
- The length of programme – 'I want to finish earlier'
- The frequency of the visits – 'Could be more frequent'
- The degree of challenge – 'It could be more challenging'

Sector subject areas

Health and social care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

27. VT Training has 1,083 learners in England on health and social care apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. Some 400 learners are working towards apprenticeships, 508 learners are advanced apprentices and 175 learners are on Train to Gain programmes. Of these, 94% are women. Some 9% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Employers are predominantly independent care homes. However, care training is carried out with larger companies at several sites and with multi-site national organisations including Age Concern. Care settings range from supported living units to residential and domiciliary care for the elderly, with some specialist provision for sufferers of dementia and the mentally frail.

Strengths

- Particularly good response to learners' and employers' needs
- Highly supportive relationships with assessors

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for some learners
- Insufficiently thorough checking of learners' understanding and knowledge and its application to care practice

Achievement and standards

28. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates are in line with national averages. In 2008/09 the success rate for apprenticeships was 70%, and for advanced apprenticeships 74%. Two thirds of learners completed within the planned time. For Train to Gain programmes success rates are satisfactory at 85% for both level 2 and level 3 learners. Progression from an NVQ at level 2 to level 3 is good. Learners' portfolios are well organised with a satisfactory range of evidence. Learners' reflective accounts show an awareness and knowledge of good care practice.
29. Some learners are making slow progress and not completing their qualifications within the planned time. On Train to Gain programmes only 52% of learners at level 2 and 36% of learners at level 3 complete within the planned time. This was identified in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

30. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. VT Training has planned the apprenticeship programmes so that the delivery and assessment of the technical certificate, key skills and the NVQ are fully integrated. Learners benefit from highly supportive relationships with vocational coaches, which help them to complete the technical certificate and their key skills within the first six months of the programme. Most learners meet this target. Vocational coaches carry out all training within the workplace, usually on an individual basis. Assessors adapt training and assessment to learners' preferred learning styles. Assessors have a good working knowledge of care and are able to match training to job roles and responsibilities effectively. Assessors coordinate the training they provide well with the training offered by employers.
31. VT Training has a good range of resources available to support learners. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors provide all learners with a useful folder at induction to support them through the programme. The folder is easy to use and includes a particularly good explanation of the different components of the apprenticeship programme. VT Training has an interactive, multimedia virtual learning environment that has a wide range of resources including booklets, case studies and quizzes to support learners. However, resources are underused and assessors do not routinely signpost learners to where they can access additional learning resources.
32. Assessors' assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. Assessors visit learners regularly and agree clear assessment targets on each visit. They give written and verbal feedback on completed work and identify gaps in knowledge or evidence. Assessors provide additional training as appropriate. VT Training has a system to report progress monthly. When it identifies learners who are making slow progress, assessors involve employers in agreeing actions to support the learners. Employers are usually involved in the formal reviews of progress every three months. However, the monitoring of learners is inconsistent and does not inform learners of where they are with their achievements. The 'learning wall' used to map progress records full units only and, as most assessment covers parts of units, does not reflect the total amount of progress achieved. Some learners are making slow progress.
33. Assessors make insufficient use of the learner's knowledge of their workplace within training sessions, and miss opportunities to relate the theory to practice. There is also insufficient rigour in checking learners' understanding or relating knowledge across different units of the NVQ. Sessions on risk assessment do not revisit the work on legislation or workplace policies and practice.
34. The programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. VT Training has made a particularly good response to learners' and employers' needs. Assessors work around shift patterns and the personal

circumstances of learners. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors work hard to meet the individual needs of learners, for example those who are pregnant or are new entrants to the country. Learners and employers have a good awareness of the improvement in work-based skills and knowledge following training, and how it leads to improved care practices. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are satisfactory. VT Training has a clear strategic direction and reporting systems in place. Regional managers set performance targets and standards that internal verifiers implement well at a local level. However, some interventions are introduced too late to have an impact on learners' achievement. Assessors give learners information and advice about equal opportunities at their induction and satisfactorily monitor and develop this at progress reviews. The self-assessment report is satisfactory, although some strengths identified are normal practice. VT Training's arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

Early years and playwork

Good: Grade 2

Context

36. VT Training has 332 advanced apprentices, 110 apprentices and 34 learners on Train to Gain programmes in children's care, learning and development. Vocational coach coordinators monitor the work of vocational coaches/assessors in their geographical regions. Most learners attend a series of six group sessions for technical certificate training, with a minority having individual coaching in their workplaces. Learners are employed in day nurseries and after-school clubs. Vocational coaches visit learners in their workplaces to assess their skills and knowledge for the NVQs and to develop their key skills with the support of skills trainers. Some 98% of learners are women and some 7% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- Particularly effective use of resources
- Highly responsive arrangements for meeting the needs of learners and employers
- Highly effective support for improving staff practice

