

# INSPECTION REPORT

**IMS (UK) Ltd**

**24 March 2003**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

IMS (UK) Ltd is a private training company which provides training at six sites, in Bradford, Keighley, Telford, Leeds, Hull and Middlesbrough. It provides training in basic skills, numeracy, literacy, language support for learners whose first language is not English, and jobsearch and personal development. It also provides training in manufacturing operations from its centre in Hull. It currently provides training for 212 young people and New Deal clients.

### Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of training in manufacturing is good and that in foundation programmes is satisfactory. However, training for other government-funded provision in foundation learning is unsatisfactory. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, as are arrangements for quality assurance. However, the arrangements for the promotion of equality of opportunity are unsatisfactory.

### GRADES

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	3

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3
Other government-funded provision	4

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

- well-managed change and growth
- good internal communications
- culture of critical appraisal
- good support for clients

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- lack of appropriate staff development to meet learners' needs
- poor management of basic skills programme
- incomplete arrangements for the promotion of equal opportunities
- lack of qualified teaching staff

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more sharing of good practice
- better use of feedback from learners

## THE INSPECTION

1. Five inspectors spent a total of 19 days at IMS (UK) Ltd (IMS) during March 2003. They met 79 learners and conducted 43 interviews with IMS's staff. They visited three work placements and made 10 visits to IMS's sites across the country. Inspectors viewed 31 samples of assessed work or portfolios, and 38 individual learning plans. They observed nine training sessions and examined a range of documents, including policies, procedures, management information, and learners' personal records. Inspectors studied the self-assessment reports from the two predecessor companies, which were completed in July and November 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	5	3	0	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. IMS is a private training company based near Selby, with training centres in Bradford, Leeds, Keighley, Telford, Middlesbrough and Hull. It was established in January 2003 as a result of the merger of its two predecessor companies, IMS Employ and IMS Cortrain. IMS Cortrain provided training for young people within the manufacturing and engineering industries. Training is provided for 54 foundation modern apprentices and for eight young people following a programme of training in national vocational qualifications (NVQs). IMS Employ provided training mainly for unemployed people under contract with Jobcentre Plus. A range of programmes is available for New Deal 18-24 and New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, including basic employability training (BET), short intensive basic skills (SIBS), overcoming language barriers (OLB), Gateway to Work, and follow-through. There are 143 learners on these foundation programmes. There are also eight learners on a small programme for unemployed young people funded by Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and based in Middlesbrough. Most of the clients on New Deal and work-based learning for adults are sent to IMS's training without choosing it.

3. Modern apprenticeship training is funded by Humberside LSC. New Deal funding comes from Jobcentre Plus. There are further funding initiatives from Jobcentre Plus and other sources, some of which are still in the pilot phase. IMS employs a total of 62 staff at a total of eight sites, concentrated, but not limited to, Yorkshire and Humberside. Relevant economic and social indicators vary across the different areas served by IMS. Unemployment in May 2002 in Yorkshire and Humberside is higher, at 3.7 per cent, than that of 3 per cent for England as a whole. In particular, in Bradford it is 4.9 per cent and in Hull, 5.5 per cent, and Middlesbrough and Stockton, 6 per cent. However, it is lower in Leeds, at 2.9 per cent, and Telford and Bridgnorth, at 2.3 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of young people gaining five or more general certificates in secondary education (GCSEs) in Yorkshire and Humberside is lower, at 43.1 per cent, than that of 47.9 per cent for England as a whole. However, this rate is only 35.1 per cent for Bradford, and only 27.5 per cent in Hull, but is better, at 47.3 per cent in Telford and Wrekin. The proportion of people in Yorkshire and Humberside from minority ethnic groups is lower, at 4.4 per cent, than that of 6.2 per cent for England as a whole. However, this figure rises to 5.8 per cent in Leeds, and to 15.6 per cent in Bradford, but is only 1.2 per cent in Hull.

