

REINSPECTION REPORT

Huyton Churches Training Service Reinspection

26 February 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

HUYTON CHURCHES TRAINING SERVICE REINSPECTION

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

Huyton Churches Training Service Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Huyton Churches Training Service (HCTS) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity based in Huyton, Merseyside. It provides work-based learning for young people in business administration and childcare. Most learners start their training on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes at level 1 and a small number at level 2 or 3.
2. Since the previous inspection learners who were studying construction, engineering, foundation and life skills programmes at level 1 with HCTS, have been transferred to Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes at a local college. HCTS no longer offers training in these areas and they have not been included in the reinspection process. The college now subcontracts E2E programmes to HCTS.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

3. Of the six learners currently on business administration programmes, four are foundation modern apprentices and two are working towards an NVQ at level 2. All modern apprentices work towards key skills as an integral part of their programme and three are completing a technical certificate. All learners are in work placements with local companies. Some learners have a placement identified by the company's work-placement officer. HCTS recruits learners directly from employers or they are referred by Connexions. All learners are assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills and for their preferred learning styles. They have an induction with HCTS and employers provide a further induction in the workplace. The assessor reviews each learner's progress in the workplace every 12 weeks. Learners attend the HCTS training centre one day a week for off-the-job training.

Health, social care & public services

4. There are 24 learners in early years, of whom seven are foundation modern apprentices, four are advanced modern apprentices and 13 are following NVQ programmes at level 2. Most learners are referred through Connexions and are recent school leavers. Few learners have formal qualifications when they enter training. Learners receive an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and complete an assessment of their preferred ways of learning. Learners attend training in childcare and key skills one day a week in HCTS's training centre. They attend an induction at HCTS and a workplace induction before they start training.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of inspectors | 3 |
| Number of inspection days | 9 |
| Number of learner interviews | 21 |
| Number of staff interviews | 16 |
| Number of employer interviews | 9 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 1 |
| Number of visits | 15 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection, the work-based learning in business administration was unsatisfactory and in health and social care it was satisfactory. Leadership and management overall was unsatisfactory, with equality of opportunity satisfactory and quality assurance unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Leadership and management | 4 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Equality of opportunity | 3 |
| Quality assurance | 4 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Construction | 4 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 4 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Engineering, technology & manufacturing | 4 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 4 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Business administration, management & professional | 4 |
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 4 |

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| Health, social care & public services | 3 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 3 |

| Foundation programmes | 3 |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Life Skills | 3 |
| Other government-funded provision | 3 |

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

| Leadership and management | 3 |
|---------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Equality of opportunity | 2 |
| Quality assurance | 3 |

| Business administration, management & professional | 3 |
|--|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 3 |

| Health, social care & public services | 3 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 3 |

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Key skills training in business administration and early years is linked well to the training programmes**, and some learners have completed their key skills. Learners in business administration make good progress towards the achievement of key skills.

7. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory. Learners use a wide range of evidence from their training sessions and the workplace. Learners' work is marked regularly and tutors provide constructive feedback.

8. **Retention and achievement rates for 2000-03 are poor for business administration and early years.** Most of those who leave their training programmes early do so to enter full-time employment. Strategies have been implemented to deal with retention and achievement issues, but it is too early to assess the full impact of these.

9. Learners are making slow progress towards NVQ units in early years training. Some learners have to wait several months before they complete a full unit of their training programme.

Quality of education and training

10. The good standard of teaching and training in early years has been maintained since the previous inspection. Tutors use a range of teaching methods effectively and take account of learners' preferred learning styles.

11. Off-the-job training is good in business administration. The training programme is well planned. Schedules of training and standardised training packages are used to support learning. However, there are insufficient links between on- and off-the-job training.

12. Tutors and workplace supervisors provide effective individual support for learners. They work well together and respond quickly to individual needs. Supervisors are keen to support learners' progress.

