

TDR Training Ltd

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded.....	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement	7
Main findings.....	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like.....	12
What learners think could improve	12
Sector subject areas	13
Science.....	13
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	16
Learners' achievements	19

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Science
- Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Description of the provider

1. Training Development Resources Ltd was established in 1998 as a registered charity. Its subsidiary company, TDR Training Ltd (TDR), was incorporated in 2001 to deliver commercial and government funded training. Its main base is on the Team Valley trading estate in Gateshead. TDR provides training in engineering and manufacturing, science, and construction plant operations. In engineering, just over 320 learners are on young apprenticeship, apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. Virtually all 91 science learners are on young apprenticeship programmes. In addition, TDR holds a contract for Train to Gain, with 87 learners in engineering and manufacturing, and 57 in construction plant operations. A significant proportion of training is subcontracted to local colleges and a private training provider. Approximately 75% of the company's business comes from government funding through the Tyne and Wear LSC.
2. In the Tyne and Wear area, the proportion of the local population comprising minority ethnic groups is 1.6% compared with 2.4% regionally, and 9% nationally. Unemployment is 6.0%, which is slightly above the national average of 5.5%, but below the regional average of 7.0%. The proportion of young people leaving school with five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including mathematics and English, is similar to the national average at 45%, but higher than the regional average of just over 40%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject areas

Science	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

3. The overall effectiveness of TDR is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all good. Equality of opportunity is good. Provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies and science is also good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

4. TDR has demonstrated it is now in a good position to make improvements. A clear and strong commitment exists within the organisation to continuously improve the quality of provision. The reinspection report in 2005 identified insufficient aspects of quality improvement. This and most other areas for improvement identified at that time have been, or are being, resolved. Inspectors judged quality improvement to be satisfactory overall. The progress identified at the quality monitoring visit in 2007 has been maintained and TDR has made significant improvements in quality procedures and processes. Monitoring of key learning processes is more effective, better management of the subcontractors exists, and use of feedback to contribute to improvement planning is more meaningful. Investment in resources to support learning and staff development has been good, and succession planning arrangements have been introduced for senior posts. Since the reinspection, TDR has dramatically improved retention rates on engineering advanced apprenticeship programmes, and overall success rates on young apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes are very high.
5. Inspection findings matched many of the judgements in the self-assessment report and in some areas the quality of provision is better than claimed in the report. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Self-assessment is regarded by staff as an important tool for improving the quality of provision, and staff are proactive in identifying areas for change and introducing improvements. The self-assessment report shows evidence of being evaluative and critical, and the quality improvement plan is a detailed record of how important changes and actions have been, or are being, implemented. However, in some areas the report is not well structured and it is inconsistent in its use of terminology, particularly in the analysis of learner performance data.

Key strengths

- Outstanding achievement on young apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in engineering
- High retention rates on young apprenticeships in science
- Good and improving retention on advanced apprenticeships in engineering
- Good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training in engineering
- Outstanding provision for young people from local schools
- Very comprehensive recruitment arrangements for science young apprentices
- Very good support for all learners
- Good strategic management
- Particularly effective links with external organisations and partners
- Good promotion of equality of opportunity
- Good management of subcontractors

Key areas for improvement

- Further improve success rates on advanced apprenticeships
- Consistency in the development of practical skills on science courses
- Further development of management information systems

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

6. Success rates on young apprentice programmes in engineering are outstanding, and the retention rate on the science programme is very high. A very high and increasing proportion of engineering young apprentices progress to relevant higher level courses or employment.
7. As identified in the self-assessment report, published data shows poor success rates for advanced apprentices in engineering. However, this data includes a significant number of learners who left TDR before 2004/05, but are still included in the calculation of overall success rates as they would have completed in the three years up to 2006/07. Data produced by the provider indicates that retention and achievement rates since 2004/05 have improved significantly. Since September 2004, 94% of learners starting the advanced apprenticeship have either successfully completed or are still on programme. Overall and timely success rates for apprenticeships are significantly above national averages, and have been for some time.
8. Success rates on Train to Gain are outstanding. Since TDR started delivering this programme, 494 learners have been enrolled. In 2006/07, 98% of the 96 leavers were successful. In 2007/08, 93% of the 253 leavers so far have been successful. Currently 145 learners are still on programme.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

9. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training in engineering is good. Employer staff have a very good understanding of framework requirements, and regularly attend meetings at the colleges and TDR. College projects are very employer focused, and projects completed on Train to Gain programmes are all work-based.
10. Provision for young people from local schools is outstanding. TDR staff are very effective in working with local schools and their pupils in raising awareness of the employment opportunities in engineering, manufacturing and science. The number of 14-16 years olds enrolling on this programme is high and increasing, and progression from these courses into relevant further education, training and employment is very high.

11. Recruitment arrangements for science young apprentices are comprehensive. These are the result of detailed planning and collaboration between TDR and its partner schools. Learners benefit from objective initial advice and guidance. Parents and employers are fully involved.
12. TDR provides very good support for all learners as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners with support needs have these identified at school. Staff in schools and in subcontracting colleges, along with employers, work co-operatively with TDR to ensure that support is provided as and when it is required. Employers who provide work placements are passionate about helping learners make progress on their young apprenticeship. Employers of advanced apprentices are fully involved in progress reviews, and show a very strong commitment to supporting their apprentices.
13. The development of practical skills on science courses is inconsistent. Science learners use laboratory facilities at local universities and colleges, and facilities vary from one institution to another. Problems have been encountered in finding suitable work placements. For a minority of learners, the shortcomings in their work placement and the variability in the quality of laboratories for practical work is impacting on their development of practical skills.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. Strategic management is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. It is supported by effective business planning, and a staged approach to change and growth. A clear focus exists on developing employability skills through the learning programmes. Strategies and objectives have been shared with staff, who are committed and enthusiastic about the future direction of TDR. Leadership is strong with effective support from the board. All staff have individual and team performance targets which are reviewed during appraisal. Staff training and development is purposeful, linked to objectives and targets and well resourced. Communication with staff is effective, and regular and informative meetings are used for action-planning and to share best practice.
15. Links with external organisations are particularly effective, as identified in the self-assessment report. TDR is responsive in meeting the needs of employers, schools and other partner organisations. Nationally and locally staff are actively involved in a wide range of initiatives including, for example, the development of the new diplomas in engineering. TDR has very good relationships with local schools, and contribute effectively to enhancing the schools' curriculum. Links

with employers are extensive and effective. All advanced apprentices now have employed status and all young apprentices have work placements.

16. Arrangements for managing subcontracted provision are good. Detailed service level agreements are in place. Regular visits are carried out by TDR co-ordinators to check learner progress, complete reviews and meet with college staff. Good communication ensures the subcontractors are well informed. The mutual exchange of self-assessment reports contributes to the understanding of each other's strengths and areas for improvement.
17. Initiatives to promote equality of opportunity are good. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is good, and particularly well promoted at induction and during progress reviews in engineering. Staff discuss equality and diversity issues confidently with learners, and they have benefited from recent training in dyslexia, *Every Child Matters* themes and age legislation. A detailed and appropriate action plan is monitored regularly to ensure progress. A good range of initiatives have been introduced to attract women and people from minority ethnic groups into engineering, and TDR staff are continuing to develop actions to widen participation. In science, 14% of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Equality of opportunity in the workplace is checked appropriately with all employers. Equality of opportunity data is collected and the performance of different groups is analysed effectively.
18. Information, advice and guidance for learners are particularly clear and very effective in ensuring learners make the right choice of programme. All learners are clearly informed about programme expectations, their responsibilities, and what future career and progression opportunities may be available. Health and safety issues and *Every Child Matters* themes are introduced and reinforced effectively throughout the programmes. However, the procedures for safeguarding learners do not meet current government requirements. Currently no policies and procedures are in place to cover the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
19. Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory overall. A comprehensive range of quality policies, procedures and work instructions are in place and they are reviewed regularly. Scheduled quality audits are completed and these successfully identify areas for improvement. The arrangements for the collection, analysis and use of feedback to contribute to improvement planning are particularly good. Improvements to the quality of teaching and learning have taken place. TDR managers complete joint observations of engineering classes in subcontracting colleges, and have access to the findings of college lesson observations. Any concerns regarding college teachers are discussed at contract monitoring meetings. Managers have recently started observing TDR staff who deliver training to science young apprentices. In all cases, good practice and areas for improvement are clearly identified, and the outcomes of all observed activities contribute to staff appraisals. The grading of lessons is thorough and accurate, but managers do not make sufficient use of this information in identifying trends in the quality of