### Work-based learning for young people

4. The quality of work-based learning is good. The manufacturing programme is well structured, and the programme has been designed with the involvement of employers. On-the-job training is appropriate to meet the needs of learners. Key skills are effectively integrated within the training programme. Portfolios of evidence are of a high standard. Retention rates are good. However, induction for learners is poor, and support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs is inadequate.

### **New Deal 18-24**

5. New Deal training in foundation programmes is satisfactory. Many programmes comprise a mixed group of clients, on New Deal 18-24, on New Deal 25+ or on work-based learning for adults (WBLA). The Gateway to Work programme is good, and most clients achieve their individual learning aims. Overall, the quality of accommodation is good, with pleasant and well-furnished rooms. Individual learning plans are completed appropriately, and clients receive good support from staff at IMS. However, there is a shortage of some learning resources such as appropriate textbooks for learners. Some teaching is uninspiring, and there is not enough involvement of employers in the training programme.

### **New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults**

6. Training is satisfactory. Clients benefit from access to a range of programmes including SIBS, BET, and OLB. Most clients attend IMS as a result of mandatory referral from Jobcentre Plus. The proportion of clients progressing into employment from some programmes is low. Many programmes comprise a mixed group of clients, both New Deal 25+ and 18-24. Some learning resources are in short supply. Some training sessions are uninspiring, and employers are insufficiently involved in planning and providing the training programme.

### **Other government-funded provision**

7. One project with eight learners in training is based at one of IMS's centres. This is unsatisfactory provision. The contractual requirements for the project have not been clarified with Tees Valley LSC, and the programme is poorly planned and managed. Unrealistic expectations are made of the learners, and evidence towards the intended qualification aims is of poor quality. The retention rate is low.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

8. IMS is a private limited training company with a range of LSC, Jobcentre Plus and privately funded training contracts. IMS (UK) Ltd is the newly merged company formed in January 2003 from two related but separate companies, and has a total of 62 staff. These were owned jointly by two owners, but run independently. The two owner-directors are active in the management of the new company. There is a managing director and an operations director who oversee all the management functions. They are supported by a team of four senior managers: the quality assurance manager, human resources manager, financial controller and product development manager, who are all based in the head office near Selby, along with four support staff. There is a new structure to the company and there are now also six regional business managers reporting to the operations director, who have control over all the projects being run in their regions and manage the staff employed through the regional offices. Each project has designated staff and an individual manager. These managers report on a weekly basis to their business manager who then produces a monthly regional report for the operations director. There are various subcommittee groups, including one for each of the four head office functions. The subcommittees and regional business managers report to the board on a monthly basis. There are company policies covering aspects of quality assurance and equality of opportunity. All training is provided directly by the company, and none is subcontracted. Two self-assessment reports have been produced, one for each of the original companies, in July and November 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- well-managed change and growth
- good internal communications
- good use of data
- effective target-setting and action-planning
- culture of critical appraisal

### WEAKNESSES

- lack of appropriate staff development to meet learners' needs
- poor management of basic skills programme
- lack of established quality assurance system
- incomplete arrangements for the promotion of equal opportunities

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of feedback from learners
- more sharing of good practice

9. There is a strong strategic vision in the company which has encouraged change and growth. Since the self-assessment report was written nine months ago, the number of staff employed has doubled and the number of programmes being run has increased dramatically to 17. The merger between the two companies has been well planned and executed to ensure minimal disruption to staff and learners. A company director attended team meetings on a regular basis throughout the merger to ensure any issues raised by staff were fully understood and appropriate action taken. A dedicated head office team has been established, whose function is to support the regional managers. There is a planned programme whereby all senior managers go out into the regional centres each month to provide ongoing advice and guidance to staff. This programme is reviewed and evaluated to ensure it remains effective. All prospective programmes are examined for financial viability before tendering, to ensure the company does not over-stretch its resources and ensure well-managed growth.