13. There are good training resources in business administration. Information and communications technology (ICT) equipment and facilities meet commercial standards. Learners have access to a range of good materials that cover all aspects of their training.

14. Progress reviews in early years are effective and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Clear targets are agreed and learners know what progress they have made. There is some incomplete target-setting in business administration. Targets are too general for learners to understand what they can do to improve their work.

15. In early years, training partnerships with employers are particularly effective. Employers and HCTS work effectively together to help learners' progress. Employers are well represented on external committees with HCTS.

Leadership and management

16. Training programmes are well planned. Staff receive appropriate updating for new programmes. Planning takes full account of monitoring targets for retention and achievement.

17. HCTS has expanded its work with community links and partnerships and now works with many countries across Europe on projects to help reduce local unemployment. It continues to work with a wide range of employers and local schools.

18. Feedback from learners about the training has significantly improved since the previous inspection, and is now good. The analysis is thorough and action plans are monitored and displayed for learners to see the changes that have been made.

19. **Equality of opportunity has significantly improved since the previous inspection and is now good.** HCTS promotes equal opportunities through carefully designed materials. Staff and learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities. Data are collected and used to plan and promote training.

20. **Staff hold regular meetings and the actions and areas of responsibility are recorded.** Managers meet regularly with assessors to review performance and targets.

21. Internal verification is satisfactory. Feedback to assessors and verifiers is detailed and constructive and is aimed at raising standards of assessment.

22. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory and have improved since the previous inspection. The quality audit process is thorough. The new quality assurance procedures now monitor retention and achievement targets. There are inconsistencies in the completion of some of the documents. Good practice is not always shared between staff from different programme areas.

23. The self-assessment process and monitoring of the post-inspection action plan is satisfactory. The full consultative process includes feedback from learners and employers. The monitoring of progress of the post-inspection plan was detailed.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- well-planned training
- productive external links and partnerships
- effective feedback from learners
- good promotion of equal opportunities and diversity
- effective monitoring of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- some incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient analysis of retention and achievement by the board

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good off-the-job training
- effective support for learners from employers
- good training resources
- good integration of key skills for foundation modern apprentices

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient links between on- and off-the-job training
- some incomplete target-setting

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good teaching
- effective support for learners
- particularly good partnership arrangements with work-placement providers
- effective progress reviews

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow completion of assessments

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

Strengths

- well-planned training
- productive external links and partnerships
- effective feedback from learners
- good promotion of equal opportunities and diversity
- effective monitoring of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- some incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient analysis of retention and achievement by the board

24. Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements in the planning of training and it is now good. Employers and learners are involved in planning the training and HCTS produces a coherent learning plan. Most learners identify employment as their first option and learning plans take account of this. Learners and employers have a good understanding of the programme and their responsibilities within it. Planning takes full account of monitoring targets for retention and achievement. Learners and workplace supervisors receive annual schedules for off-the-job training. All learners now complete a pre-registration period before beginning their training to ensure that they are on the correct programme. Induction is well planned and includes extensive information on health and safety and diversity. There is good reference to external support agencies.

25. Partnerships with external agencies and employers continue to develop and the board has extended these across Europe. Two separate partnerships cover community and employer links. The first involves the board developing co-financed European projects to support their work in reducing local unemployment. For example, a European project involving more than five countries resulted in a group of unemployed adults renovating a local community centre and also registering for construction training to support this work; and all gained employment. The other partnership continues to build local employer links to provide good work placements for learners and to develop links between businesses and the wider community to support employment projects. HCTS also works with local schools to raise achievement and progress through the 14-19 strategy. They work with three schools to help retain those young people who are at risk of leaving education early. Staff from Connexions now visit HCTS's premises each week to provide individual support for learners. HCTS works with local colleges to develop

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new training programmes. HCTS uses local market intelligence well and has produced a useful needs analysis to develop its business.

