

INSPECTION REPORT

Employment & Regeneration Partnership Limited

27 May 2005



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.

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*

INSPECTION REPORT

Employment & Regeneration Partnership Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Employment & Regeneration Partnership Limited (ERP) is a not-for-profit company, established in 2000. It has a board of voluntary directors drawn from the private, public, voluntary and trade union sectors. ERP is one of the main operating companies within the Manchester Enterprises Group. Since 2000, ERP has grown in terms of staffing, turnover, geographical coverage and the services that it offers. It has over 274 staff, 22 centres and a forecast turnover for 2005-06 of £15.5m.
2. ERP provides a wide variety of learning programmes under contract to the Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus. There are also two European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed contracts with the LSC.
3. Each of ERP's 22 centres serves an area-based regeneration programme or group of wards that have high levels of deprivation. Seventeen of its centres are located in the top 10 per cent of the most deprived wards in England. The proportion of ERP's learners from minority ethnic groups exceeds that of the local population. Twenty-nine per cent of adult foundation learners and 20 per cent of Entry to Employment (E2E) learners are from minority ethnic groups.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** ERP's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Overall, the foundation provision is outstanding. Construction provision is satisfactory.
5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process involved all staff through the regular meeting structure of the company. At the time of the inspection, many of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report had already been acted upon. Inspectors agreed with many of the previous strengths and weaknesses and acknowledged the changes to the provision that ERP had made between writing the self-assessment report and the inspection. The construction self-assessment report did not relate to the provision that was inspected, as this was a new programme.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** ERP has good arrangement to promote improvements. There are extensive arrangements for the collection and analysis of feedback. The company uses a separate agency to collate and analyse the data impartially and it then actions recommendations for improvements.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EMPLOYMENT & REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP LIMITED:

- maintain and improve the high-quality provision

EMPLOYMENT & REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP LIMITED

- improve the quality and consistency of learners' progress reviews
- improve arrangements for monitoring equality of opportunity in workplaces
- increase the amount of analysis of data for equality of opportunity

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		2

Construction			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Building services			
Other government-funded provision	25	3	

Foundation programmes			1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ESOL			2
Other government-funded provision	52	2	
Work-based learning for adults	41	2	
Employer training pilot	23	2	
Employability/employment training			1
New Deal for young people	67	1	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	63	1	
Entry to Employment	299	1	
Literacy and numeracy			2
Other government-funded provision	42	2	
Employer training pilot	50	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. This inspection reported on all areas of learning that ERP offers. The foundation area of learning was inspected with contributory areas of employability, literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Within employability, the programmes of E2E, New Deal 18-24 and work-based learning for adults were graded separately. Within literacy and numeracy, the employer training pilot (ETP) and other government-funded programmes were graded separately. Within ESOL, the ETP, work-based learning for adults and other government-funded programmes were graded separately. Construction was given a generic grade.

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	40
Number of learners interviewed	280
Number of staff interviewed	133
Number of employers interviewed	12
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	38
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	10

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **There are excellent job outcomes on all adult programmes.** Job outcomes have steadily increased over the past three years for all Jobcentre Plus programmes. The increase on basic employability training (BET) programmes is from 20 per cent gaining employment in 2001-02, to 53 per cent in 2004-05 at the time of the inspection. This is an increase over the past three years of 33 per cent and the BET job outcomes are now twice the national target. In 2003-04, the first year of E2E, 50 per cent of learners have progressed into employment, further education or training. At the time of inspection, 59 per cent of learners on the current programme have achieved qualifications in literacy, numeracy or vocational qualifications at level 1 and above.

9. **ESOL participants develop very effective employability skills.** They have well-organised files, demonstrate good progress and their standard of class work is good. Tutors plan the sessions to enable them to practise spoken English in the context of real-life situations and work environments. Participants develop effective personal skills to express their views and opinions about equality of opportunity in the work and social environments.

10. **ERP has significantly increased the availability and take-up of external accreditation for literacy and numeracy participants.** They are entered for the certificate in adult literacy or numeracy at any level from entry 1 to level 2 and take the tests at all venues, including on employers' sites.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Foundation programmes	1	23	9	1	34
Total	1	23	9	1	34

11. **ERP offers a good range of flexible foundation programmes.** The company has succeeded in bidding for new funds and deploying them imaginatively to develop different programmes. It offers individual support and group work of varying durations and at a time to suit participants. It tailors the content of all programmes to suit individual participants' needs, as negotiated with employers and the participants themselves. ERP targets the most

vulnerable participants and those in areas of high deprivation. Effective use of other government funding, such as co-financing through the ESF, means those who are ineligible for other programmes can receive support.