10. Communications within the company are good, both on a formal and informal basis. There is a wide range of effective meetings held at all levels. These are managed through a formal meetings schedule covering all aspects of the company from regional projects to dedicated head office functions. The outcomes of all these meetings are reported to the monthly board meetings. Meetings are well recorded. There is a well-developed business plan which is communicated to all staff at the annual conference. Staff receive their own personal copy and are encouraged to use it as a working document. All staff have a copy of the staff handbook which is an effective document for communicating policies and procedures. Senior managers are readily available to meet with staff, all of whom are encouraged to discuss any issues which concern them. Although some sharing of good practice does take place between centres and programmes, this does not occur sufficiently consistently or thoroughly to ensure best practice is always adopted. There are good working relationships with local offices of Jobcentre Plus.

11. Use of both quantitative and qualitative data to influence management decisions, and as a planning tool, is effective. Data are accurate and current and this helps ensure that decisions reflect the most up-to-date situation in the company. There is a good flow of information from the regions to the head office which is effectively controlled by the regional business managers. This includes monthly analyses of each project which are subsequently combined into regional analyses.

12. There is effective target-setting and action-planning across all levels of the company. The business plan has clear objectives. These are broken down into targets for each programme, which are challenging and often higher than contractually required, and include targets for outcomes as well as recruitment. Targets are effectively communicated to staff who have a good awareness of their progress towards meeting them. When shortfalls become apparent, remedial action is taken and monitored for its effectiveness. All meetings result in action-planning, which is strictly monitored and reviewed by the managers at subcommittee and board level.

13. The staff development which has so far been carried out is not adequate to meet

the needs of learners. There is a new system for staff recruitment, selection and appraisal, but this has not yet become established within the company. The previous system did not lead to an overall or individual staff development plan. Staff development is recorded but is not planned in a systematic way to ensure it benefits the learners or the company. Staff are recruited for their attitude rather than the qualifications they possess, but there is little urgency in gaining the necessary qualifications. There has been little evaluation of the training taken to ensure its relevance or effectiveness.

14. Management of the basic skills programme is poor. There is no overall strategy or clear management responsibility in this area. There is not enough emphasis on staff training in basic skills. No tutor in the manufacturing area of learning and only one of the tutors in the foundation programme hold the desired basic skills qualifications. Basic skills tutors teach for 30 hours a week, leaving very little time for marking, preparation and development of resources. Some centres have insufficient resources to provide literacy and numeracy support for learners.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 4**

15. There is good support for learners' cultural needs. In centres where learners require it, a room is set aside to accommodate requirements for daily prayer, and learners make good use of this facility. Timetables are arranged flexibly where possible to accommodate learners' religious activities. One tutor starts his group of learners in two stages each day: at 09.00, for a group of learners who are then able to finish earlier on Fridays to attend their local mosque for prayer, and at 09.30 for a second group of learners who do not require this facility. The tutor goes out of his way by teaching these additional weekly hours each week, to meet the needs of his Muslim learners. Further support is given to meet the needs of these learners by using the first half hour of the day, before other learners arrive, for much-needed additional language and literacy support.

16. IMS has an equal opportunities policy and this is displayed in the company's premises and in the staff handbook. Learners receive a summary version as part of their induction material. However, coverage of equality of opportunity during induction is inadequate. Learners have poor or no recollection of what has been covered, and insufficient understanding of equality of opportunity issues to help prepare them for the world of work. Material issued to learners has only brief information on equality of opportunity, and does not adequately develop understanding of related issues such as harassment, bullying and raising a grievance. Reviews conducted during the programme sometimes mention equality of opportunity, but the progress review process is not used sufficiently to reinforce and develop learners' understanding. Staff have not received sufficient training to enable them to effectively develop learners' understanding of equality of opportunity.

