

TNG (Avanta) Ltd

Inspection report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. TNG, part of the Avanta group, has been providing skills training, jobs for unemployed people and business start-up advice for 26 years. Avanta Enterprise Ltd, established in 2006, was set up to manage the merger of TNG with InBiz. The company has 115 local centres and employs 950 staff.
2. In April 2009 the company restructured. Local centres are managed by business managers, who report to area directors, who report to regional directors. In June 2010 the north and south regions were being led by one regional director as an interim arrangement. Regional directors report to the managing director through to the chief executive and the board. The skills division is led by a director of skills who also reports to the managing director. Avanta provides the corporate functions of human resources, marketing, business development, information technology, product development, finance and quality.
3. TNG's learners are aged from 16 to 65 years in a variety of government funded programmes including Jobcentre Plus, Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and European Social Funding (ESF). TNG also works with local authorities and private businesses. Contracts with the SFA accounted for 10% of Avanta's business in 2008/09 and 5% in 2010. The SFA provision is located across the United Kingdom, with clusters in London and the South East, Midlands and the North. Inspectors reported on and graded three subject areas. The largest subject area of health, public services and care accounts for 47% of all learners, business administration and law accounts for 27% and preparation for life and work, including the employability skills programme (ESP), 17%. The remaining subject areas, covering manufacturing technologies, retailing, warehousing and direct support services, were too small to report on and grade as part of this inspection.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
 - Quay Assessment (health and social care and management)
 - Portable Group (management)
 - First Friday (retail)
 - DHL (warehousing)
 - Valkyrie (management, administration and food manufacturing).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	 130 learners 77 learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships Employability skills	 1096 learners 257 apprentices 163 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Health, care and public services	2
Preparation for life and work	3
Business, administration and law	3

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Learners' outcomes are satisfactory overall, and improving. Qualification achievement rates on Train to Gain programmes are satisfactory and high in ESF management training and for community care learners. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and most learners acquire good vocational and employability skills. Many learners progress through course levels and gain promotion at work. Learners enjoy their training, feel safe and improve their employment prospects. However, too many learners on entry to employment (E2E) and ESP courses do not complete their qualifications or progress to further education, training or in to work. Apprenticeship achievements, although improved, are low.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with the better sessions well planned and well managed. However, little use is made of information learning technology. Assessments are also well managed, however the quality of recording in individual learning plans and progress reviews is poor with many learners unsure of their progress. Literacy, language and numeracy and support for additional learning needs are satisfactory and most learners are well supported in Skills for Life by specialist tutors in the workplace. Learners receive high

levels of pastoral support particularly learners presenting a wide range of barriers to employment and training.

7. The management of TNG is satisfactory, with good strategic direction and its values clearly understood by staff. Leadership is strong, ably managing the recent restructure. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory as is the promotion of equality and diversity. TNG produced a critical and realistic self-assessment report closely linked to the quality improvement plan and inspection findings are well matched to TNG's own judgements. However, TNG has been slow to implement quality assurance arrangements, and insufficient feedback from learners and employers is collected and used. Arrangements to quality assure subcontractors are good.

Main findings

- Overall outcomes are satisfactory. Over the past three years qualification achievements for Train to Gain learners have improved and are now just above the national average.
- Achievements on Train to Gain and ESF at advanced level are high with most learners completing their qualification within agreed time scales. Train to Gain community care learners are particularly successful with nearly all completing within their given time scale.
- Overall achievement rates in apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are low. Many make slow progress and completions within the planned timescale are particularly low. Qualification achievements on employability programmes for young learners are low. Progression rates into education, employment and training are also low and falling.
- The development of vocational and employability skills is good. Learners develop practical and communication skills and demonstrate a significant growth in confidence. Progression to higher level qualifications and job roles is good. Learners progress through qualification levels and often achieve promotion at work. Learners feel safe at work and in training and use safe working practices.
- Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, with the better sessions well managed and planned. Some good individual teaching was observed in literacy and numeracy where learning topics were set within the context of work and daily life and provided relevance and strong motivation for learning. In some sessions however, teaching involved learners insufficiently and made little use of information learning technology.
- Arrangements for assessment are well managed. Internal verifiers meet frequently with assessors, as teams and individually, to discuss learners' progress and action plan and evaluate overall performance against set targets. Assessors have frequent opportunities to discuss experiences and share good practice with colleagues.
- The quality of recording in individual learning plans varies widely. Some contain particularly effective and innovative action planning, which help learners develop better personal effectiveness and social integration. However, generally

the detail of information is brief and generic and set targets are insufficiently personalised to meet individual need. Recording in learners' reviews is also poor with learners frequently unsure of their current progress.