12. ERP makes very good support for learners with dyslexia a priority. Comprehensive dyslexia awareness training has been delivered in-house, giving tutors hints on what to look out for and strategies for support. Teaching staff are beginning to use dyslexia support strategies in their general teaching.

13. There is particularly effective pastoral support for participants on all employability programmes. ERP holds breakfast clubs in all the centres that deliver E2E programmes. It uses effective links with outside agencies to support participants and help them overcome barriers to progression and moving into a job.

14. Learners on construction programmes receive particularly good support. ERP carries out learners' progress reviews in the workplace every four weeks and more frequent informal visits to support them. It identifies additional learning support needs at initial assessment. Specialist, qualified staff provide effective support for numeracy, literacy and ESOL in two-hour planned evening sessions at ERP's centres. There is effective integration of literacy and numeracy into the core construction vocational subject.

15. The monitoring of construction learners' achievements is effective. The assessors who know the extent of learners' achievements maintain good records. Detailed duplicated records identify what learners have achieved and what they need to do to progress. This motivates the learners effectively and they speak highly of the close monitoring of their progress.

16. ERP provides a good range of courses at local venues for ESOL participants to progress from pre-entry levels. There are options for them to participate in the extensive range of social and personal development programmes. Participants also have jobsearch and information and communications technology (ICT) sessions.

17. Teaching and learning are very good across all of the employability programmes. Staff are very enthusiastic and there are good relationship between tutors and participants. Tutors demonstrate a sound knowledge of participants' needs and inspire and encourage them, many of whom have considerable barriers to learning. Many of the sessions are fun and cover relevant job-related topics.

18. Teaching in ESOL is good. Tutors know their participants' needs well. Their profiles are detailed, with clearly identified personal backgrounds, needs and learning levels. Most of the lessons are planned to meet the targets set in the individual learning plans. In the good lessons, tutors engage the participants with lively activities that keep them alert and enable them to communicate purposefully.

19. Most foundation learners benefit from good target-setting and reviews of progress. ERP reviews foundation learners regularly but there are some inconsistencies in target-setting when it completes the learners' E2E Passport and reviews of progress. In some cases, the content of the targets set is insufficiently detailed and some reviews are not sufficiently detailed. There is a small proportion of targets that are expressed too closely in terms of the adult core curriculum and in language inaccessible to lower level learners.

20. In construction, training is satisfactory. All training and assessment are carried out in the workplace. Little off-the-job training is required for some aspects of construction site logistics. There is an emphasis in the programme on the recognition and accreditation of skills previously acquired.

21. Teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. The better sessions include varied topics and pace and clear explanations. Tutors question the learners to check their understanding. Schemes of work for ETP are well planned to cover a mix of generic literacy and numeracy at the outset and move on to more specifically job-related projects. However, some tutors in this area are over-reliant on work sheets, using paper-based activities in preference for real-life resources or learning aids.

22. Resources for all foundation programmes are satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Teaching and learning materials are satisfactory. Many tutors use relevant, context-based and real-life materials to provide the learners with enjoyable learning experiences.

23. Resources for the construction programmes are satisfactory. All training is in the workplace and little specialist equipment and tools are required. However, ERP provides adequate resources for learners to carry out on-the-job tasks safely and efficiently.

24. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory for all areas of learning. Assessment is fair, accurate and conforms to awarding body standards. It is planned and learners are aware of when their assessment will take place. Assessment is carried out on a formative basis and ERP records all decisions effectively.

25. Basic skills tutors provide literacy and numeracy support, or ERP refers learners to learndirect where basic skills programmes and testing is easily accessible. **However, in some programmes, there is insufficient attention at review to progress made on literacy and numeracy needs identified at initial assessment.**

26. The range of construction provision is satisfactory. ERP limits its construction programmes to a new programme of construction logistic skills. In partnership with the local LSC, Manchester Enterprises (ME) and major construction employers, ERP has researched and developed the demand for this provision. It has provided a programme that meets the needs of the industry, employers and learners from disadvantaged areas, the unemployed and people under threat of redundancy.

