

INSPECTION REPORT

Kita Ltd

24 August 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Kita Ltd (Kita) was established in 1967 under the name of Kent Industrial Training Association as a shared training resource by a number of engineering employers in the Maidstone area. Based in Sittingbourne Kent, Kita currently has around 40 member companies in a wide range of occupational sectors. Approximately 75 companies participate in government-funded training provision. Kita is registered as a non-profit making organisation. Government-funded training is offered to young people through apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in engineering, business and administration, information technology, customer service, contact centre and professional and leadership and management. Kita also provides comprehensive human resource, training and safety services to a large number of organisations, and not exclusively for member companies.

2. Kita has a board of governors, a managing director, a centre manager and eight members of staff. At the time of inspection there are 123 learners.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 4

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate.** Kita's provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is satisfactory. Leadership and management, including the arrangements for quality improvement, equality of opportunity and business administration and law are inadequate.

4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment is detailed and staff are involved in the process. Some of the strengths and weaknesses in the report have also been identified by inspectors, but some key strengths are considered to be no more than normal practice and some key weaknesses were omitted. Apart from engineering, the inspection team gave lower grades than those given by the provider.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a poor position to make improvements.** Kita has made insufficient progress towards improving its provision since the previous inspection. Some of the key weaknesses still exist. Quality meetings have only just been introduced as part of recent changes in management. There are no effective quality improvement systems. Not all staff are receptive to change.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR KITA LTD:

- improve success rates on all programmes
- establish and maintain a quality improvement system that works
- develop and implement a skills for life strategy
- improve assessment practice

- give business learners opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond their current job role
- improve the understanding and promotion of equality of opportunity for all

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		4
Quality improvement		4

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Engineering			
Apprenticeships for young people	24	3	
NVQ training	10	3	
Train to Gain	4	3	
Manufacturing technologies			
Apprenticeships for young people	1	3	
Train to Gain	5	3	
Transportation			
Train to Gain	5	3	

Business administration and law			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Administration			
Apprenticeships for young people	18	4	
Train to Gain	11	4	
Business management			
Apprenticeships for young people	6	4	
Train to Gain	17	4	
Customer service			
Apprenticeships for young people	7	4	
Train to Gain	15	4	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors over four days. The areas inspected include leadership and management, quality improvement, equality of opportunity, engineering and business. Retail provision was not included in the inspection, although learners from this area were taken into account when making judgements on leadership

and management. Inspectors included work-based learning for young people and Train to Gain programmes. Inspectors found little difference in the quality of provision between programmes. Inspectors visited many placements across a wide area to interview learners and employers.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	37
Number of staff interviewed	8
Number of employers interviewed	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	16

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- no significant strengths

Weaknesses

- poor management of literacy, numeracy and language support
- poor quality assurance
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good employer involvement

Weaknesses

- poor review practice
- poor assessment practice for many learners

Business administration and law

Strengths

- good portfolios for advanced apprentices
- wide range of programmes available

Weaknesses

- poor framework success rates
- slow progress for adult learners
- poor development of knowledge or skills
- insufficiently flexible assessment processes to meet individual needs

KITA LTD

- insufficient planning of support for learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT KITA LTD:

- assessors are very supportive
- getting a qualification
- team building at college (engineering learners)
- training at work
- moving from single jobs to more complex
- 'gives me a greater understanding of what I do'
- 'it's a really good way of learning - it's fantastic'
- portfolios are easy to understand

WHAT LEARNERS THINK KITA LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of training co-ordinator visits
- the employer involvement - there should be more
- sharing the marks of tests
- the problems at college such as the shortage of a lecturer and needing better resources
- more sympathetic responses from training co-ordinators from issues raised (engineering learners)

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- no significant strengths

Weaknesses

- poor management of literacy, numeracy and language support
- poor quality assurance
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity

7. Leadership and management are inadequate. Most strategic planning is informal. The development plan is satisfactory and is based on the self-assessment report. It is sufficiently detailed and actions for improvement are monitored. However, some improvement targets are too general and completion is not always satisfactory. Staff are encouraged to develop new business opportunities, but are not clear about the direction of the organisation.