- Literacy, language and numeracy and support for additional learning needs are satisfactory, with assessment of learners' skills and identification of additional support needs being routine and completed well. Most learners are well supported in Skills for Life by specialist tutors in the workplace.
- Learners receive high levels of pastoral support from caring staff willing to give of their time to provide practical help, advice and guidance. Close working relationships between staff and learners maintain good support for learners presenting a wide range of personal and social issues.
- Strategic direction is good. Corporate values are clear and understood by staff. Leadership is strong and the recent management restructure was managed well. Recently introduced performance procedures are good.
- Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Learners 'at risk' are supported well by TNG and external agencies.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactory. TNG meets current legal requirements. Overall, learners' awareness is satisfactory as is the training of staff. The analysis of equality and diversity data has yet to be fully recognised.
- The use of feedback from learners and employers is insufficiently developed and TNG has been slow to implement quality assurance arrangements. However the quality assurance arrangements of subcontractors are good.
- The self-assessment report is critical and realistic and understood well by staff. The quality improvement plan links well to the self-assessment report. The inspection findings are well matched to the self-assessment report.

What does TNG need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices to at least national averages.
- Improve the qualification success rates and progression rates into education, employment and training for E2E and ESP learners to increase their chances of employment.
- Following the appropriate collection and analysis of equality and diversity impact measures, develop a process that actively reduces variations in success rates between minority groups.
- Fully implement the national quality assurance arrangements in the skills division to build on the existing process of continuous improvement. Include a robust process to collect learner and employer views to actively impact on the quality of the provision.
- Improve target setting, especially in the identification of medium- and long-term aims to provide learners with better personalised, and suitably incremental, goals to help them maintain progress appropriate to their experience, abilities and aspirations.

- Improve the quality of recording in individual learning plans and in learners' reviews to provide good evaluation and full understanding of learners' progress.
- Embed recent performance management procedures to improve the quality of provision and achievements at all centres.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the assessors who are reliable and encourage learners to progress
- TNG helping them to become more confident
- learning from one another as well as from the tutors
- assessors who are flexible and prepared to fit around work commitments
- training which is well suited to their employment
- training which builds on their knowledge
- tutors who provide one-to-one instruction and engender enthusiasm in learners.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the opportunities to understand their training programmes and their content
- the one-to-one meetings with assessors which are too infrequent
- the number of personal computers as there are not enough
- the level of support and tutoring provided
- the time to discuss questions with tutors and assessors

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- TNG assessors who provide excellent support and are reliable in attending appointments and finding time for learners
- TNG staff members who are highly qualified and effective in communication
- TNG providing training relevant to learners' needs
- enjoying a strong working partnership with TNG
- staff members who provide encouragement throughout the learning process
- communication with TNG which has greatly improved since recent management changes.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the communication with TNG, particularly when there are gaps between one assessor leaving and another being appointed
- the pace of learning as many learners can achieve at a faster rate
- the inclusion of employers in the training process

- the time given to complete training during the working day.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