27. In construction, learners' progress reviews are inadequate. ERP carries them out in the workplace every four weeks but they are not thorough and make little reference to pastoral issues.

Leadership and management

28. **The range and quality of partnership work are very good.** The company is an active member of strategic partnership groups and practitioner groups for the different E2E providers in the Greater Manchester area, providing the opportunity to share ideas. Several innovative initiatives involving large employers such as a local NHS trust have resulted in permanent jobs for ERP's learners.

29. **The strategic management at ERP is clear.** The board of directors and senior management have a clear vision of the company's purpose to support and regenerate disadvantaged communities. ERP's position as part of a wider group of companies stimulating economic development enables it to focus more effectively on its specific role within the overall strategy. Enhanced funding is sought and negotiated where possible to improve the learners' experience. Senior managers adopt an open, democratic style of management and staff have a strong sense of loyalty to and ownership of the company.

30. **The operational management at ERP is good.** Staff work effectively as teams to benefit the learners. There is a good system of meetings of different groups of staff, which the company records effectively and monitors the resulting actions. ERP uses e-mail, its intranet and a recently established company newsletter effectively to help keep staff across the 22 centres informed and involved in developments.

31. **ERP has a very good strategic approach to widening the participation of learners from under-represented groups.** This includes clear targeting of these groups. The range of actions to promote participation includes the location of training centres within shopping centres in deprived areas. Seventeen of ERP's 21 training centres are located in the top 10 per cent of the most deprived wards in England.

32. **ERP takes highly effective actions to meet the diverse needs of learners and staff.** There is an individual approach to meeting the diverse needs of the learners throughout the company. The cultural range within the staff group has a good match with that of the learner group.

33. **ERP has particularly effective arrangements to promote continuous improvement.** It has comprehensive arrangements to collect and analyse the views of learners, employers, and others, on the quality of provision. ERP uses a good variety of methods to collect views, including online and paper-based questionnaires, breakfast clubs and discussion forums.

34. Arrangements for monitoring the learners' work placements are satisfactory. ERP uses its wide range of contacts to help obtain good-quality and supportive work placements, well matched to the learners and their programme. Qualified health and safety staff carry out a detailed audit and risk banding on all work placements and ERP's own centres.

35. ERP has satisfactory arrangements to set up and monitor subcontracted provision. The company uses subcontractors effectively to enable a wider range of training opportunities for the learners.

36. The recently revised equality and diversity policy is detailed and satisfactorily meets all relevant legislation. There is a range of linked human resource policies and procedures, including harassment and bullying, a disability statement, and policies on statutory and special leave. ERP promotes equality and diversity satisfactorily to learners within its centres, through induction, reviews, sessions, displayed materials and agreed codes of conduct.

37. While at least satisfactory systems exist for most aspects of quality improvement, ERP is making many revisions to improve provision and not all of these revisions are fully established.

38. **The arrangements for monitoring equality practices in work placements are not sufficiently developed.** While there is a written agreement for working with placements and employers, it does not sufficiently specify the requirements for equality of opportunity. Nor does it clearly identify the methods of monitoring equality practices in the workplace.

39. **Analysis of data for equality and diversity is insufficient.** Collection of data by gender, ethnicity and disability is satisfactory. ERP has recently defined the data requirements for monitoring participation and achievement levels. Although the company collects the data, it does not use it fully to identify actions to improve participation and achievement for specific under-represented groups.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategic management
- very good partnership work
- good operational management
- very good strategies to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups
- highly effective actions to meet diverse needs of learners and staff
- particularly effective arrangements to promote continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed arrangements for monitoring equality practices in work placements
- insufficient analysis of data for equal opportunities

Construction

Strengths

- particularly good support
- effective monitoring of progress

Weaknesses

- inadequate learners' progress reviews

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective development of employability skills
- good teaching and learning
- good target-setting and reviews

- good range of programmes

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Employability/employment training

Grade 1

Strengths

- excellent job outcomes on adult learning programmes
- good achievement and progression
- very good teaching and learning
- particularly effective pastoral support for learners
- very effective management of employability programmes

