

REINSPECTION REPORT

Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited Reinspection

29 July 2005



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

Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited Reinspection

Contents

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	1
Overall judgement	1
Grades	2
Retailing, customer service & transportation	3

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited is a limited company by guarantee and is a registered charity which operates under the trading name of OTC. It is a member-owned organisation with 102 members paying an annual subscription. Its head office and training centre are located in Oldham. OTC provides work-based learning in engineering, business administration, distribution and warehousing and customer service. A wholly owned subsidiary company, OTC Consultancy Limited, was set up in 1996 to provide health, safety and environmental support to companies. This company was not within the scope of the inspection.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Retailing, customer service & transportation

2. There are 45 learners in this occupational area. Eight are apprentices, one is an advanced apprentice and the remaining 36 are adult learners on an Employer Training Pilot scheme. Four learners are in customer service and 41 are in distribution and warehousing. All learners are employed in customer service, warehousing or stores jobs with member and associate organisations of OTC. All learners receive an induction into their training programme and have their literacy, numeracy and language skills assessed. Learners are given individual coaching and mentoring in the workplace, as well as on short courses and in workshops at OTC. All of the activities are operated and managed from the company's main office and training site in Oldham.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	7
Number of learners interviewed	14
Number of staff interviewed	7
Number of employers interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	9
Number of visits	2

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

3. At the previous inspection of January 2003, retailing, customer service and transportation was unsatisfactory. Following the reinspection process, retailing, customer service and transportation is outstanding.

OLDHAM ENGINEERING GROUP TRAINING ASSOCIATION LIMITED REINSPECTION

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	3

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Apprenticeships for young people	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Retailing, customer service & transportation	1
Contributory grades:	
Employer training pilot	1
Apprenticeships for young people	1

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 1

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Employer training pilot	36	1
Apprenticeships for young people	9	1

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

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- good development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills
- good take-up of additional training by warehousing apprentices
- highly productive links with employers
- particularly good assessment practice
- successful arrangements for quality improvement

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

4. Retention and achievement rates are good. A high proportion of adult learners achieve their qualification. Of those who started in 2002-03 and 2003-04, 72 per cent and 80 per cent respectively achieved their qualification. Similarly a high proportion of apprentices complete their apprenticeship. Of those who started an apprenticeship between 2001 and 2003, 70 per cent successfully achieved all aspects of their programme. Retention rates are also good. Over 80 per cent of adults and 70 per cent of apprentices are retained. Although there have been few advanced apprentices, those still on the programme are making very good progress. One advanced apprentice has achieved a level 3 national vocational qualification (NVQ) in customer service, and in business administration. She has completed all of her key skills qualifications and is waiting for final certification.

5. Learners' work is of a high standard. Their portfolios are well presented and contain a good range of relevant training material and assessment records. The standard of most learners' written work is good. At work learners make effective and valuable contributions to their employers' business. All learners are making good progress towards their individual learning goals. One advanced apprentice has worked with another apprentice to produce an information booklet for local schools outlining the value of carrying out an apprenticeship programme. This activity had been used as part

of her key skills project work.

6. Learners develop good literacy and numeracy skills. All learners have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed at the beginning of their programme. The results of this diagnostic test are used to produce a highly individualised development plan for each learner. These plans include all of the aspects of literacy and numeracy highlighted as development needs by the diagnostic test. A specialist tutor is available for those learners who need intensive support, although most learners receive effective support from their training adviser in the workplace. The first attempt pass rate for learners taking key skills tests in literacy and numeracy is 100 per cent.

7. Take-up of additional training by warehousing apprentices is good. All apprentices on warehousing programmes are given the opportunity to take a five-day basic lift-truck operator licence as an additional qualification. Learners and employers value this and most learners take it. Employers are consulted to confirm the appropriateness of this additional training. First aid qualifications are offered to learners who do not require the lift-truck licence.

Quality of education and training

8. Links with employers are highly productive. OTC provides employers with clear and comprehensive explanations about learners' programmes and how they can support the learner. They are provided with a detailed and useful information pack, which clearly explains roles and responsibilities of OTC staff and the expectations of the employer. Employers are enthusiastic about what their learners are doing and give them good support. Employers are actively involved in identifying the most appropriate qualification for the learner and the choice of optional units within the qualification. Employers are encouraged to identify a mentor for each learner who will contribute to progress reviews, organise time for training advisers' visits and monitor progress between visits. One learning mentor took the initial assessment tests along with her staff so that she could fully appreciate what her staff were expected to do. On another site two learners who successfully completed their lift truck operator licence were able to access the company lift trucks over the weekend to practise manoeuvring skills within their own workplace. This improved their confidence. Where appropriate, employers arrange for learners to move to other parts of the organisation to ensure learners are able to achieve their NVQ. Employers and OTC effectively share information. Employers promote learning programmes on their notice boards, in newsletters and in staff rest rooms.