8. Recent changes in management have started to deal with immediate areas of concern and some staff are positive about these changes. However, other staff are less enthusiastic and this is hampering opportunities to implement new systems and share ideas and best practice.

9. As a small provider with all staff located in close proximity, communication tends to be open and less formal. Team meetings are regular and well recorded. Action points from these meetings are followed through. All staff have access to all non-confidential documents. Staff understand their roles, but not all appreciate their responsibility to improve and adapt. The provider is well recognised within the local area and staff are on good terms with employers.

10. Learners' progress is monitored and further improvements to the data recording systems are being developed and implemented. However, there are no targets to raise achievement, and training co-ordinators are not fully accountable for their learners' progress. Data indicates that success rates are generally declining. Since the previous inspection the business has maintained its performance, but this is compared with improvements in funded training as a whole. Many key weaknesses are the same as four years ago.

11. There is no clear planning or monitoring of staff performance. Staff are appropriately qualified, but staff development is not planned and there are no staff appraisals.

12. The management of literacy, numeracy and language training is poor. There is no strategy for learners with additional learning needs. Staff interpret initial assessment results differently. Learners are not made aware of test results and those who need additional support do not receive any. Staff awareness of, and training in, additional support is poor.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 4**

13. Equality of opportunity is inadequate. Recruitment of learners is through direct employer introduction and there are few opportunities to recruit under-represented groups through direct marketing. The ethos at Kita is to accept all learners. Recruitment of women into engineering and men into business administration is generally proportionate to industry figures and minority ethnic learners are well represented. There is a good level of respect between the provider's staff, employers and learners. Kita supports employers that do not have appropriate policies in place, and the provider is a member of an equality and diversity forum.

14. All employers have appropriate equality and diversity policies in place. All learners and staff are given Kita's own policy, and information and guidance on equality of opportunity including discrimination, harassment and bullying. These topics are covered briefly at induction. During regular progress reviews, learners have the opportunity to advise training co-ordinators of concerns relating to equality. However, not all staff are confident enough to deal with such issues. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of the complaints procedures. Learners who have concerns are suitably supported by training co-ordinators.

15. Kita monitors data relating to the overall programme, yearly trends, gender, ethnicity, learners with disabilities and women in engineering. The provider is aware of variations in group achievements, although it has no strategies to deal with clear variations in learners' performance, including why women consistently out-perform men.

16. Access to Kita's current building is not suitable for those with restricted mobility. However, purpose-built compliant training premises are planned for 2007. Most staff have been trained on equality of opportunity, but there is no clear overview of training needs and staff understanding. Team meetings include equality of opportunity as a regular agenda item.

17. The promotion of equality of opportunity is poor. Many learners have a limited understanding of the topic. Progress reviews are not used to extend learners' understanding, and Kita is not involved in monitoring subcontractors. Kita does not formally check whether employers are offering new initiatives or in-house training on equality and diversity.

Quality improvement**Contributory grade 4**

18. Quality improvement is inadequate. Kita focuses on individual progress and achievements that are monitored by all staff. Regular team meetings are used to highlight slow progress, and plans for improvement are agreed. The provider is in the process of making further improvements to the management information system. Data on overall success rates are benchmarked against local providers, and these are low.

19. There have been recent changes in management and new procedures and ways of working are being implemented. There are clear areas for immediate attention and staff are encouraged to become more involved and take on more responsibility and to share ideas and good practice. It is too early to judge the effect of recent changes.

20. The arrangements for self-assessment are generally satisfactory. All staff are involved in the development of the report. Some of the strengths and weaknesses in the report

have also been identified by inspectors, but some of the key strengths are no more than normal practice and some key weaknesses were omitted. Apart from engineering, grades given by the inspection team were lower than those given by the provider.

