

REINSPECTION REPORT

Charter Training Services Ltd Reinspection

19 December 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning 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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

Charter Training Services Ltd Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	3
Key findings	3

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	7
Equality of opportunity	9
Quality assurance	10
Business administration, management & professional	12
Information & communications technology	15
Retailing, customer service & transportation	17

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Charter Training Services (CTS) is a privately owned company established in 1989. CTS provides training at its head office in Macclesfield and from seven other sites in Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire. It has contracts with Staffordshire and Cheshire and Warrington local Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) to provide work-based learning for young people on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in business administration, management and professional, customer service and transportation, retailing and warehousing, and information and communications technology (ICT). The number of learners on modern apprenticeships in ICT has fallen since the previous inspection.
2. In addition, CTS has contracts with Jobcentre Plus to provide a range of programmes for unemployed young people and adults. The main purpose of these programmes is to help learners gain qualifications and suitable employment in business administration and ICT.
3. CTS is owned and managed by two directors and employs 52 staff. There is a senior management team of nine people including the two directors. These include managers with overall responsibility for business development, human resources and quality assurance. Each of the seven training centres is managed by an assistant manager. A team of 10 assessors visits learners on work placements.
4. The population of the Northwest and Midlands regions is approximately 7.5 million. There is considerable variation in employment rates and growth industries in the geographical areas where CTS operates.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

5. There are currently 131 learners on learning programmes in business administration at level 2 and level 3 and management and professional training at level 3. There are 42 advanced modern apprentices and 74 foundation modern apprentices. There are 15 learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes. Most are on the longer occupational training (LOT) 26-week programme. No learners are identified as having additional learning or social needs. Most of the modern apprentices are employed. Learners are recruited through direct contact and marketing with employers or through Connexions. Learners can start their programme at any time of the year. The recruitment process includes an initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and other occupational skills. Employed learners have an individual induction at their workplace. Learners do not regularly attend the training centre, but occasional occupational-specific training is given on topics such as accounting. Key skills training and assessment are carried out as an integral part of the training for a technical certificate. Employed learners receive off-the-job training in the

CHARTER TRAINING SERVICES LTD REINSPECTION

workplace through individual coaching. Assessors visit learners in the workplace at least monthly to carry out workplace assessments, action-planning, portfolio development and progress reviews.

Information & communications technology

6. There are 28 learners taking qualifications or following programmes of study in ICT. There is one advanced modern apprentice and one foundation modern apprentice. There are 26 learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes. There is one client on New Deal 18-24. Most learners are on LOT programmes, with smaller numbers on short job focused training, New Deal 25+ Routeway, education and training opportunities, or full-time education and training, and are spread throughout the training centre locations. Learners work towards nationally recognised basic computer literacy qualifications as well as national vocational qualifications (NVQs), with some also taking extra qualifications in accounting. They are generally referred to the provider by Jobcentre Plus and may start their programme at any time in the year. Many learners have had no previous ICT experience before starting their programmes. They attend the training centres on a daily basis, take part in jobsearch activities such as jobclubs, and spend time on curriculum vitae preparation, as well as pursuing their ICT training. Learners take part in simulated interviews. Reviews of progress take place weekly in the first month and once a month thereafter.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

7. There are 60 learners taking qualifications in retailing, customer service and warehousing. Of these, 24 are advanced modern apprentices and 36 are foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. All learners are employed. All training is carried out in the workplace. Initial assessment and induction is carried out by the assessors who visit learners once every four weeks to carry out background knowledge training, key skills training and assessment, assessments and progress reviews.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	28
Number of learner interviews	48
Number of staff interviews	50
Number of employer interviews	9
Number of subcontractor interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	11
Number of visits	9

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. At the previous inspection, leadership and management, and quality assurance were unsatisfactory, and equality of opportunity was satisfactory. Business administration, management and professional, and retailing, customer service and transportation were

also unsatisfactory, and ICT was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process all aspects of provision were judged satisfactory or better, apart from retailing, customer service and transportation, which was still unsatisfactory. CTS has been referred to its funding body for emergency action.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

	Inspection	Reinspection
Leadership and management	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	3	3
Quality assurance	4	3

	Inspection	Reinspection
Business administration, management & professional	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3
New Deal 25+	4	3

	Inspection	Reinspection
Information & communications technology	3	2
Contributory grades:		
New Deal 25+	3	2

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

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

9. In business administration, management and professional, achievement rates are satisfactory and improving for both work-based learning and Jobcentre Plus programmes. Poor achievement rates were identified as a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. For ICT learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes, job outcomes are satisfactory and improving.