8. Capacity to improve is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, TNG has made a number of improvements to aspects of its provision. Strong leadership with a clear and realistic strategy and the recently well-managed restructuring have created a focused organisation. Good performance management procedures have recently been introduced. Train to Gain success rates have steadily improved. Overall, key strengths from the previous inspection have been maintained. Of the key areas for improvement, the use of data to monitor progress has much improved as has overall success rates within the planned timescales for Train to Gain learners. However, other key areas for improvement have yet to see sufficient improvements. For example, overall apprenticeship success rates and those within agreed timescales have improved, although they are still low. Well-developed quality assurance procedures have been slow to impact on improving provision. Progress towards improving success rates for apprenticeships, E2E and ESP programmes has been limited.
9. TNG's self-assessment report accurately identifies key aspects of the provision. The report is sufficiently detailed and the findings of the inspection are well matched. Grades awarded at inspection for outcomes, quality of provision, leadership and management, equality and diversity and safeguarding matched those of TNG's self-assessment. Of the three subject areas inspected, two were graded higher than the self-assessment and this takes account of the improvements since the report was published.
10. Since the previous inspection the focus on quality improvement has much improved. However, quality assurance arrangements have been slow to impact on the provision. There is too much variation between aspects of the quality of provision and not all programmes have seen sufficient improvements in achievements. The use of feedback from learners and employers has yet to influence improvements sufficiently.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Outcomes for learners overall are satisfactory. Over the past three years success rates for Train to Gain have improved and are now just above the national average at 84% and account for over 60% of all learners.
12. Success rates on Train to Gain at level 3 are high in some regions, with most learners completing their qualification within agreed time scales. Success rates for learners on the ESF management courses at level 3 are high at nine percentage points above the national rates in 2009/10. Train to Gain community care learners achieve very high success rates at 98% with nearly all achieving within their given time scale.

13. As identified in the self-assessment report, overall success rates in apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships at 63% for 2008/09 and 47% in 2009/10 are low. Apprenticeships account for 15% of all learners. Many make slow progress and success rates completed within the agreed timescale are particularly low and well below the national rate of 57%.
14. Qualification success rates on employability programmes for young learners are low. Only 29% of E2E learners achieved qualifications in 2009/10. Progression rates to education, employment and training are low, falling from 68% in 2006/07 to 25% in 2009/10.
15. TNG has identified inequalities in outcomes for learners in each subject area and recently set equality and diversity impact measures to bring about improvements, for example to minority ethnic group success rates, White British men and for women. It is too soon to see the impact of these measures.
16. The standard of learners' work is broadly satisfactory and some is good. Portfolios have a clear and standardised format which learners follow. The introduction of the electronic portfolio is used well by business and management learners.
17. The development of vocational and employability skills is good. In childcare and health and social care, learners demonstrate a good range of practical skills. Preparation for life and work learners demonstrate a significant growth in confidence, communication skills and personal effectiveness. Learners acquire useful job search skills, such as curriculum vitae writing and word processing skills. Business learners are more assertive in their relationships with managers and quickly learn how to manage their time and prioritise work.
18. Progression to higher level qualifications and job roles with increased responsibility is good in health and social care, childcare and business programmes. Learners progress from intermediate through to advanced levels and on to management awards. Learners often achieve promotion at work.
19. Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe at work and in training. Learners adopt safe working practices and benefit from their employer's good quality health and safety policies, which are checked and reinforced by TNG throughout the programme.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

20. Overall teaching, training and assessment are satisfactory and provided by staff with appropriate skills and experience. In the better sessions learning was well managed and planned and informed by the findings of initial and diagnostic assessments of learners' skills and aspirations. Tutors make good use of a range of different resources to meet the learning styles of individual learners. In Skills for Life sessions learning topics were set within the context of work and daily life and provided relevance and strong motivation for learning. Weaker lessons

included insufficient use of information learning technology and insufficient involvement of learners in active learning.