9. Assessment practice is particularly good. Training advisers visit learners in the workplace every two weeks to review progress and carry out assessment. Assessors are well qualified, both as assessors and in the occupational area. Where learners work shift patterns, including night shifts, training advisers visit during the shift. Assessments are planned well using an agreed action plan which is reviewed at every visit. A good range of assessment methods is used with a good emphasis on observation of learners at work. Other methods include witness testimonies, verbal and written questions, the use of video, digital photographs and tape recordings. Observations are recorded well and

link clearly to the requirements of the qualifications. Learners are allocated mentors in their company to support them. Learning mentors complete witness testimonies throughout the learning programme. Portfolios are presented well using a standard format which learners understand. Key skills projects have been developed that are integrated with the learners' main NVQs. This has reduced duplication and streamlined evidence generation for learners. Learners work with their training advisers to cross-reference their evidence and are very proud of their work.

10. Internal verification is effective and comprehensive. It is planned effectively and an appropriate sample of assessment activity and learners' portfolios is verified. Training advisers are regularly observed carrying out assessment and learners and employers are interviewed. Verifiers and assessors meet monthly to monitor the quality of assessment and consider improvements. Records are comprehensive with clear action plans where required. Feedback to training advisers is appropriate and constructive. OTC has introduced cross-area team meetings to support staff in the completion of key documents. The training advisers' team has contributed to the development of guidance documents for employers to help plan effectively for progress reviews. Standardisation activities have been introduced to provide opportunities for all staff to share best practice. There is effective sharing of good practice with regard to assessment.

11. An effective induction is provided by training advisers, either at OTC or in the workplace. Induction includes a good range of information about the learning programme and the rights and responsibilities of learners. Individual learning plans are well structured with clear and challenging short- and long-term targets. These targets are frequently reviewed and achievements accurately recorded.

12. Progress reviews are comprehensive and effective. All learners receive their first formal progress review after four weeks. Thereafter, progress reviews are carried out every eight weeks. The progress review effectively involves the employers, and they are encouraged to take an active part in the discussion. Records of reviews provide a clear picture of what has been achieved, how this relates to the individual learning plan and what the learner needs to do next. Learners are given useful guides to help them to prepare for their progress review.

13. Training sessions are well structured and well planned. Teaching is effective and learners are attentive and interested. Training rooms are bright and equipped well with modern facilities. A variety of relevant support resources are available to learners and staff. Staff are regularly observed delivering training sessions as part of OTC's quality monitoring process. Learners are provided with relevant support booklets that have been developed by OTC staff.

14. Lift truck training is provided by OTC in a dedicated training area, fitted to current industry standards, with a selection of racking at various heights with a wide variety of load types. OTC has improved the resources for warehousing learners since the previous inspection. They have in place a well-structured programme covering all aspects required for safe lift truck use and operation. They have a good range of videos and learning resource packs to cover essential good practice and health and safety.

Leadership and management

15. Arrangements to improve the quality of training in this area have been very successful. The performance of this area of learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Achievement and retention rates have improved, as has the quality of training, assessment and resources. Comprehensive procedures have been produced for key processes and for assuring the quality of learners' experiences. Feedback is regularly sought from learners and employers and, where appropriate, is followed up with individual interviews. Feedback is constructively used by managers to plan improvements. An effective system to observe teaching and learning has been introduced and includes the observation of subcontracted provision. Internal verification is particularly effective. Self-assessment is an ongoing process involving all staff. The self-assessment report produced for this area of learning was accurate and clearly reflected the views of all those involved. Strengths and weakness are discussed at weekly meetings and actions are agreed by all staff.

16. The programme is well managed. Staff are well qualified and experienced in customer service and warehousing. All staff have their performance appraised annually and have extensive individual development plans. Staff regularly attend training to update their skills and to broaden their knowledge. They meet regularly to discuss programme performance and to share good practice, both within the area of learning and more widely across the organisation. The progress of learners is closely monitored by staff and managers, and senior managers receive regular reports on the performance of programmes. Data is effectively used by managers and staff to monitor performance and plan individual and programme improvements. Managers have a clear view of how the provision will develop and have carefully considered the capacity of the organisation to develop this area of learning further. They regularly compare performance with other providers in the region.

17. OTC's management of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners receive good information during their induction on their rights and responsibilities. Training advisers and assessors regularly monitor how learners are treated at work and learners' understanding of equality and diversity. OTC collects and analyses data on the gender, ethnicity and disability of its learners. It attempts to recruit learners from under-represented groups through its normal marketing activities and by special events aimed at particular groups. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities and how to complain if they need to. All learners are given opportunities to take additional learning, and if this is not possible, alternatives are made available. Staff have received training on equality and diversity. There is a prayer room in the main training centre for those who wish to use it.