26. Staff appraisal is now satisfactory. All staff have received an appraisal and a six-monthly review. HCTS is currently evaluating this first cycle of appraisal. Individual and team targets are agreed with managers and these reflect the strategic and development plans. Staff welcome the clear objectives. Observations of training are used in the appraisal meetings. The training manager meets with individual staff and programme teams to review performance against targets. Staff development is well supported.

27. Since the previous inspection, HCTS has developed a new management information system and it is now satisfactory. Data are now accurate and reliable. Strategies have been put in place to deal with retention and achievement issues. However, the strategies were only implemented in June 2003 and it is too early to measure the impact of these. Staff have received training in the new system to help them monitor their own and their team targets. Staff receive regular retention and achievement information and this is used effectively at meetings to monitor overall performance. The analysis of data for learners who leave training early is good. Those learners who are at risk of leaving early are identified and appropriate support is provided. Senior managers receive regular information relating to performance and targets. However, although the board receives this information, it is not analysed sufficiently to identify some of the key issues relating to recruitment, retention and achievement. The board members do not receive a detailed enough account of the overall performance of the training or a breakdown of each programme, and they do not have a full understanding of the funding and implications of early leavers. Brief references in the board's minutes reflect cursory attention to these issues and there is little discussion or actions identified to deal with them.

28. Management of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. A team of qualified tutors supports learners who have additional support needs. Individual timetables are agreed between the tutor and the learners. Dyslexia screening is carried out for all learners and appropriate support is identified.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

29. HCTS has ensured that the shared company ethos of the promotion of equality of opportunity continues. This has improved further and is now good. Policies are updated annually and include diversity and current legislation. Learners have a good recall of equal opportunities and know their rights and responsibilities. Equal opportunities is covered well in the progress reviews. Staff have received recent updating on equal opportunities and diversity.

30. Equal opportunities information is now well designed and well promoted across the wider community, with employers and in the training centre. Although the minority ethnic population of the area is low, HCTS continues to communicate effectively and promote training well. Equal opportunities materials are displayed in community centres and in all training areas including the employers' premises. Visual representation of

minority ethnic groups in promotion materials is good.

31. Induction is well planned and includes a wide range of equal opportunities and diversity scenarios for discussion. Learners recall their induction well and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the workplace. Equal opportunities and diversity are also reinforced throughout their training programme.

32. Learners' progress reviews now explore different situations in the work placement and these are recorded at the end of the review process. They include a range of questions relating to diversity and individual rights and responsibilities. Employers receive a comprehensive information pack and make good use of them when working with learners.

33. There is now good monitoring of equal opportunities. Detailed data are collected on learners' ethnic origins, gender and disabilities and HCTS uses this information well to promote training in its fact sheets. A business analysis of potential learners from minority ethnic groups has been completed and has been fully discussed at board meetings. Regular monitoring of equality of opportunity by managers identifies different levels of performance of individual learners.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

34. Quality assurance arrangements have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. There is an established quality audit process and new quality assurance procedures to monitor the standards of training. Targets are now set for individual staff and programme area teams. Lesson observations are now established and staff receive constructive feedback. Staff and managers meet regularly to discuss quality assurance issues. Quality assurance policies and procedures are reviewed annually and issues are dealt with appropriately. A detailed learning plan has been improved for off-the-job training and schemes of work reflect the schedule. Meetings are now well recorded and actions and responsibilities are clearly identified. Although employers know what learners have to complete before their assessment, there are few links between on- and off-the-job training in some areas of training. Some procedures are not completed consistently by staff. Aspects of individual learning plans and progress reviews do not record enough information for learners to understand what they have to do to improve their work. Some progress reviews do not include all parties and where employers are unable to attend, there is no formal procedure for ensuring that they are informed of the outcomes. Good practice is not shared sufficiently between programme areas.