17. Information relating to arrangement of work experience for learners contains good emphasis on health and safety, but little to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity. At three employers in Hull, IMS monitors the proportions of learners from different ethnic origins against the company as a whole. IMS does check that employers who provide work placements for learners have an equal opportunities policy. However, following the initial check, equality of opportunity is not monitored at any future audit. There is little monitoring of other aspects of IMS's provision to ensure adequate representation, achievement or progression of different groups of learners. IMS does not adequately check to ensure compliance with, and promotion of, equality of opportunity on an ongoing basis in employers' premises. While some premises have lifts for use by learners with restricted mobility, other centres have restricted access. There are no specially adapted toilet facilities.

18. An action plan has recently been produced to further develop the promotion of equality of opportunity among staff and learners. This contains important revisions to the company's practice, such as the incorporation of equal opportunities criteria in all recruitment activities, and identification of key personnel with responsibility for implementing and monitoring the equal opportunities policy. While some of the developments have already been introduced, their contribution towards ensuring good practice is too early to assess.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 3**

19. There is a culture of critical analysis at all levels of the company. Staff are encouraged to identify areas for development in their daily activities. The system of monthly performance reports from each project to the board includes an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the project, together with a realistic action plan to build on the strengths and opportunities, and deal with the weaknesses and threats. These reports are honest and critical in their approach and help to identify improvements to provision. There is a thorough self-assessment process which critically analyses all aspects of the company. All staff, including those in the administrative functions, are involved in the self-assessment process. Learners and employers' views are gathered and taken into consideration in the report-writing process. Self-assessment has resulted in a clear action plan which identifies key areas for improvement. Realistic target-setting which is reviewed by senior management on an ongoing monthly basis.

20. At the time of the inspection, the company had only completed its merger into IMS a few weeks previously. However, a good start has been made in sharing common procedures and processes across the newly merged company. There is a new quality assurance policy and strategy for the company. This has not yet been shared with all regions and has not yet become established throughout the company. Revised procedures have been written for some of the projects that are provided by the company, but the effect of this is not yet measurable on improving the learners' experience. There is an existing audit plan and audits of some projects have been carried out, but the audit plan is not always adhered to in terms of timescales, and some projects have not had a monthly audit within the past three months. Although these audits give emphasis to contractual compliance, attention is also given to quality of programmes. When issues are identified, actions are taken, although these have not always been subsequently reviewed to ensure an appropriate effect on the quality of provision. Feedback is collected from learners and employees. Some analysis is carried out, but opportunities are missed to make best use of the analysis and feedback. Although some observation of training does take place, there is no company-wide procedure established across all centres to ensure training is observed and quality controlled in a consistent way. Where observations have taken place and feedback given to tutors, this is not always recorded. There are no observations of any teaching or learning on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme or for key skills. In some centres, learners have the opportunity to evaluate every training session, in other regions, there is no evaluation at all.

21. Internal verification is satisfactory overall. It is planned, assessments are observed by verifiers and portfolios are verified on an ongoing basis. However, on one small project there has been a delay in verification activities and 17 portfolios are awaiting verification.

<b>Good Practice</b>
<i>All staff have a screensaver on their computer which shows the mission statement and the aims of the company.</i>

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

### Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	62	2

22. IMS offers foundation modern apprenticeship manufacturing programmes designed to meet the needs of three local manufacturing companies. All learners are directly recruited and employed by the companies. There are 54 foundation modern apprentices and eight NVQ learners following a programme of NVQ training. There is one female learner. All learners are working towards level 2 NVQs in performing manufacturing operations. They have an induction which incorporates an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, key skills, and a vocational assessment. Additional learning and support needs are identified during this process. Sixteen learners have additional learning needs. There are three assessors, each of whom is based at one of the three manufacturing companies. Assessors are responsible for carrying out initial assessment, induction and all training and assessment, all of which is carried out on employers' premises. Assessors review learners' progress every 13 weeks. All assessors hold relevant assessor awards, and two hold relevant internal verifier and training awards. Background knowledge is provided mainly in the workplace using materials developed by IMS.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	41		59											
Retained*	0		28												
Successfully completed	0		27												
Still in learning	41		13												