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for some apprentices and Train to Gain learners
- Missed opportunities for gathering NVQ evidence for some learners

Achievement and standards

37. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The development of learners' skills and knowledge is good. Learners research information thoroughly and express themselves clearly when demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of legislation, theories and principles of childcare and education.
38. Success rates are satisfactory overall. Success rates for advanced apprentices are high with 83% achieving in 2008/09, and 69% within the expected time. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory at 73% for 2008/09. However, success rates for Train to Gain learners at level 2 are high at 92% in 2007/08 and 94% in 2008/09. At level 3 all three learners achieved their qualifications. The strength around Train to Gain success rates was recognised in the self-assessment report.
39. Some apprentices, and Train to Gain learners at level 2, make slow progress towards achieving qualifications. Timely success rates are low at 56% for apprentices in 2008/09 and 47% for Train to Gain learners.

Quality of provision

40. Teaching and learning are good. Vocational coaches use resources for supporting learning particularly effectively. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. The resource team has produced a well-designed set of booklets that provide information and practice activities for the NVQ, technical certificate and key skills. Learners are able to understand the straightforward language and use these booklets in group learning sessions, for individual support in their workplaces and for independent study. Vocational coaches use visually stimulating resources for such topics as the symptoms and treatment of childhood illnesses. Training rooms are large, comfortable and well equipped. Coaches and assessors are well qualified and experienced. They illustrate key points in training sessions from their own wider experiences while encouraging high levels of participation in group sessions. Learners' portfolios are well organised. Learners discuss and share good practice in group training sessions. They apply new ideas in their workplaces, for example, improving safety and security for children on outings. Learners show good understanding of the early years curriculum, aspects of children's development and health and safety.
41. Assessors sometimes miss opportunities for gathering evidence for NVQs. Although assessors observe learners frequently in their settings and write detailed reports, there are missed opportunities to use the observational evidence to claim competence across different units. Not all assessors recognise when observations also provide evidence of learners' knowledge for other units. They make little use of witness statements and oral questioning to complete units.
42. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. The range of provision is good. VT Training is highly responsive to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors consider the learners' job roles and other factors carefully when agreeing suitable programmes. Assessors plan flexible apprenticeship programmes to suit individual circumstances. Trainers or assessors provide support for the technical certificate in individual sessions or in groups, and in workplaces or training centres according to demand. Generally, learners complete the technical certificate first so that evidence can be used for NVQ knowledge but this pattern is adapted when necessary. Assessors keep employers fully informed of learners' progress, enabling employers to contribute effectively to learners' progress and development.
43. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners' skills and aptitudes are adequately assessed at the start of their courses. VT Training safeguards learners adequately through its policies and procedures for health, safety and risk assessment. Vocational coaches provide satisfactory relevant advice and guidance about further training.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are good. VT Training provides good and highly effective support for improving staff practice. Internal verifiers and vocational coordinators carry out observations of assessors systematically against criteria and provide detailed feedback including areas for improvement. Managers monitor assessment practice systematically. Internal verifiers provide thorough detailed feedback after sampling. Teams share good practice, such as successful actions to improve success rates, at regular team meetings. VT Training shows a strong commitment to identifying and developing staff through a range of relevant training courses. Managers regularly audit procedures and documentation, and ensure that action points arising from them are completed.
45. VT Training's self-assessment process is satisfactory and broadly inclusive. The self-assessment report compared reasonably with inspectors' findings.
46. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted throughout courses and during reviews. Learners have a good understanding of the need to treat colleagues and children as individuals.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

47. VT Training has 1,333 learners on engineering and motor vehicle apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. Some 2% of learners are women. Seventy members of staff made up of vocational coaches and technical trainers provide the engineering training. VT Training provides the technical training elements of the apprenticeship from its training centres and local further education (FE) colleges. General engineering provision is located predominantly on the south coast of England and is centred on a long-term contract for shipbuilding apprentices, but also includes a range of small to medium enterprises in the local area. The motor vehicle provision technical training is provided either through VT Training's own establishments or by local FE colleges.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Very good training
- Very good arrangements for meeting employers' needs
- Good enrichment activities
- Very good support to enhance learners' progress
- Very successful schools initiative to widen participation in engineering

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for some learners on Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes

Achievement and standards

48. Achievement and standards are good. For 2008/09 the success rates were high at 92% for advanced apprentices and 84% for apprentices. Success rates improved significantly from 2007/08 when they were 83% for advanced apprentices and 67% for apprentices. Timely success rates for the advanced apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory at 75%. Success rates in 2008/09 for the Train to Gain programme are good at 86% for NVQs at level 2 and 89% for NVQs at level 3.
49. Standards of work in the workplace are high. Learners develop good skills in both the general engineering and motor vehicle sectors.
50. Some learners on apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes make slow progress. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Many Train to Gain learners do not complete their training in the allotted time. Timely

completion for 2008/09 is poor at 29% for NVQs at level 2 and 39% for NVQs at level 3. On the apprenticeship programme, timely success rates are poor at 50%.