35. Since the previous inspection, arrangements to gather feedback from learners has significantly improved and is now good. A detailed questionnaire is extensively analysed and an action plan identifies clear actions and responsibilities. The analysis provides useful information about all aspects of teaching and learning and includes each part of the learners' training programme. Induction evaluations are carried out separately and changes to the design of the induction programme have been made after feedback from learners. A questionnaire is sent to a range of employers regardless of whether they

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have learners. Feedback is analysed, but some of the employers that have learners are not sent the questionnaires and cannot provide feedback on the quality of training. **Of the 60 businesses canvassed, due to the questions asked, it was not clear what area of training they offered.** Results of the feedback are posted on learner notice boards, together with actions that have been taken to make improvements.

36. Internal verification is satisfactory. Staff are given clear guidance on the required procedures. There is a timetable for internal verification and all assessors' work is verified. Staff receive detailed feedback about their performance which is aimed at raising the standards of assessment.

37. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Feedback from employers, tutors and learners is used, together with observations of recruitment and teaching to identify strengths and weaknesses. Internal and external reports and a range of management information is also considered. The monitoring of the post-inspection action plan was thorough and progress was carefully monitored.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 6 | 3 |

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

Strengths

- good off-the-job training
- effective support for learners from employers
- good training resources
- good integration of key skills for foundation modern apprentices

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient links between on- and off-the-job training
- some incomplete target-setting

Achievement and standards

38. Learners make good progress towards the achievement of key skills and this has improved since the previous inspection. Key skills relate clearly to the training programme and are introduced early in the training programme. Learners complete an initial assessment and use workbooks to help develop their skills. Tutors are skilled at clearly referencing their topics in the training sessions to key skills development. Evidence from tasks carried out in the workplace is used for assessment. Assignments are vocationally relevant. For example, numerical calculations are used as evidenced by learners when they produce a room plan for their office.

39. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners produce a good range of evidence in their portfolios which includes personal statements, work products and written questions. Exercises and workbooks which are used for literacy, numeracy and key skills development and background knowledge work, are kept in a separate portfolio. Learners' work is marked regularly and they are given constructive feedback on their progress.

40. The retention rate is poor for foundation modern apprentices and NVQ learners. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices were 27 per cent in 2001-02 and 30 per cent in 2002-03. However, the three learners recruited in 2003-04 are still in learning. The achievement rate of NVQ learners and foundation modern apprentices is

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poor. In 2001-02, one foundation modern apprentice completed the full framework and in 2002-03, one learner achieved the NVQ at level 2. However, of the 25 learners who left between 2001 and 2003, 13 gained a job and five of those went into jobs for which they were receiving training. Two learners left and subsequently achieved their NVQ at level 2 with another provider. Three learners transferred to the E2E programme. Of the current learners, one foundation modern apprentice has achieved the NVQ at level 2.

41. Since the previous inspection, HCTS's staff have implemented strategies to deal with poor achievement rates. Learners who complete an NVQ unit are given an in-house certificate, which they value. New procedures for monitoring progress have been implemented. Learners' achievements are clearly visible on a wall chart and each stage of the process is highlighted. Learners regularly check these charts and are eager to progress.

Quality of education and training

42. Learners receive particularly good off-the-job training. The training programme is well planned with detailed lesson plans and clear objectives. Learners receive a copy of the scheme of work and add dates when they have attended the training session. A wide range of teaching methods is used. The tutor makes good use of the current ICT teaching resources in training sessions. Presentations on the electronic whiteboard are printed out for future reference and are given to those learners who are absent from the sessions. Workplace supervisors value the good training that learners receive. They recognise the improvement in learners' confidence and the development of their work skills. They understand how the background knowledge impacts on the learners' work roles.

43. Learners benefit from good working relationships with their workplace supervisors. There is effective communication between employers and learners. Supervisors are strongly committed to helping learners achieve their potential and they are responsive to their individual learning and social needs. Supervisors are keen for learners to progress. For example, one learner who is placed in a solicitor's office is being encouraged to progress to a legal executive position. They are committed to developing the capabilities of learners, some of whom progress to full-time employment with these employers.