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8															
Retained*	0															
Successfully completed	0															
Still in learning	8															

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

### STRENGTHS

- well-structured programme
- good use of resources
- good integration of key skills assignments with vocational training
- high standard of portfolios
- good retention rates

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs
- poor induction for learners

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better cross-referencing of key skills evidence
- more thorough progress reviews

23. The manufacturing programme is well structured. As recognised in the self-assessment report, a formal project plan is agreed with each employer in which key milestones for progression and achievement are clearly identified. The programme has been designed with the involvement of employers and its flexibility enables IMS to effectively meet their needs. Workshops for background knowledge and key skills are planned to cause minimal disruption to employers' productivity targets. Assessors respond quickly to employers' requests to change scheduled workshops and ensure learners are not disadvantaged in any way. For example, at the request of one company, the assessor has delayed the introduction of workshops, and has planned an

effective programme of on-the-job observations and individual guidance and support to fill the void. Opportunities to observe learners' work are readily available throughout the programme. Training workbooks, developed by IMS, allow learners the flexibility to study at home if they wish, minimising the impact on company and individual productivity. Workbooks cover both NVQ requirements and key skills. They are detailed and informative. On-the-job training is appropriate to meet the needs of learners and the requirements of the NVQ. Workplace supervisors and IMS's assessors work closely together to ensure opportunities are made to collect work-based evidence and carry out observations.

24. There is good use of resources. Assessors are well qualified and vocationally experienced. They work continuously within their allocated company and so are always accessible for learners and supervisors. They are viewed as a member of the team by employers and have developed excellent working relationships with key personnel. Advice and guidance extends beyond the learning programme. Employers regularly seek advice from the assessors on productivity improvements and health and safety issues. Assessors have the use of an office and training room within each company to provide training and support for learners. The training rooms are adequately furnished and resourced with computers for key skills training. Assessors clearly record progress with learners following informal meetings and one-to-one support sessions. Assessors refer to these to ensure agreed actions are followed through and learners make progress as planned.

25. Key skills assignments are effectively integrated within the training programme. Three assignments covering health and safety, waste management and time analysis have been developed by IMS. Evidence towards key skills such as application of number, communication and information technology (IT) is generated within the assignments, all of which are relevant to the learners' working environment and job role. Learners' understanding and appreciation of the relevance and purpose of key skills is good. Following completion of the assignments, some learners use their increased knowledge and understanding to improve their own working practices and contribute to overall company performance.

26. Portfolios of evidence are of a high standard. They are well structured and presented and include clear indexing of their contents. Portfolios contain a wide range of work-based evidence, such as production programmes, company operating procedures and delivery reports. Staff from each company liaise with assessors to ensure that evidence collected not only meets the requirements of the NVQ, but also improves learners' understanding of the company's systems, procedures and working practices. Records of observation of actual performance are detailed and contain positive feedback to learners. Many learners comment on these positive comments from their assessor and feel motivated as a result. Learners cross-reference their evidence to the NVQ standards and work closely with assessors to complete an evidence matrix within their portfolio.

27. As recognised in the self-assessment report, retention rates are good. Of the

learners who started the programme since August 2001, 82 per cent have successfully achieved all the targets on their learning plan or are still in learning. All 49 learners who started the programme in 2002-03 are still in learning. Although the first learners only started the programme in 2001-02, early indications towards achievement are good. The achievement rate for learners who started in 2001-02 is currently 46 per cent, with a further 22 per cent still in learning.

28. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Internal verification is a continuous process and includes the observation of assessors and the verification of portfolios together with other sources of evidence. Sampling plans cover a range of learners and NVQ units. Regular meetings take place where assessment practices are discussed, improvement actions identified and relevant items followed up at subsequent meetings. Feedback to assessors is sufficiently detailed and appropriately recorded.