21. Feedback from learners and employers is satisfactory. The provider has recently introduced comprehensive questionnaires to gain feedback at key points of the learners' programme. Analysis of questionnaires is starting to raise debates among staff. Further improvements have been planned, such as more user-friendly questionnaires. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory and action plans from awarding bodies are quickly acted on.

22. Quality meetings have recently been introduced to deal with areas for immediate improvement. A work instruction audit schedule is used to monitor compliance with a range of procedures. However, quality assurance arrangements are poor. Most key aspects of the learners' experience are not assessed and the provider has no clear standards to measure staff performance. Observations are informal and are not used to share good practice or to plan staff development. There are no service level agreements or quality assurance arrangements with the three engineering subcontractors. Key weaknesses from the previous inspection remain. Actions for improvement are not always fully understood or fully accepted by some staff.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Engineering		
Apprenticeships for young people	24	3
NVQ training	10	3
Train to Gain	4	3
Manufacturing technologies		
Apprenticeships for young people	1	3
Train to Gain	5	3
Transportation		
Train to Gain	5	3

23. There are 49 learners on work-based learning programmes in engineering and manufacturing technologies. Of these, 19 are advanced apprentices, six are apprentices, and 10 are on other work-based learning programmes working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 3. Fourteen learners are on Train to Gain programmes.

24. There are 11 learners in fabrication and welding engineering, 11 in mechanical manufacturing engineering, 15 in engineering maintenance, six in specialised plant and machinery operations, five in performing manufacturing engineering and one in engineering production. All but two of the learners are men. They are employed in a wide range of national and international companies across a wide geographical area. Kita is often an integral part of the companies' recruitment process.

25. All advanced apprentices spend their first year on a full-time programme working towards the performing engineering operations programme at level 2. This is delivered by subcontracted colleges or another work-based learning provider that has appropriate training facilities. All apprentices and NVQ learners attend subcontracted day-release provision to complete the technical certificate and three key skills, where necessary. Two additional key skills units are completed in the workplace and are assessed by the provider's staff.

26. Train to Gain learners are assessed in the workplace. Two assessors visit learners at work every four to six weeks to monitor training and review progress. One employer directly manages assessment and verification using its own staff.

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good employer involvement

Weaknesses

- poor review practice

- poor assessment practice for many learners

Achievement and standards

27. Development of practical skills is good. Learners are placed with skilled technicians and craftsmen and are quickly given increasing responsibility and less supervision. Learners develop their skills to a point where they become an integral part of the employer's business. Many companies have planned training schemes offering a wide range of skill development opportunities. Typical tasks for learners include welding large steel structures, investigating and correcting major component failures and operating very large machinery and plant. The one-year off-the-job training programme supports the acquisition of skills.

28. Overall success rates for apprentices and NVQ learners are satisfactory, although success rates are declining. The rates for Train to Gain have improved in the past two years and are now satisfactory overall. However, for 2006-07, if all learners achieve, the success rate can only be 63 per cent. Most learners from all the programmes are making satisfactory progress.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	7	100	57	100	46
		timely	6	67	34	67	27
	2004-05	overall	3	100	57	100	45
		timely	5	20	33	20	25
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	6	67	48	33	32
		timely	6	0	22	0	13
	2004-05	overall	3	100	52	33	41
		timely	1	100	27	100	19
NVQ training for young	2003-04	overall	18	56	47	0	0
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
	2004-05	overall	9	67	57	0	0
		timely	7	29	37	0	0
Adult training (long courses)	2004-05	overall	49	55		0	
		timely	49	27		0	
	2005-06	overall	25	64		0	
		timely	25	52		0	

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

* indicates unreliable data.

The quality of provision

29. The employers' involvement in engineering programmes is good. In many companies the involvement by senior management is good and they take a keen interest in the

learners' training. Shop floor supervisors train and support learners to improve their skills. Most employers have a satisfactory understanding of the framework qualifications and some employers maintain direct contact with the providers that are delivering the off-site training. Many employers are part of Kita's training association.