10. In retailing, customer service and transportation, action has been taken to improve the poor achievement rates that were identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. This action is only just beginning to impact on the learners, and achievement rates remain unsatisfactory.

Quality of education and training

11. **The assessment and progress review process for business administration, management and professional is good.** Learners are achieving units more quickly than at the time of the previous inspection. A new unit monitoring system helps learners understand their progress. There is good development of skills by learners. Work-based learners are achieving NVQ units more quickly and learners demonstrate good jobsearch and employment-related skills, such as petty cash management and reception skills.

12. **Resources are good for business administration, management and professional learners.** They have access to comfortable and spacious working areas in the centres, to computers with internet connections, and to good learning packs.

13. **In ICT, assessment and progress reviews are effective.** Target-setting, and the use of individual learning plans and progress reviews are now good. **There is a good training environment.** Working areas in the training centres are well laid out with good access to learning materials, the internet and refreshment facilities. **There is good support from supervisors in the training centres for jobsearch activities.**

14. **In retailing, customer service and transportation, there is good on-the-job training.** The overall planning of individual learning has improved and is now satisfactory. Individual learning plans and progress reviews are now satisfactory. Learners are making poor progress towards the achievement of their qualifications and key skills. Learning materials are poor for background knowledge training.

Leadership and management

15. **Internal communications are good.** This was already a strength in the previous inspection report and has been further improved. The training centres are located across a very wide geographical area, so that arrangements for ensuring a good flow of information are particularly important. There are formal meeting arrangements lead to effective decision-making. In addition, there is much good informal communication and teamwork.

16. **The company has developed good audit arrangements** to check compliance with agreed procedures. These arrangements are part of a comprehensive new quality assurance system covering all main aspects of the company's operations.

17. **There is good networking with local community groups.** There is effective contact with a wide range of groups and strong links with local advice and guidance networks. These links have helped to increase the staff's awareness of the needs of potential learners, raise the profile of CTS's provision in the wider community and widen

participation of learners in training.

18. **There is good support for learners with additional needs.** CTS has responded well to the individual needs of learners to help them progress. For example, special arrangements have been made for home visits, such as the use of an interpreter and the provision of IT equipment for home use.

19. Internal verification was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Revised documentation has been introduced to improve effectiveness. Good progress has been made in the development of the quality assurance system.

20. **Business-planning is inadequate.** Although the strategic plan and the three-year development plan outline the company's priorities well, the development plan and training centre plans are not sufficiently detailed to be used as effective working documents.

21. **There has been insufficient improvement in retailing and transportation training.** The revised organisational structure, the appointment of new staff and the new quality assurance system have brought about improvements in all three areas of learning. These have not yet had sufficient impact on retailing and transportation, and this area remains unsatisfactory.

22. **CTS does not make good use of equal opportunities data.** Managers do not routinely analyse the gender, ethnicity, disability, age or postcodes of learners or set targets to widen participation and achievement of learners.

23. **CTS does not adequately monitor equal opportunities with learners and employers.** Learners are asked about equal opportunities at their progress reviews but the discussion is not sufficiently detailed. Assessors do not have a thorough understanding of equality of opportunity issues. Equal opportunities is not regularly checked or reinforced with employers. Some equal opportunities training has been provided for staff.

24. **Only two of the seven training centres are accessible to learners with mobility difficulties.** Managers are aware of recent legislation and are currently reviewing the options for each of their training centres. Although only 20 per cent of learners are based in the training centres, there are plans to increase this proportion.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good internal communications
- good audit procedures
- good networking with local community groups
- good support for learners with additional needs

Weaknesses

- inadequate business-planning
- insufficient improvement in retailing training
- ineffective use of equal opportunities data
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities with learners and employers
- poor access to most training centres inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- effective progress reviews and assessment process
- good and improving skills development
- good learning resources

Weaknesses

- ineffective initial assessment
- poor use of individual learning plans

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good assessment and progress review processes
- good training environment
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses were identified