Weaknesses

- inconsistent target-setting

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective use of accreditation
- good target-setting and progress reviews
- good range of flexible programmes
- very good support for learners with dyslexia

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT & REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP LIMITED:

- meeting new people
- 'we respect each other'
- 'I feel like I am with my family'
- the fantastic support
- gaining employment
- 'having fun'
- gaining confidence

WHAT LEARNERS THINK EMPLOYMENT & REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of outings and trips for E2E participants
- the number of numeracy sessions for ESOL participants
- the length of courses - they could be longer
- the signposting outside buildings
- the amount of space

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- clear strategic management
- very good partnership work
- good operational management
- very good strategies to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups
- highly effective actions to meet diverse needs of learners and staff
- particularly effective arrangements to promote continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed arrangements for monitoring equality practices in work placements
- insufficient analysis of data for equal opportunities

40. The strategic management at ERP is clear. The board of directors has a clear vision of the purpose of the company in existing to support and regenerate disadvantaged communities. The local authorities were instrumental in helping the company's formation in 2000 and links with them remain strong. Five local authorities are represented on the board of voluntary directors and provide valuable direction to company strategy. Board meetings give appropriate attention to the strategic direction and focus of the company and monitor overall organisational performance and financial performance. The company has a recognition agreement with the UK's largest trade union for consultation and negotiation over staff-related issues, and a representative from the union sits on the company's board. ERP's position as part of a wider group of companies stimulating economic development enables it to focus more effectively on its specific role within the overall strategy. Valuable support is provided from the wider group, which helps to provide financial stability, access to specific expertise for company services, such as information technology, human resources and finance, and additional thorough monitoring of performance. ERP's senior management have a clear focus on its purpose of community regeneration. Enhanced funding is searched and negotiated where possible to improve the learners' experience, for example by paying them a wage while on their learning programme, or to extend the programme where appropriate to their needs. Senior managers adopt an open, democratic style of management and staff have a strong sense of loyalty to and ownership of the company. Many of the company's managers have been promoted from within to their present role. ERP monitors its financial arrangements carefully. Staff discuss the company's key performance indicators at team meetings. The company is reviewing staff job descriptions to readily identify transferability with similar roles, to help secure the future of both individuals and the company in changing circumstances.

41. The range and quality of partnership work are very good. The company is an active member of the strategic partnership group and practitioner group for the different E2E providers in the Greater Manchester area, giving opportunity to share ideas for good

practice. It has been active on a national advisory group for the E2E programme. An innovative project in partnership with a local council helps people currently on incapacity benefit who want to return to work. A project run in conjunction with the city council gives learners a guaranteed interview for employment with the council on successful completion of the training. Of 58 learners who have completed the course since it started in September 2003, 39 gained employment, of whom 35 are still in post. There are very good links with employers, which create real employment opportunities for learners. An employment agency operated by the company supports transition back into employment by guaranteeing a full-time wage even between periods of employment, using the time to provide training to further develop their skills. The company also specialises in creating links with employers for the employment of disadvantaged groups, such as those with disability, those from minority ethnic groups, and older people. A partnership with the NHS Trust provides increased opportunities for the employment of local people in the health service. Learners on funded programmes benefit from the extensive range of employer contacts and a high proportion are successful in obtaining work.

42. The operational management at ERP is good. Staff work effectively as teams to benefit the learners. Communications across the company are good. There is a good system of meetings of different groups of staff, which ERP records effectively and monitors the resulting actions. The company uses e-mail, its intranet and a recently established company newsletter effectively to help keep staff across the 22 centres informed and involved in developments. ERP monitors staff performance at team level, and sets team targets through the annual business plan. The process for carrying out staff appraisals has recently been revised to incorporate monitoring of performance and to set targets for the coming period. Staff recruitment practice includes targeted promotion of vacancies to under-represented groups and encourages the employment of ex-offenders where appropriate. Staff who wish to consider wider opportunities for their future, within or beyond their current post, can request a career development interview with a senior manager to consider their future role and potential.

43. The provision of support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs is well organised. After initial assessment, basic skills tutors provide support or the learners are referred to learndirect programmes. Testing is easily accessible and offered at a variety of locations and times.