Quality of provision

51. Teaching and learning are good. Training is very good. Learners work effectively and trainers provide close supervision and assistance when needed in the workshop or classroom. Trainers make good use of the range of visual and audio aids in classrooms and there is a good ethos of collective learning and experience sharing. Learners enjoy their experience and produce good personal work.
52. VT Training plans its college and private provision well. Learners in larger companies spend appropriate amounts of time in different sections under the mentorship of skilled personnel. Learners in smaller organisations also experience all aspects of their company's business. Employers support their learners well and actively encourage them to achieve. They encourage the learners to keep them informed of the training received at the training centre or local college and then ensure that workplace activities are planned to supplement this training. The business improvement programme on the Train to Gain programme is very well delivered. Learners benefit from well-structured off-the-job training sessions where they learn theory to help them make improvements at work. Assessors make good use of learners' experience and encourage them to link improvement projects with their company's overarching aims and existing quality improvement practices.
53. VT Training designs its programmes to meet the needs of the employer and the programmes do this well. The Train to Gain programme is particularly well structured to meet the needs of the learners. VT Training regularly adjusts the programme to provide assessment on demand in the workplace. This flexibility meets employers' training needs without disruption of the normal work activities. In general, engineering assessors ensure that the units of the NVQ at level 3 are carefully selected to match employers' needs.
54. VT Training provides a wide range of enrichment activities to enhance the learning experience. This was identified in the self-assessment. All third year motor vehicle learners have the opportunity to be entered for Automotive Technician Accreditation assessments and the pass rates are high. VT Training offers a range of team and confidence-building activities.
55. Guidance and support are good. VT Training provides good support for learners with additional needs. Staff use a good range of initial assessment testing procedures to identify learners vocational abilities, literacy and other support needs. Learners then join learning programmes that closely match their needs, skills and abilities. Where learners have identified support needs VT Training ensures that specialist staff, either at the training centre or at a local college, meet these needs. Learners receive good support throughout

their training programme from both vocational coaches and their workplace mentors. The support from vocational coaches is particularly good. Vocational coaches and employers provide satisfactory information and guidance to the learners throughout their training. All learners who complete their training undergo an exit interview where potential future learning pathways are satisfactorily identified.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are good. Good opportunities exist for staff development in VT Training. All vocational coaches are working towards their key skills at level 2 and regularly undertake a training needs analysis to identify areas for updating in relation to their vocational skills.
57. Managers use the management information system effectively to identify those learners at risk of not completing their qualification by their planned date. Assessors compile good action plans to ensure the learner's progress is improved. However, assessors do not always formally document this information or transfer it to the learners' review documents.
58. VT Training's self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and mainly agreed with inspector's findings.
59. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall. VT Training has good initiatives to recruit women, particularly for the year 2009/10. VT Training has successfully bid for a new engineering diploma run in conjunction with a school to further develop school links. Assessors check learners' understanding of equality and diversity satisfactorily, choosing from a bank of questions and recording answers on the progress review sheet. In better reviews assessors discuss the scenarios in detail to ensure a good understanding of the topic.

Retailing, wholesaling and warehousing

Good: Grade 2

Context

60. VT Training has 1,349 learners on retail and distribution, warehousing and storage operations. Of these, 701 are on a retail apprenticeship and 501 on the advanced retail apprenticeship. There are 24 apprentices in warehousing, with two on an advanced apprenticeship programme. In addition, 117 learners are on a retail Train to Gain programme, with four in warehousing. Some 70% of learners are men. Eighty seven staff are involved in the delivery of retail programmes. Vocational coaches provide both training and assessment, all of which takes place in the workplace. VT Training works with a wide range of employers, from small businesses to large national organisations.