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- good on-the-job training

Weaknesses

- poor progress by learners
- poor learning resources

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

Strengths

- good internal communications
- good audit procedures
- good networking with local community groups
- good support for learners with additional needs

Weaknesses

- inadequate business-planning
- insufficient improvement in retailing training
- ineffective use of equal opportunities data
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities with learners and employers
- poor access to most training centres inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties

25. Internal communication is good. This was identified as a strength at the previous inspection and in the self-assessment report and has been further improved. The training centres are located across a very wide geographical area and the company ensures that information is shared well. There are regular meetings that are formally convened and recorded, where effective decisions are made and actions agreed. These include senior management meetings, operational meetings bringing together heads of centres, and other meetings between senior managers and individual staff. Actions agreed at operational meetings are particularly well monitored. There is much good informal communication and teamworking. The company makes regular use of e-mail to set up meetings and maintain contact with assessors. It has recently launched a website to further improve communications with the training centres. A CD-ROM sent to all the training centres ensures that the latest version of the quality assurance documentation and other key documents are available to staff.

26. The company has changed its organisational structure since the previous inspection to improve management. For example, responsibility for quality assurance and internal verification are now more clearly defined. New staff have recently been appointed to lead developments in key operational areas such as human resources and literacy and numeracy skills. These changes are already leading to improvements, but it is too early to assess the full impact of the new appointments.

27. There is satisfactory use of target-setting to support improvement for some operational areas. For example, managers sets monthly targets with each assessor for

CHARTER TRAINING SERVICES LTD REINSPECTION

the completion of NVQ assessments. These are routinely monitored. A senior manager has agreed a strategy, which includes specific targets, with each training centre head to promote the company's services.

28. Staff appraisal is satisfactory. An annual cycle of staff appraisals is carried out by managers. Managers identify development needs with individual staff and take responsibility for ensuring that these are met. The outcomes of appraisal are not currently used to develop an annual staff development plan.

29. Staff development is satisfactory. For example, in-house events have been organised on priority areas for development such as key skills and equal opportunities. An external consultant has supported the development of the progress review process. A recently appointed human resources manager has given good support to individual staff in training centres on developing marketing strategies.

30. Management of resources is satisfactory. There is a strategy to update equipment when required. Arrangements for approving expenditure are clear. The quality of the training environment is satisfactory. There are some weak learning resources in retailing and transportation.

31. Although arrangements are satisfactory for meeting the literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners, there is no written strategy or policy on literacy, numeracy and language support to guide staff or learners. Learners identified with literacy and numeracy needs are given support by the recently appointed basic skills co-ordinator. There is no support for people who speak English as an additional language. There are good links with a local guidance network for referral to other specialist sources for help, such as the local college. CTS has plans to make the national tests in literacy and numeracy available to learners.

32. Business-planning, a weakness identified at the previous inspection and in the self-assessment report, is inadequate. Although the strategic plan and the three-year development plan outline the company's priorities well, the development plan does not contain sufficient detail to be used as an effective working document. For example, it does not include specific actions or measurable targets. There are plans for each training centre drawn up by a senior manager with the training centre managers. These take good account of local circumstances, but do not include the detail needed for efficient planning and monitoring. Although business-planning is inadequate, there have been significant improvements. In particular, there is a clear and detailed one-year development plan drawn up to tackle the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Senior managers have made effective use of this plan to implement and monitor improvements.

33. The management information systems are adequate to meet the company's needs. However, it is difficult for staff to obtain reliable information from the systems. The company has not routinely analysed data by area of learning. CTS has identified the need to resolve these problems.

34. There has been insufficient improvement in retailing and transportation training. Although the revised organisational structure, the appointment of new staff and the new quality assurance system have brought about improvements in all three areas of learning, these have not yet had sufficient impact on retailing and transportation and this area remains unsatisfactory.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

35. There is good networking between the training centres and local community groups. This was a strength identified in the self-assessment report and at the previous inspection. The wide range of groups include lone parents, retired workers, people with disabilities, community centres, learning partnerships, family centres and business agencies. Some training centres have strong links with local advice and guidance networks and staff regularly attend their meetings. Some training centres are frequently involved in local events such as adult learners week and disability awareness days. These links have helped to increase the awareness of staff of the needs of potential learners and to raise the profile of the provider's service in the wider community. The links are helping to widen participation of learners on the Jobcentre Plus programmes.