21. One-to-one teaching at work is provided by enthusiastic and knowledgeable tutors who support learners well to develop skills and knowledge. In childcare and health and social care, however, insufficient theory training is provided for apprentices to enable them to have full understanding of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) requirements.
22. Resources, including equipment, materials and use of technology to support learning, are adequate. Introducing electronic portfolio technology has increased employers' involvement in training by enabling them to track more easily learners' progress against NVQ requirements. However, not all employers are aware of learners' progress through this method. In health and social care, electronic learning is well established, but learning resources to support apprentices have not been adequately developed.
23. Arrangements for assessment are well managed and procedures are in place to improve the quality and consistency of standards across all programmes. Internal verifiers meet frequently with assessors, as teams and individually to discuss learners' progress and action planning and evaluate overall performance against set targets. Generally, assessment and reviews are well planned with assessors making frequent visits to support learners at work. Overall, tutors and assessors provide good feedback to learners, setting clear targets with deadlines, and they monitor learners' progress well.
24. In management and business, medium and long-term target setting is poor, although assessment practice is generally satisfactory with most learners using electronic portfolios well. Assessors overly focus on short-term targets and recording in learners' reviews is poor, with learners frequently unsure of their current progress.
25. Overall, individual learning plans are routinely completed and updated, although the quality of recording varies widely. A particularly effective and innovative action planning and recording form design was seen in Response to Redundancy (R2R). This uses customised action plans, with personalised and incremental targets, which are helping learners with greatest needs to develop better personal effectiveness and social integration. However, in many cases, the detail of information is brief and generic and set targets are insufficiently personalised to meet individual need and to fully guide action planning.
26. Arrangements for literacy, language and numeracy and support for additional learning needs are satisfactory with assessment of learners' skills and identification of additional support needs being completed well. Literacy and numeracy testing and skills scans are used routinely, although not in health and social care. Most learners are well supported in Skills for Life by specialist tutors in the workplace. Train to Gain programmes use a good variety of ways to meet learners' literacy and numeracy skills needs. A particularly effective programme

is provided through the union-led bus company projects within the context of work.

27. Programmes generally meet the needs and interests of users well and provide a good range of programme and course options. E2E and R2R programmes provide good opportunities for learners to engage in activities which provide them with new knowledge, skills and qualifications. In management and business programmes, units are agreed by employers and learners and well matched to learners' job roles and aspirations.
28. TNG works in partnership with a wide range of external organisations and agencies. Many partnerships are well established and these have contributed to programme development and general support of learners. Cooperation between TNG staff and employers has allowed staff to adopt flexible working times when visiting learners, often at night time, to fit in with learners' shift patterns. Cooperative partnerships, with Connexions and Jobcentre Plus, help to recruit E2E and R2R learners. In management and business, relationships with key employers have enabled identification of company training needs. In some cases, however, insufficient involvement of employers at line manager level is resulting in managers playing an inadequate part in training. A 'fitness4work' initiative has been introduced as part of the R2R programme. Sessions given by a personal fitness trainer are effective in raising learners' awareness of their own state of fitness and health. Staff members have attended an NHS two-day training event on healthy eating to provide advice to learners.
29. Learners receive high levels of pastoral support from caring staff willing to give of their time to provide practical help, advice and guidance. Close working relationships between staff and learners is key to maintaining good support for learners across a wide range of personal and social issues.
30. Assessors contact learners frequently at work to provide advice and encouragement, often at weekends and in the evenings. Staff support for unemployed learners is effective in minimising social barriers to re-engaging with work. Generally, TNG staff work well in partnership with external specialist support agencies to provide a good multi-agency approach to complete learner support.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

31. Prior to early 2009, TNG was an integral part of the Avanta Corporation. Since then, TNG skills has become a separate division but still within Avanta. Following this decision and the appointment of its current director in mid 2009, significant and measured change has been appropriately introduced. Strategic direction is good. The organisation's values are clear and TNG is now focused well to achieve its key objectives. Leadership is strong and decisive actions are in place to meet national and local priorities. The recent restructure of TNG is now complete and performance management procedures are good. The management of resources and the use of data to monitor performance are generally good. Change has been managed well. The level of provision provided

by subcontractors has been much reduced and, of those remaining, the quality of provision is very good.