Strengths

- Very good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- Good training
- Highly effective support for learners
- Good management of programme

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for some learners on Train to Gain programmes
- Insufficient initial planning of vocational assessment
- Insufficiently rigorous formal reviews of progress

Achievement and standards

61. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. The development of learners' skills and knowledge is very good. This strength was also identified in the self-assessment report. Learners significantly increase their retail knowledge, particularly for legislation and health and safety. They also develop very good skills in aspects such as customer service and merchandising. Learners develop their key skills of communication and numeracy very well and become much more confident in dealing with customers. Many learners take on wider responsibilities, developing broader skills, and take on increased responsibility in the workplace. Some learners gain promotion whilst on the programme. The standard of learners' work in their job role is very good, and learners demonstrate very good social and teamwork skills when dealing with customers and colleagues. The work learners produce for their NVQ and key skills portfolios is also of good quality.

62. Success rates across all programmes are satisfactory and above the national averages. On the retail apprenticeship programme, the success rate is satisfactory for 2008/09 at 66%, which is 5% above the national average. On the advanced apprenticeship retail programme the 2008/09 success rate is satisfactory at 60%, which is 12% above the national average. On the small warehousing programme, the 2008/09 success rate for apprentices is satisfactory at 71%, and this is 7% above the national average. The rate of progress towards achievement is generally satisfactory. However, the self-assessment report considered success rates to be good.
63. For those learners on Train to Gain programmes, the success rates in retail for 2008/09 are satisfactory at 81% at level 2 and 75% at level 3. However, some learners make slow progress towards achievement. In 2008/09, 28% of learners exceeded their planned length of programme.

Quality of provision

64. Teaching and learning are good. Employers provide very effective on-the-job training to develop learners' retail skills. In some workplaces, learners receive well-structured off-the-job training, which includes the use of good-quality workbooks. In addition, VT Training has an excellent range of learning resources that learners use very effectively to improve their learning. Learners use VT Training's virtual learning environment very effectively. The good-quality audio and visual materials are interesting and help learners to develop their knowledge. Learners use workbooks and practice papers very effectively to prepare for tests in key skills and the technical certificate. The quality of the individual off-the-job training sessions provided in the workplace by vocational coaches is good. Trainers use the resources well and develop additional materials to meet the needs of individual learners when required. The good teaching and learning was also identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.
65. Assessors' initial planning of vocational assessment is insufficient. They do not take sufficient account of learners' work experience and competence. Assessors do not always take the opportunity to identify those learners who could achieve early. Some employers provide structured training programmes, but assessors do not always record this effectively or use it as evidence towards the NVQ.
66. The quarterly formal progress reviews are not sufficiently thorough. The reviews have a narrow focus on the qualification and assessors do not effectively review learners' progress at work, the contribution of employers' training or the development of learners' personal skills. Although there are sometimes discussions of these aspects, the recording is weak.
67. The programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers very effectively. VT Training has good links with employers, both small and

large, and provides a flexible service to meet the individual needs of both employers and learners.

68. Guidance and support are good. VT Training's support for learners is highly effective. This was also identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. At the monthly lengthy visits from vocational coaches, there is good short-term action planning. Learners have a good understanding of what they need to do to progress. Between visits, learners often email work to their vocational coach, who provides swift feedback. Employers are effectively involved in the programme, and have a good awareness of the learners' progress and agreed actions. The good support from employers motivates learners to achieve their targets. They provide good opportunities for learners to develop skills. Where learners have additional learning needs, for example in numeracy, they receive good support from vocational coaches and employers. Learners receive good advice and guidance on progression opportunities.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are good. VT Training's staff training and development are good. Staff development is continuous, whether via formal training courses or staff meetings. Communication is good and vocational coaches receive good support from internal verifiers and vocational coordinators.
70. VT Training's quality monitoring processes are very effective. Monthly performance reviews take place at all staff levels. Managers use these effectively to monitor individual performance against targets and then action plan for improvements where necessary. Observation of training, progress reviews and assessment is frequent and effective, with accurate judgements and grades. The self-assessment report was broadly accurate, but the inspection identified additional areas for improvement.
71. The promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners complete an equality and diversity workbook that raises awareness effectively. At each visit, vocational coaches ask a question to check learners' understanding. Some learners demonstrate a good understanding, while others are less confident. Vocational coaches have a good understanding of equality and provide effective coaching to increase awareness.

Hospitality and catering

Good: Grade 2

Context

72. VT Training has 6,500 learners on hospitality apprenticeships in England and Wales and on Train to Gain programmes in England. There are 4,426 apprentices, 1,342 advanced apprentices, and 732 Train to Gain learners. Some 57% of learners are women.
73. Some 328 vocational coaches provide the training and assessment. Employers of learners on hospitality and catering programmes range from small family-run businesses through to national multi-site organisations. They include hotels, restaurants, public houses and contract caterers. Nationally, VT Training has exclusive agreements with several large organisations.