30. Employers support learners to gain additional qualifications. Most of the advanced apprentices and some of the NVQ learners progress to the Higher National Certificate. Many companies offer additional industrial short courses such as slinging, grinding regulations and heavy lifting. At one large company, learners have completed a first aid course. Companies which are new to training have been helped by training co-ordinators to select appropriate programmes for learners and to develop their training approach.

31. Overall, initial assessment is satisfactory. Apprentices and NVQ learners are accepted onto the programme based on acceptable school results. All learners have an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, but there is no further diagnostic assessment to identify specific additional learning needs. Currently, none of the learners have additional support needs. For many learners, the induction to the programme is often part of the employers' induction programme and it is not well remembered. Training co-ordinators work from either a learner's pack or an electronic presentation, both of which are comprehensive. However, in places, the language is inappropriate and too much information is covered in one session. The induction by subcontractors for Kita's learners who attend off-the-job training is particularly good on health and safety. Most learners enjoy the off-the-job training with subcontractors. However, a few have experienced problems with insufficient resources, particularly staffing. Information, advice and guidance are adequate.

32. Visits by training co-ordinators are frequent and sufficient time is spent on learners' review of progress and assessment. However, the review practice is poor. In most cases, comments by the provider's staff are very brief and are not focused enough to maintain progress. Most of the targets are not specific and do not have completion dates. Learners are vague about their progress. There are no actions taken when learners consistently miss reviews or when concerns by learners are raised. This weakness was included in the self-assessment report and it was also identified in the previous inspection report.

33. One employer with 10 learners manages its own assessment and verification process. However, for the rest, assessment practice is poor. The range of assessment methods is limited to direct questioning and by employer witness testimony. There is no assessment by observation. This was recognised by the provider as a weakness in the self-assessment report and, it was also identified in the previous inspection report. Assessment is carried out when all evidence is gathered and most of the learners are not sufficiently involved in the final process. Portfolios are generally satisfactory, although the evidence is not diverse.

Leadership and management

34. Communication with employers is good with frequent visits by both assessors. Staff are very experienced and appropriately qualified, although there is no evidence of significant recent staff development. Engineering staff promote the understanding of health and safety well across the organisation. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements. Both training co-ordinators are internal verifiers and work closely together. Standardisation meetings are informal. The self-assessment

process is satisfactory.

35. Two weaknesses from the previous inspection still exist. There are formal links with one of the colleges, but overall monitoring of the subcontractors' training is poor. For example, training co-ordinators are not fully aware of learners' problems. The potential of the central database is not fully used as the training co-ordinators rely on a paper-based system. There is little inter relation with other parts of the organisation and little sharing of good practice.

36. Equality of opportunity is not reinforced at reviews, even though the review form encourages discussion. The approach is largely ensuring the health and well being of the learner rather than promoting better understanding and awareness.

Business administration and law**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration		
Apprenticeships for young people	18	4
Train to Gain	11	4
Business management		
Apprenticeships for young people	6	4
Train to Gain	17	4
Customer service		
Apprenticeships for young people	7	4
Train to Gain	15	4

37. There are 74 learners in business administration and law. The programmes include administration, customer service and management/team leader, with 29, 22 and 23 learners on each programme respectively. There are 19 advanced apprentices, 12 apprentices and 43 Train to Gain learners.

38. Learners are all employed and most work in small and medium-sized companies, including voluntary and not-for-profit organisations. Referrals for the adult programmes come through Business Link. Many of the apprentices are referred by employers that have previous connections with Kita.

39. Training co-ordinators regularly visit learners in the workplace to offer guidance on evidence collection, and to plan carry out assessments.

Strengths

- good portfolios for advanced apprentices
- wide range of programmes available

Weaknesses

- poor framework success rates
- slow progress for adult learners
- poor development of knowledge or skills
- insufficiently flexible assessment processes to meet individual needs
- insufficient planning of support for learners

Achievement and standards

40. Advanced apprentices' portfolios are good and show a high standard of work. Learners are proud of their evidence, and talk about how the NVQ has made them think more about what they do in their job. Management learners can explain how their NVQ work has improved their working practices and benefited their company. Apprentices make satisfactory progress.