32. Internal communication has much improved and most staff are positive about revised working practices set against challenging targets. Regular monitoring of learners' progress is now embedded and has recently started to impact on improving success rates on a number of programmes. However, it is too early to say that these measures will be maintained or are sufficient to improve poorly performing programmes. A strong team ethos supports TNG's values well. Overall, the sharing of best practice is satisfactory and improving.
33. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and meet current legal requirements. A senior manager has overall responsibility for safeguarding and she is appropriately supported by centre managers. Learners highlighted 'at risk' are effectively supported and their individual cases managed well. Links with external agencies are well developed and effectively support learners. The central Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) list, including subcontractor staff, is appropriately maintained. Staff awareness of safeguarding has been raised through induction, training packs and staff conferences. Learners' awareness of safeguarding is satisfactory, although this varies considerably.
34. Posters have been made available to all learning centres on individual rights and safety measures with contact telephone numbers. Useful information on computer 'mouse' mats raises learners' awareness of internet safety. However, the standards set by TNG are not fully complied with in all learning centres. Overall, learners' understanding of safeguarding is satisfactory, although there is much variation. Procedures to risk assess new staff without confirmation of CRB checks are in place and centre managers are responsible for maintaining risk assessments. However, information about individual staff risk arrangements is not suitably forwarded to the senior manager.
35. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. TNG's equality and diversity policies and procedures fulfil current legislation. The equality and diversity action plan is appropriate to raise the profile of equality and diversity throughout the organisation. Staff are suitably trained through induction, staff conferences and a very useful reference book that recognises ways in which staff can support learners. Teaching and learning observers have recently started to comment aptly on equality and diversity in lessons.
36. Learners are aware of the complaints procedures. Overall, their understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. However, inspectors noted that the knowledge displayed by learners' varied significantly. During progress reviews, opportunities to develop learners' understanding further was not sufficiently systematic or in depth. TNG collects data on learners in relation to ethnicity, disability and gender. However, it recognises that it has been slow to develop procedures to monitor variations in success rates between minority groups and is currently in the process of improving systems to analyse data more effectively.

37. The process to gather learner and employer feedback on the quality of provision is insufficiently developed. The analysis of end-of-course questionnaires returned by learners is not captured in a way that systematically and clearly supports continuous improvement. TNG is in the process of developing a formal approach towards gathering employer views.
38. TNG has been slow to implement quality assurance arrangements in TNG's skills division. The quality strategy is comprehensive. The corporate quality manual has been developed and quality reviews have taken place at a number of centres. Additional staff have been recruited to support quality initiatives and changes to line management responsibility have improved the quality focus. However, the quality procedures have not yet been fully implemented and the first cycle of quality reviews not yet been completed. The internal observation of the teaching and learning process is satisfactory and improving. The impact of any quality assurance arrangements has had limited effect on aspects of the provision. Quality assurance of sub-contractors is good.
39. The self-assessment report is critical and realistic. The self-assessment process is inclusive of staff views and they had a good understanding of TNG's current position. The quality improvement plan links well to the self-assessment report. Actions for improvement are particularly well focused on improving key areas with appropriately challenging targets. The inspection findings are well matched to the self-assessment report.
40. TNG effectively manages the resources available to secure value for money. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Staff development to meet the organisation's aims is effective. Financial management is good.

Subject areas

Health, care and public services

Grade 2

Context

41. Health, public services and care has 802 learners. Of these, 525 are in health and social care of which 39 are advanced apprentices and 15 are intermediate apprentices. In childcare, there are 277 learners of which 56 are intermediate apprentices and 37 advanced apprentices. The remaining learners are on Train to Gain programmes taking NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4. Learners are employed in residential homes, community care settings, family centres and nurseries.

Key findings

- Success rates for community care Train to Gain learners are excellent. In 2009/10, 98% successfully completed their qualification; 95% in the time allocated to them. Overall success rates for Train to Gain learners are satisfactory, with 88% successfully completing in 2009/10 with 72% completing within agreed timescales
- Success rates on apprenticeship programmes are low and declining. In 2008/09 63% completed the qualification, 47% in the time allocated to them. In 2009/10 only 47% completed their qualification and only 40% in the given time. These rates are well below the national average.
- Learners develop good workplace skills. They gain in self-confidence and develop team working skills. Employers observe an improvement in learners' understanding of their jobs. Learners have gained promotion to more responsible roles at work.
- Apprentices have insufficient understanding of the content of their qualification. They are unable to apply theory to practice. Their understanding of their clients' needs is not fully developed.
- Learners enjoy learning. Train to Gain learners have become fully engaged in lifelong learning. They have developed realistic aspirations for career development. Learners report positive effects on their family life and community working.
- Teaching, training and assessment are satisfactory. Assessors work flexibly to accommodate shift working and meet the requirements of the workplace. TNG make good use of additional, external courses provided by employers. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory.
- Resources for teaching and coaching for apprentices and inexperienced learners are inadequate. For example, in some areas, assessors rely on employers to teach learners the core values of care. Assessors guide learners to resources on the internet and in text books, but this practice is not standardised. Learners rely on their colleagues at work to clarify key knowledge questions.