Strengths

- Good acquisition of workplace skills
- Well planned and delivered programmes
- Excellent learning resources
- Very good adaptation of programmes to the needs of employers
- Good management of hospitality programmes

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for some learners on Train to Gain programmes
- Insufficient provision of support for a minority of learners with additional needs

Achievement and standards

74. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Learners acquire good workplace skills while on their training programmes. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Many learners are achieving standards of skills and understanding that are higher than expected for their level of qualification and experience. Learners, many of whom were nervous and unsure when they started the training programme, develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Learners are able to take on additional work, cover others' job roles and show initiative in identifying work to be done. Some learners, who take employment in the hospitality industry with no thought of a career, have developed career aims and ambitions while on their training programme.
75. Success rates are satisfactory. In 2008/09 the success rate for advanced apprentices was 66% and for apprentices 64%. This is well above the national average. Achievements for Train to Gain learners are satisfactory. In

2008/09, 81% of learners at level 2 and 70% of learners at level 3 achieved their NVQ.

76. Some Train to Gain learners however, make slow progress on programmes. Only 53% of learners completing an NVQ at level 3 do so within the planned time. On NVQ programmes at level 2, just 58% of learners complete the qualification in a timely manner.

Quality of provision

77. Teaching and learning are good. Programmes are well planned and delivered. Vocational coaches plan their visits to learners well. They arrange appointments taking into account the nature of the business; this may involve visits out of normal hours or at the weekend. Visits normally occur every four weeks but in some cases happen more frequently. At each visit vocational coaches carry out a good interim review of work done and plan the work that learners should complete before the next visit. Vocational coaches plan their training sessions well and use appropriate techniques, often taking into account the learners' preferred learning style. Workplaces are of a good quality. Learners' training and assessment reflects their company's policies and procedures and takes into account their company's training programmes. Assessors use workplace evidence effectively and most vocational coaches make good use of naturally occurring evidence.
78. Assessors explain the structure and processes involved in the qualifications very clearly. Learners show a good understanding of the types of evidence available. Learners take good responsibility for the development of their portfolios and know how to use evidence effectively to prove their competence. VT Training delivers key skills well and early in the apprenticeship programmes. However, some key skill assignments are not related to the hospitality industry.
79. Vocational coaches and learners make good use of excellent learning resources. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. VT Training produces a series of well-designed booklets containing both instructional material and workbook exercises covering all aspects of the hospitality programmes. The virtual learning environment also provides a range of very good learning materials and assessors give some of these to learners on CDs. VT Training is currently piloting the use of personal digital assistants to allow electronic recording of learners' evidence and to make learning materials more accessible.
80. A minority of learners with additional learning needs do not receive the appropriate specialised support they require. VT Training has a new network of regional support staff to support vocational coaches, but this is not yet fully effective.

81. The extent to which programmes meet the needs of learners is good. Programmes are well adapted to the needs of employers. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Vocational coaches agree each learner's programme in detail with the employer. They coordinate programme delivery well with workplace supervisors and arrange visits taking into account the business requirements. Vocational coaches adapt learning materials to reflect specific workplaces.
82. Guidance and support are good. Learners receive very good support and guidance from VT Training's staff. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Coaches give learners their mobile telephone numbers and email addresses and an alternative contact number. Learners are encouraged to contact coaches out of working hours if they need help and they receive appropriate support when they do this.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are good. VT Training manages its hospitality programmes well. Regular meetings at all levels are used to ensure staff are aware of issues facing the organisation and to inform managers of any concerns. These meetings are recorded and focus on continuous improvement. Both managers and internal verifiers regularly visit learners in the workplaces and vocational coordinators hold monthly review meetings with each coach.
84. VT Training is piloting the use of software that allows excellent monitoring of learners' progress at element level. Managers use the information it provides effectively to target resources towards learners who are making slow progress. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate.
85. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. VT Training is developing good strategic partnerships with 14–19 Learning Networks across Wales, which enable it to improve the range of learning opportunities for young people. Vocational coaches develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity appropriately.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Good: Grade 2

Context

86. VT Training has 1,050 learners on active leisure and learning apprenticeships in England and Wales and on Train to Gain programmes in England. There are 651 learners on apprenticeship programmes and 368 learners on advanced apprenticeship programmes. On Train to Gain programmes, 28 learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2 and three learners are working towards an NVQ at level 3. Of the overall total of apprenticeships, 284 are adult apprentices.
87. Some 40% of learners are women, 3% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 6% declare a learning difficulty and/or disability. The active leisure and learning training division employs 48 members of staff including vocational coaches, technical trainers and internal verifiers. Employers are predominantly independent businesses; however, VT Training also carries out leisure training at national employer sites and Council/direct service run leisure centres.