41. Success rates for all apprentices are poor. Overall, fewer than half of the apprentices

complete the full framework and success rates have declined in the past three years. However, the success rates for advanced apprentices have improved in the same period. Adult learners do better and success rates have improved and are now satisfactory. Progress for many of the adult learners is slow.

42. Most learners have a good understanding of their job roles, other than advanced apprentices in management. Those who demonstrate a specific shortfall in the skills required for the NVQ or key skills, learners do not develop many work skills throughout their programmes.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	51	57	46	35	28
		timely	47	47	30	34	18
	2004-05	overall	32	63	47	38	31
		timely	32	56	35	34	23
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	19	58	51	47	37
		timely	14	36	25	36	18
	2004-05	overall	11	55	56	45	45
		timely	9	11	35	11	28
Adult training (long courses)	2003-04	overall	2	0		0	
		timely	2	0		0	
	2004-05	overall	73	51		0	
		timely	73	27		0	
	2005-06	overall	35	62		0	
		timely	35	42		0	

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

* indicates unreliable data.

The quality of provision

43. The provider offers a wide choice of programmes, including management and team leading, to adult learners and apprentices. Employers and learners are able to find a programme that closely matches their job role. Progression routes are good and Kita offers further training programmes to apprentices who complete their framework.

44. The development of knowledge or skills is poor. The provider offers little training to its learners. There are few learning resources other than past papers for technical certificates and key skills tests. Some support materials such as text-books and key skills training materials are available in the provider's office, but most learners are not aware of these. Most of the learners have no understanding or knowledge of the theory behind their qualification, except for those who have similar prior learning experience, such as a general national vocational qualification. There is no attempt to adhere to guided learning hours for technical certificates and learners state that technical certificate test success is based on common sense. Some learners have had relevant training at work, but this had

not been planned, or used by Kita to support the evidence requirements of the NVQ. Learners are focused solely on their current job role.

45. The assessment processes are rigorous but insufficiently flexible to meet individual needs. The provider is heavily dependent on learners writing lengthy statements which link their activities to the occupational standards. This is particularly inappropriate for a group of learners for whom English is not their first language. There are few professional discussions, photographs, audio tapes, or videos used. Records of observations are long, with meticulous recording of what took place, but little detail of how the activity meets the requirements of the standards. Learners and training co-ordinators' work long and hard to fit written statements to the occupational standards, but most learners rely on training co-ordinators to cross-reference their evidence. Learners have insufficient opportunities to manage the assessment process.

46. There is insufficient planning of support for learners. The outcomes of initial assessment do not affect any planning of learning or assessment. Literacy and numeracy test results are not shared with learners and none of the learners are offered support with literacy, numeracy or language, even when test results identify a need. In theory, the provider has arrangements to refer learners who have additional learning needs to another provider. However, no referrals have taken place. The results of a 12-page learning styles assessment have no effect on the way the programme is provided. The individual learning plans record nothing more than the relevant qualification and the date at which funding will end. Regular reviews are used to set targets and assessment action plans, and employers often sign the forms, but they rarely participate in the reviews. Questions about health and safety and equal opportunities are included, but answers are vague and assessors have not been trained to ask more probing questions. As learners are already employed before the start of the programme there are few opportunities to offer information, advice or guidance.

Leadership and management

47. There have been recent changes in management, and communication and opportunities for staff to be more involved in planning have improved. Team meetings have recently included discussions on learners who are making slow progress, but this approach is not sufficiently developed to improve learners' progress and success rates.

48. Internal verification overall is satisfactory. Assessors are observed regularly and feedback is appropriately recorded. As there have been staff changes and long-term illness, standardisation meetings have been irregular and informal. Currently, internal verification is adequate to ensure consistency but not good enough to drive improvements. Other than internal verification, there is no formal quality assurance of key experiences.

49. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process, but the report overstates many key strengths and some key weaknesses are omitted, for example poor success rates and slow progress.

