

REINSPECTION REPORT

KITA Limited Reinspection

04 September 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. 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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

SUMMARY

The provider

KITA Limited is a registered not-for-profit training organisation, based in Sittingbourne, Kent. It has one training centre which is also the company's head office. KITA Limited provides work-based learning programmes to young people in engineering, business administration, information and communications technology, customer services and call handling. There are currently 153 learners of whom 49 are on engineering programmes, 71 are on business administration programmes, six are on information and communication technology programmes and 27 are on customer service and call handling programmes. KITA Limited also provides training courses and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) to adults who are funded by their employers, the European Social Fund or other projects.

Overall judgement

The ALI's inspection in February 2002 found that the training for learners on engineering programmes was good, while training on business administration and information and communications technology programmes was satisfactory. All aspects of leadership and management of the organisation were satisfactory. However, the training in customer service and call handling was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, the training in customer service and call handling was found to be satisfactory.

Grades awarded

	Inspection	Reinspection
Retailing, customer service & transportation	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

THE REINSPECTION

1. Two inspectors spent a total of five days reinspecting retailing, customer service and transportation. The lead inspector carried out a one-day visit in May 2003, and there was a final visit by two inspectors in September 2003. Inspectors interviewed nine learners in their workplaces. Six interviews were carried out with KITA Limited's (KITA's) staff. Inspectors examined 11 learners' files and eight portfolios of evidence. They studied a wide range of other documentary evidence and reviewed data about learners' progression and achievement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	27	3

2. Twenty-two learners are working towards advanced modern apprenticeships and five are working towards foundation modern apprenticeships. Of these, 16 are working towards customer service qualifications and 11 are working towards call handling operations. Learners are employed with 10 different local businesses. Induction is carried out in the workplace for small groups of learners or individually by KITA's assessors. Most learners receive training from their employers. Additional key skills workshops are provided at KITA's training centre in Sittingbourne. Assessors visit learners every four to six weeks to carry out assessments and action-planning. There are four qualified assessors, two of whom work part time. Three of these assessors are qualified as internal verifiers. There is also an internal verifier. One employer has its own work-based assessor.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good range of evidence in learners' portfolios

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for key skills tests
- insufficient focus on learners' progress towards achievement of the NVQ

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better planning of internal verification
- more consistent recording of information in learners' files

3. There is good support for learners by assessors and employers. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report and was recognised at the original inspection. Assessors are friendly and approachable and have established good links with employers. Learners are visited every four to six weeks and more frequently when required. Learners agree effective action plans with their assessors so they have a clear understanding of what they are required to achieve between visits. Action plans are

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clearly structured and detail evidence as well as the unit and elements that the learners are working towards, together with appropriate timescales. Employers provide effective training to support learners in developing the skills necessary for their qualifications. Assessors provide good additional on-the-job training as required. Assessors are sympathetic to workplace demands and are flexible in their approach. In between assessors' visits, learners can contact their assessor by telephone or e-mail. If their assessor is not available, another member of KITA's staff is always willing to help and provide support.

4. Evidence in learners' portfolios is good. The range of evidence is diverse. Good use is made of witness testimonies, product evidence and observations by assessors. KITA has continued to build on this strength since the original inspection. Key skills are now introduced at the beginning of the training programmes. Good use is made of NVQ evidence and other work-based evidence for the key skills qualification. Portfolios are neat and carefully laid out. Learners have a good understanding of the qualifications that they are working towards and they cross-reference their own evidence to the NVQ criteria under guidance from their assessor.

5. Following the original inspection, KITA reviewed the retention rates for learners working towards call handling qualifications. Thirty per cent of learners had been made redundant and another 30 per cent had left to follow alternative options. At the end of 2002, KITA stopped offering the call handling operations training programme to new companies, but continues to work with current learners who are employed by three companies. Retention rates for learners working towards customer service qualifications have started to improve and of the 10 learners who joined the training programme since August 2002, one has completed the foundation modern apprenticeship and the other nine are still in learning.

6. At the time of the original inspection, no learners had completed the full modern apprenticeship framework. Since then, one learner has completed the call handling advanced modern apprenticeship, eight learners have completed the customer service advanced modern apprenticeship and three have completed the customer service foundation modern apprenticeship. Overall achievement rates for the advanced modern apprenticeship framework remains poor at approximately 30 per cent of learners. Achievement rates for the NVQ are higher, with approximately 50 per cent of learners achieving an NVQ. Many learners complete their key skills portfolios but fail to pass the key skills tests and do not achieve the full modern apprenticeship framework. Several learners working towards the customer service advanced modern apprenticeship have failed the communication key skills test at level 3. There is no specific feedback from the awarding body to indicate why these learners have failed. KITA, on behalf of an employer, has asked the awarding body for information about why learners have failed the tests so that appropriate training can be provided. KITA are still waiting for information from the awarding body.

7. Learners complete an initial assessment, which is related to literacy and numeracy skills. The results of the initial assessment and any additional support needs are not

always recorded in individual learning plans. Currently no learners are identified as requiring additional support with their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners are provided with practise test papers before taking the formal key skills tests. Some learners are not fully briefed or supported when they first try the practise tests and are left to complete them in their own time. There is no record of the results of practise tests or of any training given to support learners' needs. KITA offers key skills workshops to learners. However, many employers are unwilling to give the learners time off work to attend these workshops. There has been no analysis of achievement rates to monitor the effectiveness of the key skill workshops.

8. Monitoring and management of learners' progress is weak. Some learners are making slow progress as they have been on the training programme for over a year without achieving any units. There are insufficient specific targets set for different aspects of the modern apprenticeship framework. Individual learning plans do not clearly record the optional units or enhancements that learners are working towards or when they are expected to achieve them. One learner who has been on the training programme for several months has not yet agreed what optional units she will work towards. Learner's overall progress and achievement of elements and units is not routinely discussed or recorded during progress review meetings. Learners have a summary sheet at the front of their portfolios to record progress. However this information is not recorded in a central system for managers to monitor learners' progress. A new system is being designed for this, but has not been implemented.

9. Internal verifiers are not closely planning the sampling process. Assessors are required to request an observation by the internal verifiers and to submit portfolios to the verifiers for interim verification. There is no overall plan for when learners' portfolios will be internally verified. One learner's portfolio has not been verified after 14 months on the training programme although the company does specify that all portfolios will be sampled three times.

10. Information in learners' files is not recorded consistently. The results of the initial assessment and the individual support needed by learners for their literacy and numeracy skills and key skills are not routinely recorded on the individual learning plans. Attendance at key skills workshops is not recorded. Progress review forms sometimes contain bland statements about progress, such as a description of the evidence produced.