Strengths

- High success rates on apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes
- Good development of learners' technical knowledge and personal skills
- Good assessment practices and procedures
- Good learning resources
- Good management of provision

Areas for improvement

- Poor timely success rates and slow progress of learners on Train to Gain programmes

Achievement and standards

88. Achievement and standards are good. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Success rates on apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes are high. In 2008/09, the success rates on advanced apprenticeships and apprenticeships are high at 72% and 71% respectively. In Wales, overall success rates are good at 74%. On Train to Gain programmes at level 2 the success rate is high at 96% and at level 3 it is satisfactory at 57%.
89. Learners develop good technical knowledge and personal skills. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. On exercise and fitness programmes, learners develop good understanding of exercise techniques and how to plan safe and effective exercise programmes for a range of clients and

groups. They learn how to instruct and demonstrate the safe use of a range of specialist equipment well to improve the personal fitness of clients. On activity leadership programmes, they learn how to plan and organise a range of very effective, fun activities for children's events. On leisure management programmes, learners demonstrate good knowledge of a range of management styles and behaviours. Most learners increase their confidence and improve their communication skills. Overall, the standard of learners' written work is satisfactory.

90. On Train to Gain programmes learners make slow progress and many learners do not complete their learning programme within agreed timescales. In 2008/09, just 52% of learners at level 2 and 57% of learners at level 3 completed their programme within specified timescales. However, most learners progress onto higher levels and additional qualifications.

Quality of provision

91. Teaching and learning are good. VT Training's assessment planning, workplace assessment activities and the quality of learner reviews are good. Assessors use learners' reviews effectively to evaluate and plan learners' progress. They clearly document learners' action plans and identify progressive and realistic steps to develop learners' knowledge and workplace competencies. Assessors make good use of target setting to focus learners' energies and efforts. Assessors interact well with learners and provide good support. Employer's involvement in training is good and many managers attend learners' reviews and identify learners' progress and development needs. In the weaker review sessions, insufficient focus is given to gathering naturally occurring evidence from the workplace for qualification evidence.
92. Resources to support learning are good. Learning activities provide challenging contextualised assessment tasks, which engage learners. VT Training has developed an online learning resource containing specific learning activities, which learners are able to access at any time. Technical certificate tutors are very experienced and knowledgeable and use a range of learning activities to stimulate and engage learners. The quality of practical demonstrations on gymnasium instruction programmes and explanations of the purpose and benefits associated with each exercise activity are good.
93. Overall, programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers very effectively. Many learners progress onto higher-level qualifications.
94. Guidance and support are good. Learners receive comprehensive advice and guidance before they start their courses. VT Training has good initial assessment procedures to identify additional learning support, including literacy, language and numeracy. Vocational coaches monitor the attendance and punctuality of all learners effectively to identify any issues at an early stage and provide timely support if required. They manage the support and progress of their learners very well. Learners are encouraged to contact their

assessor outside of arranged meeting times if they need extra support. Vocational coaches provide effective individual advice and guidance during workplace visits and individual training sessions. Learners have good personal support to help them complete their programme.

Leadership and management

95. Leadership and management are good. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Vocational coaches make good use of electronic systems to monitor learners' progress and to plan training. VT Training makes good use of regular and informative standardisation meetings to share best practice. Training staff are well qualified, and have practical fitness and exercise experience. Regular professional development ensures staff's awareness of new developments in training. VT Training is involved in school partnerships and is supporting schools in Cardiff and Anglesey effectively to provide sports study programmes at level 1.
96. VT Training has good arrangements for quality improvement. Managers monitor vocational coaches well against performance targets in monthly meetings. They make appropriate interventions to bring learners at risk of making slow progress back on target to complete their programmes. VT Training uses its internal observation process effectively to identify improvements in training and assessment, and to raise standards. The internal verification process is thorough and rigorous. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and critically evaluative.
97. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. All learners have an appropriate awareness of equality of opportunity and show respect for diversity in the workplace.

Literacy and numeracy

Good: Grade 2

Context

98. VT Training provides literacy and numeracy training to 672 learners across England on Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes. There are 313 learners on application of number courses and 359 on communication courses. Courses are offered from entry level 3 through to level 2. Training normally takes place in the learners' workplace.
99. Vocational coaches deliver the vocational and key skills elements of the learners' overall programme. They also act as assessors for the learning programme. Skills trainers offer support to the coaches in the literacy and numeracy aspects of the training programme as well as offering support to learners with identified additional learning needs.