36. There are many examples of good support for learners with additional needs. This was identified as a strength at the previous inspection. A disabled learner was unable to travel to a training centre and CTS arranged for an assessor to visit him in his home. Another learner with a speech impairment had an interpreter for an NVQ unit on using a telephone. A learner was provided with a laptop computer to complete work at home. One learner was unable to use a computer because it conflicted with his religious beliefs. CTS helped the learner complete his work manually, including experiencing a manual stock control system. One learner had to move abroad before completing their qualification and CTS negotiated with the awarding body to enable the learner to complete the unit. CTS provides good individual tutorial support to learners. CTS regularly celebrates the success of learners through an annual presentation evening and a quarterly newsletter.

37. CTS has a clear equal opportunities policy and strategy which takes account of current legislation. A recently appointed equal opportunities officer has started to review the annual action plan. Some actions have missed their target dates such as developing an action plan for the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Equal opportunities is a regular item on management meetings. Most staff have had training in equal opportunities and more recently have used a two hour e-learning package to raise awareness and check understanding. Each training centre has a file of information about equal opportunities and this is frequently updated. Marketing materials show images of a wide range of learners in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. There is a complaints and grievance procedure and a record of complaints over the past three years, but it is unclear how much progress has been made in tackling each complaint.

38. CTS does not make effective use of equal opportunities data. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Managers do not routinely analyse the gender, ethnicity, disability or age of learners or set targets to widen participation and

CHARTER TRAINING SERVICES LTD REINSPECTION

achievement. An equal opportunities summary of learners in training and those who had left the programmes over the past 12 months was recently produced. Twenty per cent of learners are referred to CTS from Connexions, but there is no negotiation with the personal advisers to target specific types of learners and increase the inclusivity of the training.

39. CTS does not adequately monitor equal opportunities with learners and employers. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are asked about equal opportunities at their progress reviews but the discussion is not sufficiently detailed. A set of questions and discussion topics about equal opportunities was introduced during the previous inspection. However, assessors do not have a thorough understanding of equality of opportunity to be able to use the questions effectively. Equal opportunities is not regularly checked or reinforced with employers.

40. Only two of the seven training centres are accessible to learners with mobility difficulties and have appropriate lavatory facilities. Two training centres have access to alternative ground floor accommodation when necessary, but the remaining four training centres are not fully accessible. Most learners spend most of their time in the workplace. Twenty per cent of learners are based in the training centres and there are plans to increase this number. The management team are aware of the revised Disability Discrimination Act 1995 legislation which requires education providers to make reasonable adjustments to their buildings by 2004. They are currently reviewing the options for each of their training centres. CTS identified this weakness in its self-assessment report.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

41. The company has developed good audit arrangements to check compliance with agreed procedures. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. These arrangements are part of a comprehensive new quality assurance system covering all main aspects of company operations. Staff evaluate the new procedures and contribute to their development. The self-assessment report identifies this as a strength.

42. The audit arrangements include monthly visits to training centres by the standards co-ordinator to monitor compliance with agreed procedures, such as the completion of individual learning plans and the frequency and content of progress reviews. These visits are now an established part of the quality assurance system. The standards co-ordinator produces summary reports of these visits for senior managers to monitor progress towards greater consistency of practice. Effective action is taken by managers when procedures are not followed.

43. The quality assurance arrangements include a thorough system of observation which cover all aspects of training and assessment. A schedule has been drawn up to ensure that all staff are observed at least three times a year over a range of activities, and that new staff are observed soon after appointment. This system is now established and most staff have been observed at least once. The standards co-ordinator and the assessment co-ordinator give clear and consistent feedback against a range of criteria.

44. Internal verification was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Revised documents have been introduced to improve effectiveness. There is a suitable approach to sampling the decisions of all assessors and adequate feedback is given to them. There is good communication about issues arising from external verifiers' visits and changes made by awarding bodies.

45. Good progress has been made in the development of the quality assurance system since the previous inspection. This was a key weakness in the previous inspection report. The audit arrangements have improved compliance with the company's procedures and this has had an impact on two of the three areas of learning. It has rectified some, but not all, the weaknesses in retailing and transportation.