- TNG meets learners' and employers' needs particularly well. Programmes and levels of qualifications are available to meet learners' job roles. Partnerships with employers are good and well established, including with Connexions and Jobcentres. Health and social care employers are enthusiastic about training, but childcare employers are insufficiently involved.
- Support for learners is good. Assessors support learners with personal problems well. They accompany learners seeking housing advice and support and refer learners to external agencies as appropriate. An extensive database is used to record and monitor all learner activity and judge progress against identified milestones. Causes for concern are identified and effective action plans are agreed to improve learners' progress.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been effective changes to the way the provision is managed. TNG have recruited experienced assessors. Professional development for staff has equipped them to work with information technology and electronic learning well.
- The promotion of equality and valuing diversity is satisfactory. However, a few learners have insufficient understanding of these aspects of their work. TNG has produced resources for assessors to promote and assess learners' understanding of equality, diversity and safeguarding. However, some questions are insufficiently challenging. The safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory and learners report feeling safe at work
- Internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verifiers meet with assessors to carry out verification and discuss issues with them. Observation of assessor performance is a routine part of the process. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Assessors reflect on, and evaluate, the organisation during quarterly meetings. This informs the self-assessment process and resulting action plan well.

What does TNG need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates for apprenticeship programmes by challenging and extending learners' understanding of the content of their qualification.
- Inform childcare employers of the requirements of the NVQ to enable their increased involvement in the assessment process.
- Introduce standardised learning resources so learners receive a consistent theoretical foundation to their learning.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 3

Context

42. Some 360 learners attend literacy, numeracy or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes throughout the country. Nearly 80 of these are on E2E, 34 on Train to Gain, 53 on bus company union programmes, 64 on R2R and 130 on the ESP. E2E is offered in Leigh, Bolton, Wigan, Tameside and Milton Keynes. Of the 1,200 learners who annually join programmes, half study Skills for Life embedded within their Train to Gain programmes and 400 learners study on preparatory courses for Train to Gain.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. Learners achieve high success rates on Train to Gain Skills for Life programmes embedded in their vocational training and on discrete programmes in partnership with employers and employees' union representatives. Learners make significant progress in communication skills and in personal effectiveness. They begin to enjoy learning, often for the first time, and become more confident about their future.
- Success rates on the ESP, E2E and preparation courses for Train to Gain are low. Success rates within agreed timescales on many Train to Gain courses are also low, as is progression from E2E to education, training or work. Learners on R2R programmes make good progress on courses, but achieve only satisfactory progression to work.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Individual learning and teaching on joint union and employer projects are good. Much other teaching and learning are insufficiently contextualised to employment. Resources are generally satisfactory, although not all learners have enough access to information communication technology. Initial assessment is satisfactory, but assessment and recording of learners' progress are not always sufficiently regular.
- The programme meets the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Learners can improve their literacy and numeracy before or during NVQ training or job seeking. R2R is effective in providing customers with motivation and greater confidence in seeking work. E2E successfully recruits learners with substantial additional social and learning difficulties but does not provide sufficient work placements.
- TNG makes good use of strong partnerships to benefit learners. A close relationship with Connexions helps to recruit and retain E2E learners. Youth offending teams, leaving care teams and teenage pregnancy workers cooperate closely to provide essential support for E2E learners. The award winning partnership with union learning representatives and bus companies has ensured the success of on-site provision for transport workers.
- Learners receive very good personal, financial, social and emotional support, particularly on E2E. In R2R, staff provide sound guidance and advice across a

wide range of issues. All staff make use of a good variety of specialist support agencies to motivate learners and minimise social barriers to employment.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall. An inclusive and welcoming environment ensures that learners feel safe and respected and have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. However, TNG does not yet use equality and diversity data sufficiently to monitor the programme. Accessible guidance to staff is too recent to have had an effect on equalising success rates.
- Quality improvement measures are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is rigorous and accurate. Lesson observations are detailed and constructive. However, in some areas there is insufficient impact of new quality improvement arrangements following the management restructure. A well-designed system for caseload management is too recent to be effective. Workshops on specific ways to improve areas identified in lesson observations have not yet started.