29. There is inadequate support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Three two-hour numeracy and literacy sessions are identified within the project plan, which has been agreed between IMS and employers, but these have yet to be provided for learners with additional learning needs. Eight learners with identified additional learning needs have been on programme for between four and nine months and have yet to receive these planned sessions. Some learners have indicated a wish to receive literacy and numeracy training and feel that their needs have not been fully met. No assessors are qualified to provide basic skills training.

30. Induction for learners is poor. There is no session plan used to effectively structure and plan induction. Too much information is presented to learners in too short a time. Forty-three slides are shown in approximately 30 minutes. Overall, the induction lasts for two and a half hours. It is not interactive. Learners' understanding and knowledge of issues, such as those relating to equal opportunities, are not sufficiently explored to stimulate, for example, group discussion. Learners who have experienced the induction within the past six weeks have poor recall of the process and feel that too much information has been provided. Learners' understanding of the key topics presented during induction are not reinforced on an ongoing basis throughout the programme.

31. Key skills to be covered during on-the-job observations are identified on assessment plans. Evidence relating to key skills is clearly recorded on observation records. However, the evidence is not then cross-referenced onto the key skills evidence record sheet within learners' portfolios.

32. Progress reviews are satisfactory. Any activity carried out by either the learner or the assessor since the previous review relating to health and safety and equal opportunities are recorded. However, opportunities are not taken to test and reinforce learners' understanding of these topics as part of the progress review process. Dates for the next scheduled review are not always entered onto the review sheet. Although feedback from supervisors is sought to inform reviews, they are not always involved in a three-way discussion with the assessor and learner to fully review progress made

towards previously agreed targets, and to agree future targets.

**Good Practice**

*An assessor has developed a 'To Do' list, which enhances the monitoring of learners' progress. The list is displayed within the company's workshop and positive symbols are used to identify progress made. Learners update the list, and as a result, are able to monitor their own progress.*

**Foundation programmes****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	31	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	112	3
Other government-funded provision	8	4

33. There are 151 learners on foundation programmes. There are 31 on New Deal 18-24, 51 on New Deal 25+ and 61 on work-based learning for adults. Learners follow a range of options including Gateway to Work, BET, SIBS, OLB and follow-through. Before joining a programme learners take a basic literacy and numeracy test. The results are used by Jobcentre Plus to determine learners' eligibility for a foundation programme. There are also eight learners on a two-week programme of other government-funded provision funded by Tees Valley LSC. Each programme includes weekly jobsearch training. Foundation training takes place at five sites across the country. Learners are referred to programmes by Jobcentre Plus or, in the case of learners on other government-funded provision, through personal recommendation and from other training providers. They spend between 16 and 30 hours in training each week. Most learners spend all their time in IMS's training centres, although a few learners attend work placements for on-the-job experience. Training is designed to develop learners' job readiness and to improve their career prospects. All learners receive an induction which varies from three hours to one day. During the course, learners' literacy and numeracy skills are improved to enable them to obtain and remain in employment. Their progress is reviewed monthly, or on short programmes, weekly. Those learners whose first language is not English receive support to help them improve their written and spoken English. Learners on SIBS and the BET programmes work toward qualifications in literacy and/or numeracy at level 1 or entry level, and those on OLB, work towards an English qualification for people who speak English as an additional language. Learners can attend additional training and gain accreditation in health and safety, food hygiene, basic first aid and manual handling.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

<b>New Deal 18-24</b>										
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	215		125		151				
Retained*	121	56	93	74	83	55				
Planned learning completed	121	56	93	74	83	55				
Gained job	38	18	55	44	65	43				
Still in training	31	14	0	0	0	0				

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

<b>New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults</b>										
<b>New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	358		288		44				
Retained*	225	63	195	68	34	77				
Planned learning completed	176	49	136	47	29	66				
Gained job	45	13	45	16	7	16				
Still in training	112	31	0	0	0	0				

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

<b>Other government-funded provision</b>										
	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	68								
Retained	63	93								
Planned learning completed	0	0								
Gained job	0	0								
Still in training	8	12								