46. The quality assurance system and the use of documents within it places an emphasis on compliance with procedures. This has been effective in improving learning in one occupational area to a good standard and in another to a satisfactory level. The system does not yet clearly identify how satisfactory performance can be further improved.

47. Self-assessment is part of the new annual quality assurance cycle and is satisfactory. The latest self-assessment report, published in December, clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses and draws on the criteria of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Staff have contributed to the self-assessment report through the use of two questionnaires. Inspectors agreed with the grades awarded and with many of the strengths and weaknesses.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	116	3
New Deal 25+	15	3

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

Strengths

- effective progress reviews and assessment process
- good and improving skills development
- good learning resources

Weaknesses

- ineffective initial assessment
- poor use of individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

48. Retention and achievement rates in work-based learning are satisfactory. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Retention rates for work-based learning for previous years have been low. Retention rates for 2003-04 for advanced modern apprentices is 100 per cent and for foundation modern apprentices is 92 per cent. Recruitment numbers for this period have been low. For those learners recruited in 2002-03, 66 per cent of the advanced modern apprentices and 64 per cent of the foundation modern apprentices are still in learning.

49. Achievement rates for learners from previous years are improving with the achievement of 34 frameworks for advanced modern apprentices, and 22 for foundation modern apprentices since the previous inspection. Jobcentre Plus retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Achievement measured by job outcomes is improving.

Quality of education and training

50. Progress reviews and the assessment processes are good. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Learners are visited at least monthly and are achieving units well. Assessors meet frequently and regularly with learners. The planning of collecting evidence for NVQ units by the assessor and the learner is particularly thorough and is clearly recorded. Prompt dates for presenting this evidence are

identified on the assessment plan. Progress is checked at the next review. These visits are also used to review work-based evidence and to carry out assessment observations of learners' work tasks. Pastoral support is also provided. Assessors are available to learners through telephone contact or by e-mail. There is a new recording system to support this review and assessment process. There is a three-part document which records the activities that have taken place and the targets set for the next learning period. An assessment and learning plan contains further details of training requirements or the planned assessment activity. There is a new unit achievement monitoring system in place. This helps the learner understand the progress that is being made. Since the introduction of these new processes most learners are making good progress. Most employers are briefed on the outcome of these visits and are invited to make comments on the progress and targets. However, the recording of learners' progress and review of performance is not adequate. Assessors record what learners have accomplished but not the rate of progress. Not enough comment is made on personal development, such as improving self-confidence.

51. Learners are showing good and improving skills development. They are achieving NVQ units more quickly. Learners demonstrate good reception skills and produce well-presented minutes of meetings. They manage petty cash accounts and monitor and receive stock at the Crewe training centre. Learners have good IT skills and use spreadsheets well. Some are progressing appropriately on computerised bookkeeping. Learners have good word-processing skills, but do not use databases effectively. They work effectively with each other. The job of one learner is to be considered for regrading following the work she produced on her learning programme. Learners are involved in a wide range of activities including accounts, producing complex word-processed documents such as reports including data tables and graphs. Some learners have made sufficient progress in their companies to progress to more complex roles.

52. Learning resources are good. There is adequate space for learners to work individually or in small groups. They have adequate access to computers, most with internet connection. There is a small, well furnished training room, which is also used for progress reviews. Learners receive good learning packs to help them improve their job-seeking skills. They are able to use the office and business functions of the Crewe training centre to develop their work skills and collect evidence towards their NVQ. There are adequate book resources to supplement their learning. However, learners are not able to carry out additional work experience outside the training centre.

53. Learners on work-based business administration programmes do not routinely attend off-the-job training at the training centres, but are provided with good paper-based resources, information guides and books to help them develop the background knowledge required for them to achieve their frameworks. Where the learners can access the training centres they are able to achieve nationally recognised IT and other qualifications through a combination of personal study and testing at the training centre. One learner has recently attended an accounting training programme. Another learner has been provided with a laptop computer. There are sufficient qualified and experienced staff. Developments have taken place to prepare for the introduction of the technical certificates in business administration and three learners have already achieved

these.

54. Guidance and support is satisfactory. Assessors work well with learners and rectify adequately any identified problems. At the end of their programmes learners are provided with guidance and support on progressing to the next level in learning. One learner has recently progressed to NVQ level 4 in business administration.