What does TNG need to do to improve further?

- Raise success rates by fully implementing caseload reviews and equality and diversity impact measures, including increasing work placements for E2E learners.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by increasing the relevance of lessons to employment.
- Implement the planned workshop programme for teachers to include monitoring learners' progress against helpful targets and the promotion of diversity through lesson content.
- Improve resources by increasing access to information communication technology in the North West.

Business, administration and law

Grade 3

Context

43. There are 445 learners on business and management programmes, taking qualifications at intermediate and advanced levels. Two hundred and fifty are on Train to Gain programmes, 95 are apprentices and 100 are on ESF programmes. All learners are employed and are assessed at work.

Key findings

- Outcomes are satisfactory. Many learners are gaining good personal and work-related skills. They are more assertive in their relationships with managers and becoming more effective at leading their teams. They show an increased understanding of the businesses in which they are working. Some learners have achieved promotion at work.
- Success rates within agreed timescales are low overall, but have improved recently. Success rates for learners on Train to Gain have improved and are now around 74%. However, success rates within agreed timescales were low, with only 54% of learners achieving in 2008/09. Success is now significantly improved in the current year to 67% of learners achieving on time.
- Success rates for learners on ESF management courses at level 3 are some nine percentage points above the national average for 2010. Current learners are making good progress towards their qualifications. Many learners have already progressed to complete higher qualifications or are enthusiastic to do so.
- Learners enjoy their programmes and feel safe during learning. They are able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being. Some learners make a positive contribution to the community in addition to their usual work as team leaders of domestic cleaning teams at a local hospital.
- Vocational training, coaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners are supported well by enthusiastic and knowledgeable tutors. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessors visit learners regularly, and provide motivating feedback to learners. Learners are increasingly using electronic portfolios which are speeding up their rate of progress. Assessors make good use of a variety of evidence, including photographs and professional discussions.
- The recording of targets is insufficient and individual learning plans lack detail. They seldom specify target dates for parts of the programme and the focus is mainly on end of funding dates. Where target dates are specified, they are not always updated when a learner fails to meet them. Some work supervisors are insufficiently involved in progress reviews and in planning assessments. One subcontractor completes individual learning plans and reviews particularly well.
- Training meets the needs of learners and employers well. TNG maps learners' jobs to their NVQ well. Learners progress from NVQs at levels 2 through to 4. Assessors are flexible, visiting the workplace to suit work patterns. TNG works particularly well with employers to identify organisational training needs. Good

relationships are established from the start by employer relationship managers and this is maintained by the assessors well.

- Partnership working is good. TNG has built good long-term relationships with a number of large and small employers and repeat business is frequently gained. TNG works well with other training providers to ensure that employers and learner needs are met even when the necessary qualification is unavailable from TNG.
- Assessors are highly flexible and give satisfactory support to learners. Staff are now making effective use of technology to monitor learners' progress. Learners falling behind are given more support to help them complete their qualifications. Some learners with additional literacy and numeracy needs are supported through coaching by specialist assessors. Induction prepares learners adequately for the programme.
- Communications are good within individual teams, across the geographical regions, and between senior managers and employees. Results from piloted initiatives and good practice are shared well. The management of staff performance is good. Roles and responsibilities are clear and continuing professional development is good. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and recent initiatives to improve quality have been well managed.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners actively use this knowledge and understanding at work and within their personal lives. Performance managers have recently introduced actions to analyse data to narrow the achievement gap for male learners. Most learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity which they use effectively when dealing with customers or managing staff.

What does TNG need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness and recording of milestone target setting to help learners to make faster progress.
- Improve the quality of the progress review to include all aspects of the qualification to further improve success rates within agreed timescales.

Information about the inspection

44. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director of quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of TNG's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Skills Funding Agency or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
45. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of TNG. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas TNG offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

TNG (Avanta) Ltd

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	207	77	130
Part-time learners	1,516	0	1,516
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	4	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	3		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3		
Quality of provision	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	4		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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