44. Training resources at HCTS and in the workplace are good. There is a dedicated training room with an area for teaching, group work and portfolio development. Learners have access to ICT equipment in an adjoining area. Relevant wall displays are used well in lessons, such as those for health and safety. Computer hardware and software are to commercial standards. Teaching and learning materials for the development of literacy and numeracy and key skills are good and tutors use them effectively. There is a wide range of commercially produced workbooks, as well as tutor-prepared learning material. Resources in the workplace are appropriate to the learners' training programme. When learners need equipment or facilities to complete training tasks, workplace supervisors supply them and check that they meet the task requirements.

45. All learners are assessed on their literacy and numeracy to identify the appropriate level of support they need. There is a team of qualified staff to support learners. For example, a learner who is studying an NVQ at level 2 was assessed as needing additional support. Although she does not need to achieve a key skills qualification, she is working through workbooks for numeracy and is making good progress. Learners can recall completing the learning styles questionnaire and are able to discuss the outcomes and impact on their learning.

46. Assessment is regular and well planned. The tutor provides learners with an annual calendar of assessment and reviews. Comprehensive observation reports are prepared, which are clearly referenced to the relevant NVQ units and the key skills. Good use is made of evidence from tasks carried out in the workplace. Learners are given constructive feedback, verbally and in writing. Good use is made of questioning techniques to thoroughly check the learners' understanding.

47. Internal verification is satisfactory. The recording of verification is thorough. It is planned over a year and takes place every other month. Effective feedback is given to the assessor on the portfolios of assessed work. Learners are interviewed by the internal verifier who records their views on the quality of their assessment.

48. There are insufficient links between on- and off-the-job training. Learners are trained in the workplace when the need arises to enable them to carry out work tasks, but they do not have a formal learning plan. Learners' job descriptions are matched against the NVQ units. HCTS works with employers to ensure that the job adequately covers the requirements of the qualification. Workplace supervisors respond to requests to cover specific topics, but there is no systematic attempt to plan training in advance.

49. Some of the learners' targets are not sufficiently challenging and are not recorded correctly on progress reviews. Assessors visit the workplace to carry out progress reviews with learners, but they vary in their quality. The recording of some information is too general to help learners identify what they have to do to gain the required knowledge, skills or experience. Some do not contain clear targets for learners. They record general aspects of progress and welfare, rather than what training is carried out. The better reviews are carried out when the workplace supervisor, learner and assessor are present. However, some supervisors do not know what the learning targets are. Some individual learning plans contain a list of long-term aims and short-term target dates, but do not identify the training needed or the specific skills that will be developed. Measurable milestones are not set for learners.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is appropriate planning for the implementation of the new modern apprenticeship frameworks, including developing induction workbooks, and for the new technical certificate.

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51. Staff support learners well during and after their training programme. Staff provide training information to new employers or other training providers when learners leave. Two learners who left without achieving their qualifications, later completed with another training provider.

52. Staff development is satisfactory. Staff have received appropriate training for new awards and for the core curriculum for literacy and numeracy training. Communications are satisfactory. Staff hold regular weekly team meetings and receive good information from their manager. There are good links with other departments through the staff meetings.

53. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Issues relating to equal opportunities and diversity are discussed at induction. Health and safety in the workplace is monitored at reviews with learners. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The training manager carries out six-monthly audits and quarterly departmental reviews. New quality assurance procedures are now in place but there are some inconsistencies in completing tasks such as progress reviews. Training is not systematically evaluated.

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 24 | 3 |

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

Strengths

- good teaching
- effective support for learners
- particularly good partnership arrangements with work-placement providers
- effective progress reviews

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow completion of assessments

Achievement and standards

54. Retention and achievement rates are poor. In 2001-02, of the six foundation modern apprentices who started, none achieved the full qualification. In the same year, of the nine advanced modern apprentices who started, 44 per cent completed the full framework. Fifty per cent of NVQ learners achieved their full qualification. However, HCTS monitors the learners who leave training early and attempts to help them continue with their training in their new job. Of the 33 learners who left between 2001 and 2003, 17 gained a job, five moved to alternative training, two moved on to further training, two left the area, one left for personal reasons and six destinations are unknown. During 2001-03, many of the learners entering training were referred from Connexions and identified employment as their first choice.