55. Induction is satisfactory. A new induction programme has been introduced to learners who have started their programmes in 2003. This runs over an eight-week period during which learners are supported by visits every two weeks. This provides more intensive short information and planning sessions. During this period, learners are introduced to the modern apprenticeship framework and receive information on equality of opportunity and health and safety. This ensures learners are fully committed to the programme and are already achieving units towards their qualifications when they start their programmes.

56. Initial assessment is inadequate. This was not identified in their self-assessment report. Although information drawn from initial assessment is used for the individual learning plans, not all learners are assessed. Information from initial assessment in the Gateway phase is not used for learners to plan learning. Learners are routinely entered for full NVQs and this is not always appropriate. There are inconsistencies in the way job audits are used to aid the planning of the programme. There is no assessment of learners' aptitude for a career in business administration.

57. Use of individual learning plans is poor. Some learners do not fully understand the purpose of this document and some do not have an individual learning plan in their files. Targets for learners are not sufficiently specific. For example, they do not relate to the occupational sector in which learners are keen to work. Target completion dates for qualifications are not routinely entered. Learners do not have a clear understanding of the phasing of planned work over the whole framework. These plans are not routinely updated, following changes or when additional units have been identified. This document is not used to plan learning or progression.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New documents have been introduced effectively to improve assessment. Most assessors are using these documents and procedures consistently. There is good progress in the use of a booklet to cover employers' rights and responsibilities, and in the planning of technical certificates. Meetings of assessors help improve understanding and consistency of assessment methods and standards. However, records of these meetings do not cover scheme planning, such as guidance on the sequencing of units and links with key skills.

Information & communications technology**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 25+	28	2

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

Strengths

- good assessment and progress review processes
- good training environment
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses were identified

Achievement and standards

59. Achievement rates are satisfactory. Of the 43 starters, 19 have gained jobs and 24 are still in learning. The number of learners starting on this programme is lower than in previous years. The courses give learners a clear route for progression to further qualifications. There are not enough learners on New Deal 18-24 and modern apprenticeship programmes to make any judgement on achievement. Numbers of starters on all ICT programmes are falling.

Quality of education and training

60. The assessment and progress review processes are good. Assessment requirements are clearly set out and achievements signed off. Learners have a good understanding of the assessment process. They keep copies of their assessment documents and updates to their individual learning plans. This enables them to see how far they have progressed and what remains to be completed. There is good and appropriate target-setting and planning for short-, medium- and long-term goals. Progress reviews and assessment take place regularly, but are not sufficiently evaluative. Only the completion of targets and units, and setting out the next target or task are recorded.

61. The training environment is good. Learners have good access to resources including books, telephones, fax machines, the internet, specialist magazines and newspapers. They can also get extra resources as required. The working areas in the training centres are well laid out, warm and well lit, with access to kitchen facilities. Learners are provided with good areas of table space for working on written and other tasks. Discipline is good. Staff carry out most business phone calls and other tasks in close proximity with the learners, allowing them to observe real activities. Learners have good

CHARTER TRAINING SERVICES LTD REINSPECTION

access to computers on most occasions. There is a booking system in use for busy periods.

62. Learner support is good. Learners have good access to help and support from staff at the training centres. There is good support for learners in their jobsearch activities. Daily papers and lists of current job vacancies are available. Job clubs are used effectively to discuss health and safety, and equality of opportunity issues and to provide information on employment. Guest speakers from a variety of organisations, ranging from voluntary and disabled groups to business people, provide information on workplace issues. They also provide information on possible work experience or work placements. Staff are appropriately qualified to provide and support the programmes. Learners are given good individual support. For example, one client with excellent qualifications but poor self-confidence, was placed successfully in a company and has recently been given a permanent position.

63. The computers in use are adequate to meet the present training needs of learners but do not demonstrate the best standards that the business community is moving towards. Learners are the next generation of potential business leaders, and should expect training on the best equipment and to the highest standards. However, the operating systems in use on the centre computers are for stand-alone computers and are six years old.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good management and auditing of assessment and internal verification. Appropriate client targets for achievement of modules and units are set and well monitored. Standardisation procedures are improving and reports on upcoming assessments and progress reviews are provided weekly to each training centre.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	60	4

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

Strengths

- good on-the-job training

Weaknesses

- poor progress by learners
- poor learning resources

Achievement and standards

65. Poor achievement was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection and although some actions have been taken to improve this, they are only just beginning to have an impact on the learners. The achievement rates for the advanced modern apprenticeship programme show that only 9 per cent of starters in 2001-02 completed their modern apprenticeship framework. Retention rates are good, but there is slow progress.