teaching and learning over time. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. However, not all quality assurance arrangements are well established and applied consistently across the different learning programmes.

20. The management information system requires further development as recognised in the self-assessment report. Several improvements have been introduced to make better use of information. For example, the system now generates some good information to enable effective monitoring of learner progress. However, more than one system is being used by individual staff to record information. The system is not yet being used effectively to generate reports which enable managers to identify trends and improvements over time.

What learners like:

- 'My co-ordinator sets realistic and achievable targets for me'
- The very good support from TDR, work and college
- 'It's a more comfortable environment than school'
- 'I have a lot of contact with my assessor, they're always available and helpful'
- 'Targets are progressive, which helps you achieve'
- Being treated like adults, and being trusted
- Better facilities, tools and equipment than at school
- 'They make learning more fun'
- 'The courses helped me decide what I wanted to do'

What learners think could improve:

- 'I'd like more science trips and visits'
- 'I'd like my science work experience to have been more like real work'
- 'More time on my vocational science course'
- Better explanation of practical engineering tasks by college staff
- 'Use colleges that are nearer to learners homes, or that start later'

Sector subject areas

Science

Good: Grade 2

Context

21. TDR currently has two science apprentices and 89 young apprentices. The young apprentice programme in science started in 2006. The first group of 28 learners will complete in late July 2008 and 61 young apprentices in the second group will complete in July 2009. TDR works in partnership with eight local schools. Learners work out of school each week to follow a level 2 vocational science qualification. They also follow a double award applied science qualification in school.

Strengths

- High retention rates for young apprenticeship programme
- Very comprehensive recruitment arrangements
- Very good support for learners
- Very effective links with external partners

Areas for improvement

- Greater consistency in the development of practical skills

Achievement and standards

22. Achievement and standards are good. All learners currently on programme started their two year programmes in September 2006 or later. Data indicates that success rates for the first group will be high. Retention on the young apprenticeship programme is also high, with 88% of the first group still in learning at the end of their two year programme, and 95% of the second group still in learning at the end of their first year. Destination data for the first group shows that 64% of young apprentices plan to continue with education or training in science. Learners develop high levels of personal confidence and good vocational skills and knowledge. This has enhanced their performance on qualifications in applied science at school. Although most learners develop good practical skills, insufficient suitable work placements and variable laboratory facilities are preventing a minority of learners achieving their full potential in this aspect.

Quality of provision

23. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Learners' work is well presented and of the required standard. Assessment meets all awarding body requirements and learners receive appropriate and supportive feedback. Learner progress

reviews are effective and occur at least every six weeks. They cover health and safety, equality and diversity, progress on the programme and personal issues. Monitoring of learner progress is effective and learners are well informed of what they have to do to complete their qualification. Training staff agree short- and medium-term targets with learners during reviews, but they are not always specific and some are not followed up sufficiently at subsequent reviews. Currently, science learners use laboratory facilities at local universities and colleges, and the equipment and technical support varies from one institution to another. Problems have been encountered in finding appropriate and relevant work placements for some of the first groups of learners. Both of these areas for improvement are identified in the self-assessment report.