55. Learners are making slow progress towards the achievement of NVQ units, despite being assessed early on in their training programme. Some learners have to wait approximately four months before they complete a full unit of the NVQ. Learners can start training at any time of the year and this flexible approach to training means that some learners may have been assessed in the workplace but they are unable to complete the units due to the timescale of the tutorials for background knowledge. Key skills are linked well to the training and some learners have completed them but there have been some external issues and accreditation has been delayed.

Quality of education and training

56. HCTS has maintained the good standard of teaching and learning. Weekly off-the-job training sessions are well planned. Detailed schemes of work outline the complete programme and are linked to session plans, relevant handouts and workbooks. Tutors use ICT presentations well and these are supported by informative handouts. Tutors use an appropriate range of teaching methods and identify preferred learning styles which take account of individual learners' needs. When topics are completed, learners are set targets to complete the workbooks and these are then monitored by tutors. Appropriate wall displays are used effectively during training sessions. Good childcare resources are available to the learners to support their learning. Individual learners' progress records are displayed on the classroom walls. Handouts and additional work booklets are available for learners who need additional help with literacy and numeracy. Learners benefit from the clear guidance given by tutors.

57. Learners have effective support from tutors. Learners can arrange extra visits, individual sessions and extra tutorials. Some learners have transferred from other training organisations and HCTS reviews their progress before they start their training. Learners have a good understanding of their training programme and are aware of the appeals procedure and independent support offered by external support agencies. Learners are given constructive feedback and advice after observations and reviews on how they can improve their work. Care is taken to place learners in work placements which are able to meet individual needs, and which can lead to full-time employment. Innovative means of encouraging learners have been established. Individual progress is now recorded and displayed in the training rooms and learners are given an in-house certificate for completed units.

58. Progress reviews have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now effective. Assessors visit learners regularly to discuss the progress they have made towards targets. Topics include attendance, individual issues, health and safety and equal opportunities. Learners negotiate and agree targets and are clear about the progress they have made. The reviews include the assessor, learner and workplace supervisor who all make a positive contribution to the meeting. They all receive a copy of the review paperwork. Monitoring of action plans has led to one learner being moved to a more suitable placement.

59. Partnerships with the work-placement providers are particularly good and have improved since the previous inspection. There are regular visits to employers and these are arranged to suit the requirements of work placement. Managers or the learners' mentors are fully involved in the review cycle and actively participate in the feedback. They are informed of assessment dates and retain a copy of each learner's individual learning plan. They are well informed of individual needs and support the whole training process. HCTS contacts employers each week to check attendance and make general enquiries regarding learners' progress. HCTS's childcare consortium is well attended by the work-placement providers, which are kept up-to-date about the on- and off-the-job training programme and are well informed of new initiatives and procedures.

60. The internal verification procedure for early years training is satisfactory. HCTS has detailed policies and procedures for training. Internal verification sampling and final verification of portfolios is thorough. A detailed internal verification schedule is available to staff and records are accurate and well maintained. The assessment appeals procedure is in all learners' portfolios. Learners have a clear understanding of the internal verification process and of their qualification.

Leadership and management

61. Tutors meet regularly and actions are identified. Procedures to monitor training are appropriate. Learners receive a clear plan which outlines the possible progression routes after they have completed their training. The standard of work in portfolios is satisfactory. HCTS has an effective policy for recognising previous experience and qualifications.

62. Learners demonstrate a good awareness of equal opportunities. They recall equal opportunities from their induction and issues relating to their work responsibilities are discussed thoroughly at progress reviews and during their training sessions. Quality assurance is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. However, some routine tasks remain incomplete and there are inconsistencies in recording information on learners' progress.