Strengths

- Good progress of learners towards gaining Skills for Life qualifications
- Good learner gains in confidence and workplace skills
- Very good employer engagement
- Good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Inadequate Skills for Life qualifications of many vocational coaches

Achievement and standards

100. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates for both literacy and numeracy are high at 85%. Vocational coaches prepare learners well for their assessments and most succeed within the planned timescale or very soon after. VT Training has taken decisive action to help learners to complete within the planned time.
101. Many learners are returning to studying literacy and numeracy after many years out of formal education and with poor experiences from school. Learners grow in confidence and self-belief whilst on their programmes. Their self-esteem improves and they revel in the success they are experiencing.

Quality of provision

102. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Coaches plan sessions with clear learning objectives carefully. Vocational coaches plan a range of learning activities. However, coaches rely too heavily on materials that have no direct

relevance to the learners' workplace experience. Teaching and learning is well paced but often takes place in noisy and distracting surroundings.

103. Too many vocational coaches have inadequate Skills for Life qualifications: often they are only qualified to the same level as the programme they are teaching. In some cases there is some hesitancy, confusion for learners and errors in some aspects of the curriculum delivery. The newly appointed skills trainers are working effectively to deliver the level 3 award in preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector, which is the minimum standard for tutors. VT Training has planned that all vocational coaches will receive this training within the next academic year.
104. The extent to which courses meet the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. VT Training maintains very good contact with employers. Vocational coaches fully inform employers about the content and requirements of the learning programme. They brief employers at the start and end of training sessions. Employers give written and verbal feedback at the end of each session on the progress their learners are making. The training has a positive impact in the workplace. Employees show enhanced confidence and workplace skills. The good working relationship between employers and VT Training means that the working environment is also seen as a learning environment.
105. The range of provision is satisfactory. Programmes run from entry level 3 through to level 2. Learners are very satisfied with their programmes and enjoy their learning. Learning takes place in the workplace at times that are convenient for both learners and employers. Learners are aware of the direct link between the training provided and their future career prospects and progression.
106. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good support from the vocational coaches. Learners and coaches use a range of contact methods: phone, email, regular mail and visits, and contact may often take place outside the normal working hours. VT Training uses initial and diagnostic assessments well to ensure learners start their programmes at the right level and that the programme accurately reflects their learning needs. Coaches consider learners' learning styles when deciding the delivery style of the programme. Learners with additional learning needs receive good support through the work of the skills trainers who work alongside the coaches to provide specialist teaching and learning strategies and resources.

Leadership and management

107. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Internal verifiers have robust strategies for the sampling of learners work, monitoring learner progress and ensuring vocational coaches maintain the required standard. Internal verifiers employ clear criteria for monitoring the performance of assessors and for coding the risk level for underperformance. These procedures are well

understood and valued by the assessors. Internal verifiers also carry out the observation of teaching and learning. However, VT Training is not yet using information from this process fully to contribute to quality improvement.

108. The self-assessment report lacks thorough judgements particularly in the area of teaching and learning and leadership and management. VT Training does not provide clear evidence to support some judgements about the effectiveness of some aspects of its provision. However, the overall judgement about the provision is broadly accurate.
109. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Vocational coaches include discussion of equality and diversity at every learning session. However, this normally happens at the end of the session. Too often discussions are rushed and coaches do not sufficiently probe the learner's understanding of the concepts raised.

Business, administration and law

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

110. VT Training has 3,428 learners on business administration, customer service, and management and supervisory apprenticeships in England and Wales, and on Train to Gain programmes in England. Some 72% of learners are women. On business administration programmes, 1,498 learners are on apprenticeship programmes and 101 on Train to Gain programmes. On customer service programmes, 1,380 learners are on apprenticeships and 287 on Train to Gain programmes. A further 944 apprentices and 218 Train to Gain learners are on management and supervisory programmes.
111. The business administration, customer service and management programmes are provided and assessed by 112 vocational coaches and technical trainers.
112. On customer service and team-leading programmes learners are employed across a wide range of sectors, including hotels, restaurants, sports and leisure centres, shops, offices and call centres. In business administration, learners are employed in a wide range of roles in various administrative establishments including legal practices and conference planning companies.

Strengths

- High success rates for advanced apprentices in business administration
- Good development of vocational skills and confidence
- Good and well-planned individual coaching and assessment
- Very responsive programmes meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers
- Good regional management
- Good development of learners' understanding of equality and diversity

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates for apprentices in business management and customer services
- Insufficient use of workplace evidence towards the learners' programme
- Insufficient reviewing of learners' overall progress
- Insufficient analysis and use of observation to assess and improve the quality of learning sessions

Achievement and standards

113. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates for advanced apprentices in administration are particularly high at 95%.