24. The young apprenticeship science programme is part of TDR's outstanding range of vocational training for young people from local schools. The recruitment process for science young apprentices is very comprehensive and is the product of detailed planning and collaboration between TDR and partner schools. All staff involved in the recruitment process ensure that potential learners benefit from objective advice and guidance in selecting from available options. This process includes a presentation in Year 9, to generate initial interest and applications. Learners and their parents are then invited to an evening event to discuss the programme in more detail. Following this, applications are forwarded to TDR who interview all applicants with the assistance of representatives from employers and schools. All applicants receive feedback on their performance and the successful applicants then attend an induction session. Additional learning needs are well supported. Learners with support needs have these identified by their schools, and the school provides the necessary support. One learner, for example, with Asperger's syndrome receives individual support from a teaching assistant who accompanies him to his vocational studies at college, and on work placement. Once on the programme learners participate in a number of trips and educational visits which are informative and enjoyable.
25. Support for learners on the young apprenticeship programme is very good. Learners receive a high level of support from staff at TDR, which is supplemented by school staff who work co-operatively with TDR to ensure that support is provided as and when it is required. In addition, the employers who provide work placements are passionate about helping young learners make progress on their young apprenticeship, and encouraging them to commit to a career in science. Employers are very supportive of learners on work placement.

Leadership and management

26. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. As identified in the self-assessment report, links with external partners are very effective. TDR has taken a lead in developing very effective links between the schools involved in the young apprenticeship programme and employers, to share best practice and further develop the programme. This co-operation has led, for example, to projects being tailored to better fit the needs of employers and so provide a more realistic work placement for learners. Quality assurance arrangements are

effective and include learner and employer surveys. Assessment and internal verifications meets all awarding body requirements.

27. Equality and diversity issues are effectively covered at induction using materials produced by the LSC. However, the opportunities that this presents for further discussion of these issues later in the course are not actively pursued.
28. Staff are well qualified in science and possess the necessary assessor and verifier awards where required. Those involved in teaching do not possess teacher training qualifications but teachers are observed as part of TDR's lesson observation system, and they work together to develop teaching and learning styles. All teaching staff will begin a relevant teaching qualification in September 2008.
29. The science team meets formally each quarter and also has regular days off-site when they focus on particular areas for development. At one of these events they collectively discussed the science section of the self-assessment report, the production of which was then led by the science co-ordinator. Inspection findings generally matched the findings of this report. Most the strengths were confirmed and it was found that the areas for improvement were overstated as the two listed could be seen as separate elements of a single issue.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

30. TDR delivers training in various engineering disciplines for a range of age groups. Currently 166 young apprentices are enrolled on programmes for 14-16 year olds. In work-based learning TDR has four apprentices, 142 advanced apprentices and 95 Train to Gain learners. TDR has subcontracting arrangements with a number of local colleges for most of its provision. They work with local schools to promote engineering as a career path for young people. TDR's industrial partners range from large multi-national companies to small engineering companies employing only a few staff. Train to Gain clients cover a wide range and include packaging manufacturers and service industries for the food sector. In addition to the provision in scope for this inspection, TDR also has 12 learners on its tomorrow's engineers programme, and 69 student engineering apprentices. Neither of these areas were covered by this inspection, but the student engineering apprentices programme provides progression for some young apprentices, and all of these programmes feed into the advanced apprenticeship programme.

Strengths

- Outstanding achievement on young apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes
- Good and improving retention on advanced apprenticeships
- Good achievement of additional qualifications
- Good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- Outstanding provision for young people from local schools
- Very good support for all learners
- Very good equality and diversity reinforcement on apprenticeship programmes

Areas for improvement

- Success rates on advanced apprenticeships programmes

Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards in engineering and manufacturing are good overall. Achievement rates on the young apprenticeship programme in engineering are outstanding. Of the 46 learners starting the two-year programme in 2005, 88% have successfully completed, and of the 60 learners starting in 2006, 91% have been successful. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes are also outstanding. In 2006/07, 98% of the 96 leavers were successful. In 2007/08, 93% of the 253 leavers so far were successful.