## **STRENGTHS**

- good accommodation
- updated and thorough individual learning plans
- good support for learners
- good Gateway to Work programme

## **WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate resources
- uninspiring teaching
- low employment rate in some programmes
- poorly planned project in one centre

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better development of keyboarding skills
- better dyslexia support for learners

34. Accommodation is of good quality. The comfortable learning environments are referred to in the self-assessment report as a strength. The company's training centres are suites of rooms in buildings that are occupied by several organisations. The rooms are pleasant and well furnished. The training areas consist of large rooms that are divided by portable screens. Learners benefit from this comfortable and professional environment, and from trainers being able to make good use of available space by modifying the layouts to suit class sizes and the type of activity being carried out. While most sessions take place in areas without interference from adjacent areas, noise levels do sometimes rise from nearby classes or offices. Lifts are available for use at some centres for learners with restricted mobility. No applications have yet been received from wheelchair users. Some communal areas are less welcoming than the training rooms.

35. Recently introduced learning plans are well designed and appropriately completed. About half of the class have the new plans. They give personal details, including learners' emergency contact numbers. Plans include both long- and medium-term targets as well as any qualifications for which learners are working. There is space to record learners' learning and jobsearch activities. In many cases, learners complete their own plans and their comments are reviewed and signed by their tutors. Ongoing review documents now form part of the individual learning plan and this encourages continual updating of the plan to reflect progress made. Learners have a good

knowledge and understanding of these plans and are aware of the progress they are making. A weakness in the self-assessment report relates to individual learning plans not being sufficiently specific to individual learners, and inspectors found that some learners had insufficient knowledge of their learning targets and what their plans contain.

36. Support for learners is good. They appreciate the high level of support given by tutors. This helps to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Tutors are aware of learners' barriers to learning. Their encouragement helps learners to stay on programme when they may otherwise leave. Most learners attend courses at IMS as a result of mandatory referral from Jobcentre Plus. Although this includes some learners who are unsuitable because of their qualifications or experience, IMS's continued support for these learners enables some to still gain value from the programme. IMS provides good support for learners to help them start their training. For example, at one centre, IMS's staff attend the local job centres for the last few minutes of clients' interviews to meet the learners and help them overcome their apprehension over starting their training programme. Following this, staff keep in touch with the client by telephone until they start their training to help retain their commitment to starting the programme. IMS offers useful incentives to learners to encourage passing significant milestones such as starting training, completing their programme or their qualification aims, and in one programme, provision of a personal computer if the client finds and keeps a job. There is good individual jobsearch support for many learners. Some of the staff and volunteers are either former learners or people with personal experience of unemployment and they understand the learners' difficulties. IMS has developed a personal skills profile in an attempt to help learners understand themselves better, and identify personal skills which need to improve to equip them for the world of work. Although this is not yet established across all programmes, there are signs it is helping staff and learners to more clearly understand the importance of relevant personal skills to successful completion of programmes. In one centre, success is celebrated by awarding weekly certificates for learners' achievements. Although testing for characteristics of dyslexia is carried out, there is no specialist dyslexia support available to learners.

37. The Gateway to Work programme is good. Gateway to Work programmes are offered at two centres. These are well planned and provided. They include jobsearch, communication, interview techniques and telephone skills. Learning sessions are varied and interesting with effective use of role-play and individual presentations. Lessons are regularly evaluated, taking into account feedback from clients and self-evaluation by tutors. Learners receive a high standard of advice and guidance, and some receive practical support such as help with lunch costs. Learners often return for additional guidance after they have completed their programme. Ideas and good practice are shared between the two centres offering the programme.