44. Team leaders have carried out informal observations of learning for some years. ERP has revised the procedure recently and the observer now keeps a detailed record, including useful suggestions for improving practice. The company carried out observations of the different activities with learners, including group sessions and individual progress reviews, and including those carried out by subcontractors. The quality of teaching and learning in most sessions is good. Staff are appropriately qualified and benefit from a well-resourced development programme that encourages personal and professional development as well as competence in their current role. Management of physical resources is satisfactory. ERP chooses and reviews centre locations carefully to help fulfil its mission to support the economically inactive and disadvantaged into sustainable employment.

45. Arrangements for monitoring work placements for learners are satisfactory. The company uses its wide range of contacts to help obtain good-quality and supportive work placements, well matched to the learners and their programme. Qualified health and safety staff carry out a detailed audit and risk banding on all work placements and the company's

own centres. ERP's staff reinforce health and safety during regular visits, for example, as part of learners' progress reviews. Discussions are held regarding content of on-the-job training which will best support the learner, but these are not formalised to help ensure best use is made of workplace training opportunities while on the programme.

46. ERP uses subcontractors effectively to enable a wider range of training opportunities for learners. It has satisfactory arrangements to set up and monitor such contracts. The company is itself a subcontractor for its LSC-funded provision, from the parent company, ME. Its thorough monitoring arrangements check contractual, financial and quality issues regularly.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

47. ERP has a very good strategic approach to widening the participation of learners from under-represented groups. This includes clear targeting of these groups. The range of actions to promote participation includes the location of training centres within shopping centres in deprived areas. Seventeen of ERP's 22 training centres are located in the top 10 per cent most deprived wards in England. ERP has an open-door policy for learners, many of whom have significant personal and social barriers to gaining employment. In addition, ERP has developed an extensive range of effective strategic partnerships to promote participation from under-represented groups. Partnership with a local NHS trust resulted in 33 long-term unemployed adults from minority ethnic groups gaining employment. Strategic links with the Greater Manchester Police resulted in seven of ERP's learners from minority ethnic groups gaining permanent employment. Another project targets unemployed adults over 50 years of age. ERP operates a social employment agency that particularly supports disadvantaged people into jobs. Further work supports the learners' transition from prison into ERP's programmes.

48. The company takes highly effective actions to meet the diverse needs of learners and staff. It has an individualised approach to meeting the learners' diverse needs. The cultural range within the staff group has a good match with that of the learner group. Staff have empathy for and work effectively with the learners, many of whom have significant social and personal barriers to achievement, such as visual impairment, dyslexia, mental health issues, and drug and alcohol dependency. Some learners have anti-social behaviour orders against them or are ex-offenders. ERP's well-established links with a wide range of specialist agencies enables them to provide effective support through counsellors, drug and alcohol prevention agencies, sexual health organisations and specialist support for learners with disabilities. The company has purchased aids and adaptations for learners, including magnifying aids for those with visual impairment, sign language interpreters for deaf learners, and tinted glasses for learners with dyslexia. In one instance, ERP arranged an extensive package of support to help learners with disabilities establish their own business. In addition, the company provides learners on employability programmes with breakfast each morning, which encourages punctuality. Individual programmes are flexible to meet specific circumstances such as childcare responsibilities, prayer needs, and part-time evening jobs. Similarly, ERP meets the diverse needs of its staff effectively and flexibly. This is supported by detailed statutory and special leave policies. For instance, the company arranges flexible hours for staff who need time to attend courses or who are returning to work after maternity leave or long-term sickness absence, and provide counselling for staff with mental health illness. ERP's human resource department carefully monitors such support. The company used Access to Work funding effectively to provide adaptive technology for a staff member with visual impairment.

49. The recently revised equality and diversity policy is detailed and satisfactorily meets all relevant legislation. The company has a range of linked human resource policies and procedures, including harassment and bullying, a disability statement, and policies on statutory and special leave. ERP promotes equality and diversity satisfactorily to learners within centres through induction, reviews, sessions, displayed materials and agreed codes of conduct. The company keeps its staff well informed of developments in equality and diversity through a range of satisfactory arrangements, including recent staff development and team meetings. Marketing leaflets satisfactorily portray positive images to reflect the learners' cultural diversity and are available in a range of minority languages. ERP dealt with a recent equality complaint promptly and efficiently. The company has carried out a thorough audit of access to its buildings and has identified actions to bring about improvement. Access to training centres is satisfactory. ERP satisfactorily meets its duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote racial equality.