114. Learners are interested in their qualifications, find them challenging and are keen to progress further. They develop valuable skills in team building and produce a good standard of practical work. They have good knowledge of organisational procedures, and contribute to their companies' business goals and deal successfully with a wide range of customers, including those with complaints. They learn to prioritise their work and work under pressure. Learners take on additional responsibilities at work and some have progressed to supervisory and management roles.
115. Learners' written work is satisfactory. They have well-organised portfolios of work and their work is accurate and well written. However, written answers to activities and questions in the technical certificate workbook are often too brief.
116. Overall success rates for 2008/09 are satisfactory at 74% for advanced apprentices, 66% for apprentices and 77% for Train to Gain learners. Success rates for business management and customer service apprentices are low at 54% and 63% respectively. Overall timely success rates for apprentices are low at 50%, and some learners are making slow progress.

Quality of provision

117. Teaching and learning are good. Learners receive regular, well-planned and good coaching and assessment. VT Training has produced highly relevant and very useful workbooks to develop learners' understanding of aspects like legislation and confidentiality. Learners are making increasing use of these resources, but there is insufficient use of VT Training's online e-learning resources. Some learning sessions are too brief or rushed, with insufficient learning taking place and an over-reliance on learners completing work at home. Some learners, especially on Train to Gain, find the written questions in the workbooks difficult to interpret. Initial assessment is satisfactory. The few learners identified as having additional learning needs receive appropriate support from their vocational coach or from Skills for Life tutors who plan learners' coaching sessions.
118. Vocational coaches make regular, effective and efficient assessments of learners at work. In the best assessments, learners confidently identify which units, elements and performance criteria have been met through their evidence. Assessments are well recorded and learners receive valuable feedback to support their development. However, vocational coaches do not always make sufficient use of the full range of assessment methods. Some sessions lack pace and there is over-reliance on the workbooks for assessment. Vocational coaches make insufficient use of workplace evidence in planning learning and assessment. Learners duplicate written work for their NVQ and key skills already completed within their employers' training or their job role.

119. Formal reviews of learners' progress are generally weak in England but good in Wales. Internal verifiers and assessors closely monitor the amount of evidence produced in portfolios to judge progress. However, they do not monitor overall progress effectively enough to identify those learners making slow progress. Comments about learners' progress are often vague and do not make sufficient reference to how learners are meeting their identified targets.
120. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. VT Training matches its learning programmes very well to learners' current and future job roles. Some learners are taking key skills at a higher level to help them progress onto the next level of qualification. Employers are fully involved in the programmes, and most provide good support. Assessment is flexible to accommodate learners' work commitments.
121. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Assessors make regular visits to their learners and are sensitive to their learners' needs. There is effective support for learners with additional learning needs to increase self-confidence and engage them in the learning process. Initial advice and guidance is well organised, relevant and generally accurate.

Leadership and management

122. Leadership and management are good. Regional management is clearly structured with clear roles and responsibilities. The vocational coordinators and internal verifiers both support and monitor vocational coaches. Communications are good and regular meetings focus strongly on learners' training and performance. Managers set staff performance targets to increase overall and timely success rates. Staff development and training is good. Many quality improvements have been made to performance management, assessment processes, individual learning plans, delivery of learning sessions, electronic tracking of learners' progress and auditing processes.
123. Internal verification is robust and promotes good improvement. Internal verifiers use a good system for evaluating their team's work and promoting improvement in assessment practice.
124. The self-assessment report is broadly satisfactory and staff are well involved in the self-assessment process. Development plans have been effective in improving provision and success rates for the current year are improving. For Wales, the self-assessment report was particularly accurate. This report was critical and judgemental and the inspectors agreed with the strengths and areas for improvement.
125. Equality of opportunity is good. Vocational coaches are very effective in developing learners' awareness of equality and diversity. Many learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity, their rights and responsibilities, and the complaints and appeals processes. Vocational

coaches routinely check and discuss equality and diversity with learners during progress reviews and they probe learners' wider understanding.

126. Managers do not sufficiently analyse or use the results of observations of training sessions to assess and improve the quality of teaching and learning. VT Training does not have a sufficiently clear view about the quality of teaching and learning in customer service. Insufficient judgements are made in the self-assessment report about the quality of learning sessions.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by VT Training 2007 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2007/08	overall	1983	82%
		timely	973	49%
	2008/09 (12 months)	overall	2143	80%
		timely	2141	50%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 12 months or greater of the LSC contract year

- * Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned
- ** College/provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'
- *** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'Skills for Life'