38. Learning resources are inadequate. Tutors use a range of worksheets and learner-centred handouts, but their over-use frustrates some learners. Some of the worksheets are insufficiently different to meet individual learners' needs. There is a shortage of suitable textbooks. While some centres have adequate computer facilities, in Bradford, with only three computers for over 70 learners, there is too little availability to

adequately develop learners' IT skills. Learners at this centre do use computers for jobsearch activities, but most have had little or no training in computer use. There are no interactive CDs to help develop learners' skills in English and mathematics, and a lack of equipment such as video and audio tapes and playback facilities, or overhead projectors. Staff do not have enough understanding of how to access specialist IT equipment for learners with disabilities, such as visual impairment. Some learners do use computers effectively, but opportunities are not taken to develop their keyboarding skills to enable them to input information more quickly and accurately.

39. There is some uninspiring and unimaginative teaching. Most of the teaching staff have not yet gained qualifications in either teaching or in supporting learners' literacy and numeracy needs. They have insufficient awareness of teaching methods appropriate for use with foundation programme learners. The needs of individual learners are not met by setting work graded according to ability. In some sessions, the vocational focus is poor. In programmes designed to overcome language barriers, too little time is spent on developing learners' oral skills where their first language is not English. Although learners do have individual learning plans, sometimes sufficient emphasis is not placed on meeting the targets identified. Learning sessions are planned on an eight-weekly cycle which results in learners on longer programmes repeating lessons. BET and OLB do not have enough tutors and this reduces the amount of individual attention learners receive. Tutors have little time for preparation, marking, and reviewing learners' progress. Some learners' work is poorly presented in their ring binders. They are aware of this and often apologise for the state of their work.

40. There are low numbers of learners gaining employment in some programmes. For example, the proportion of starters going into employment from New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults is only 16 per cent each year for the two years 2000 to 2002, and 13 per cent for 2002-03 with a further 31 per cent still in learning. The proportion gaining employment following the SIBS programme is also low at around 12 per cent of those who started, with a further 16 per cent still in learning. Just over half the leavers from this programme have achieved their qualification aims. However, in 2000-01 and 2001-02, the proportion of learners gaining employment was good overall for New Deal 18-24 at over 40 per cent. The proportion getting jobs following Gateway to Work has improved significantly, and in 2001-02, was 46 per cent. Although the 2002-03 year was still incomplete at the time of inspection, early indications suggest a decline from this level. IMS has recognised the need to improve the number of jobs gained from its programmes, and has engaged a specialist member of staff to develop links with employers. Most of the work so far has been in developing links for clients on a new follow-through programme. On most other programmes, involvement of employers is poor. They are not involved in planning or provision to help inform learners of job or career opportunities. Insufficient account is taken of learners' work aspirations or of the need for short work placements to develop personal and organisational skills. Pressure of work in training centres prevents tutors from visiting employers to develop suitable links with them.

41. A project in one centre is poorly planned. This other government-funded provision

is aimed at hard-to-reach and socially disadvantaged people who are not accessing mainstream training and employment provision. It aims to provide an innovative and motivational approach to attracting local residents into mainstream training. However, learners are required to complete key skills portfolios at level 2 in IT, communication and application of number by the end of a two-week programme. This is an unrealistic expectation. There is no systematic initial assessment to ascertain learners' suitability for the programme. Although learners are not prepared for key skills' tests, they believe they will obtain the qualification as a result of their portfolio evidence. IMS has failed to clarify contractual requirements with the LSC and the programme is poorly managed and provided. There are not enough safeguards to ensure accurate assessment and internal verification of learners' work, and competence is accredited on the basis of poor-quality evidence. The retention rate on the current programme is low. From eight learners who started, only four continued into the second week.

#### **Good Practice**

*There are numerous inspirational quotes around training rooms. Learners who are leaving programmes are asked to research on the Internet for an inspirational quote that they can leave for other learners. These are saved and placed on a hall-of-fame record sheet with a learner's photo to help motivate others.*

#### **Poor Practice**

*In one learning session, a learner was unable to use the maps provided to plan a route because of a visual impairment. Although enlarged maps would have enabled him to participate fully in the lesson, these were not available and no alternative activity was given to him. He spent a large part of the session unable to further his learning.*