32. Retention on advanced apprenticeships is good and improving. Historical data for this programme indicates poor success rates. However, this data includes a

significant number of learners who left the programme several years ago, but who were due to complete over the past three years. Since September 2004, 94% of learners starting the advanced apprenticeship have either successfully completed or are still on programme. Recent improvements to the programme have yet to impact upon success rates as calculated by the new measures of success.

33. Achievement of additional qualifications by advanced apprentices is good. Learners complete a wide range of industrially relevant training programmes and many progress to higher education. Key skills required by the apprenticeship framework are now completed during the first year of the apprenticeship programme.

Quality of provision

34. The quality of training and education is good. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is good. Company training staff have a very good understanding of framework requirements. Employer staff regularly attend college meetings and TDR open evenings. College projects are very employer focused, many project recommendations have been adopted by companies, leading to improved efficiency. Business improvement techniques projects completed on Train to Gain programmes are all work-based, and they have tangible benefits for the companies involved. In a number of cases, TDR has arranged specialist provision for individual learners. One company required an engineering learner to develop expertise in painting and coatings. TDR identified a source for the training which the learner successfully completed.
35. The range of provision is good and meets the needs of learners and employers. TDR has an outstanding range of vocational training for young people from local schools. TDR staff are very effective in working with local schools and their pupils in raising awareness of the employment opportunities in engineering and manufacturing, and significant numbers of Year 10 pupils enrol on their vocational programmes. The number of 14-16 year olds enrolling on this programme is increasing, and progression from these courses into further education, training and employment in the engineering sector is very high.
36. Support for all learners on engineering programmes is very good. Young apprentices are well supported while attending local colleges where they develop practical skills. All new entrants to programmes are screened for their additional support needs, and where these are identified, appropriate support is quickly in place. TDR training staff visit work-based learners frequently. Learners in employment are well supported by their employers, with some learners being assigned graduate mentors to support learning in areas such as mathematics and science. Companies readily fund additional training and qualifications. Many learners on the advanced apprenticeship programme progress to higher level study, and many companies offer financial inducements for successful completions. One company involved in Train to Gain pays staff overtime to attend training and assessment sessions.

37. Resources for training in the workplace and the subcontracting colleges are satisfactory overall. Resources in most companies, for on-the-job training are good. Some of the larger companies have very sophisticated and expensive computer controlled manufacturing cells. Learners develop a wide range of skills within the workplace, working on a range of machines and equipment. A very wide range of training opportunities is on offer to the learners.

Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management of engineering and manufacturing programmes are good. Management of subcontracted provision is good. Reinforcement of equality and diversity is very good, both at induction and particularly during progress reviews with learners. During their reviews learners are asked to consider some challenging scenarios covering aspects of equality and diversity. Themes covered include terrorist attacks, such as the London bombings, the problems associated with the olympic torch visiting countries around the world, and the history of minority ethnic footballers in national team. Learners are set targets requiring them to investigate topics to be discussed, and their understanding of these issues is thoroughly tested at future reviews.

39. Assessment and internal verification meet all awarding body requirements and are well managed. Clear schedules are in place for assessment and verification. Progress reviews are effective and frequent. They involve company representatives whenever possible, and company training managers are kept fully informed of the progress of their learners, and assessment requirements. Progress is now recorded using electronic portfolios which both staff and learners prefer to previous methods. The approach to health and safety is well managed, and work placements and employers' premises provide a safe working environment for learners.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the provider 2004 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	210	31	56	20	47
		timely	201	22	33	15	26
	2005/06	overall	320	29	54	18	48
		timely	321	26	35	15	31
	2006/07	overall	90	38	70	34	66
		timely	84	30	44	26	41
Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	24	79	52	79	42
		timely	34	41	26	41	19
	2005/06	overall	33	97	56	97	50
		timely	23	91	36	91	32
	2006/07	overall	15	93	67	93	62
		timely	20	95	45	70	40

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain programmes managed by the provider 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain***	2006/07	overall	96	98%
		timely		
	2007/08 (11 months)	overall	253	93%
		timely		

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

*** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'skills for life'