Quality of education and training

66. There is good on-the-job training and skills development is effective. All learners are employed in a range of organisations that provide them with good training. Learners develop good occupational skills. Learners clearly understand their job roles. Most learners have increased responsibilities and some have progressed into supervisory roles. Most employers are supportive towards their learners and assist them, or allow them time away from their work activities to collect evidence towards their NVQ. Learners are also developing good personal skills, such as increased self-confidence and working as effective team members. Assessors are aware of the training in the workplace and discuss with the learner how this can be used to provide evidence of competence.

67. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. Assessors have satisfactory assessor qualifications and industry experience. They have regular training and staff development and update their skills every year. All training is carried out in the workplace.

68. Staff provide a satisfactory induction programme to all learners supported by written material. Employers provide a workplace induction. At the previous inspection, key skills

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training and assessment was not included at the start of the programme and was identified as a weakness. Improvements have been made and learners are now aware of key skills at the start of their programme. Some learners have previous qualifications that can be used to exempt them from the tests and others have been given past test papers to use for practise. Most learners are working on projects related to the workplace to provide evidence for their portfolios. Key skills arrangements are now satisfactory however, some learners have not started to collect evidence for their portfolios.

69. In the previous inspection report and in the current self-assessment report, support for learners was identified as a strength: it is now satisfactory. At reinspection, pastoral support is good. However, this support does not ensure that learners make good or satisfactory progress.

70. All learners have a satisfactory initial assessment of their key skills, training needs and career aims. Staff discuss prior experience and qualifications with learners and, where appropriate, use these to exempt learners from completion of units, or allow them to be used as evidence towards their qualifications. None of the learners are identified as having any additional learning or social needs. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to provide literacy and numeracy support if required.

71. At the previous inspection, progress reviews were identified as a weakness. These have improved and are now satisfactory. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every four weeks. Employers are not always fully involved in the progress review process. Although they sign the progress reviews at least every twelve weeks, they are not always involved in the planning of learners' work.

72. At the previous inspection, the use of individual learning plans was identified as a weakness. The overall planning of individual training is now satisfactory. The provider does not use individual learning plans as a working document. The copy of the individual learning plan in the learner's portfolio is a photocopy of the previous and is not updated. However, the copy in the assessor's working file is regularly updated and there are supplementary documents in the learners' portfolio to record progress and changes to the learner's learning plan. These are regularly updated.

73. There is poor progress for most learners. There is insufficient observed assessment for some customer service learners. This was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection, but has not improved. There is not enough improvement from the previous inspection on setting sufficiently challenging targets. Some learners have been on programme for over 12 months before completing any units. Targets set can be repeated over many months before any work is done on them. Completed work can go many months before being signed off by the learner or the assessor and learners do not know what progress they are making.

74. Learning resources are poor. The in-house training materials consist mainly of a bank of questions and handouts covering background knowledge for each unit of the NVQ in both warehousing and customer service. The questions are poor. Other material used for handouts covering background information is out of date.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are weak. There have been a number of changes since the previous inspection and managers are aware of the slow progress of learners. The self-assessment report identified the weakness of poor achievement and insufficient employer involvement in planning learners' training. Inspectors found the strengths identified in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice.

76. CTS has introduced a new set of assessment and progress review documents. Subcontracted assessors are included in the assessors' meetings and have requested that they be included in any future staff meetings. These changes are starting to improve learners' progress and learners have achieved a number of NVQ units over the past few months.

77. There is a new monitoring system and assessors have monthly meetings with a senior manager where the progress of individual learners is checked. Assessors are set targets to improve achievement rates. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. As these monitoring meetings have only been in operation for three months, the effects are only just beginning to impact on the learners. The three separate strands of this occupational area, retailing, customer service and warehousing, have not been sufficiently evaluated to identify whether there are any different issues restricting progress in each.