50. The arrangements for monitoring equality practices in work placements are not sufficiently developed. While there is a written agreement for working with placements and employers, it does not sufficiently specify the requirements for equality of opportunity and does not clearly identify the methods of monitoring equality practices in the workplace. Very recently, the company produced a satisfactory employers' toolkit, which includes equality and diversity, but it is too early to judge its effect. Recently ERP provided training for employers, focusing on racial equality. Six employers attended this training and ERP has plans to provide further sessions. While the reviews in training centres satisfactorily monitor equality of opportunity, monitoring of equality of opportunity during placement reviews is inconsistent.

51. The company's analysis of data for equality and diversity is insufficient. Collection of data by gender, ethnicity and disability is satisfactory. ERP has recently defined the data requirements for monitoring participation and achievement levels. Although the company collects the data, it does not use it fully to identify actions to improve participation and achievement for specific under-represented groups. Written plans indicate that the board intends to use this data to establish key performance indicators for the monitoring and improvement of performance, but this has not yet taken place.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

52. ERP has particularly effective arrangements to promote continuous improvement. It has comprehensive arrangements to collect and analyse the views of learners, employers, and others, on the quality of provision. The company uses a good variety of methods to collect views, including online and paper-based questionnaires, breakfast clubs and discussion forums. Questionnaires have been revised several times to improve their usability. ERP produces good-quality displays to inform learners and staff of significant results of evaluations, and what actions it will take to improve its training provision. To encourage the impartial presentation of results, a separate company carries out the collation and analysis of feedback. While most results arrive quickly, a few are delayed, which prevents the timely implementation of improvements.

53. ERP's sixth and most recent self-assessment report was prepared in April 2005, one month before the inspection, but a number of weaknesses that the company identified had already been rectified by the time of inspection. The self-assessment process involved all staff through the meeting structure within the company. Most staff have a good

understanding of the self-assessment and any improvements needed. The self-assessment report was too descriptive in some parts but agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors identified, although improvements to provision had changed the emphasis of some judgements by the time of the inspection.

54. ERP has recently revised and updated the well-established quality assurance system extensively in order to make it more readily useable by staff across the company. It is introducing a new computer-based package to improve control of, and access to, procedures and working documents across its centres. The company will use the system to record complaints, observations of teaching and learning, appraisals and other processes that it currently keeps separately. ERP has successfully gained external certification for the quality assurance systems and for the quality of its advice and guidance. The company has used its preparation for these external assessments to improve quality, for example by obtaining more feedback from learners and others to help develop improvements.

55. ERP has effective processes for internal verification, with separate, appropriate instructions for the verification of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and for other qualifications. Sampling is appropriately thorough, and ongoing throughout the programme. The company accreditation manager maintains a good overall monitoring system and makes it available to other staff as required.

56. While the company's systems for most aspects of quality improvement are at least satisfactory, it is making many revisions to improve provision and not all of them are fully established. ERP carries out regular audits on learner-related documents, but not all of them are completed sufficiently thoroughly. For example, some individual learning plans and learners' progress reviews are not completed sufficiently well. A company-wide skills for life strategy has been prepared and, while early indications suggest more staff awareness of relevant issues and more learners taking relevant courses and accreditation, it is too early to fully assess the effect of any changes. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. ERP prepares management information regularly and the different levels of management use it to make decisions. Some management information reports are unsuccessful in presenting complex performance data in a concise and useful form, and the company does not make best use of it in stimulating discussion and action. ERP is preparing a new system to improve the quality of management information, but it is not yet in full use across the company.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Building services Other government-funded provision	25	3

57. The construction training programme is designed for learners from disadvantaged local areas, the short-term unemployed in transient employment or those made redundant. There are 25 learners on construction site logistics programme working towards NVQs at level 2 and the construction skills certification scheme. A number of learners were employed with the construction company as well as others being employed with ERP's own social employment agency, and carry out all of their training in the workplace. ERP's advisers visit the workplace every four weeks to carry out learners' progress reviews. A qualified assessor employed by a subcontracted training provider carries out assessment in the workplace. Learners are referred to ERP by local colleges of further education, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions or employers wanting to develop unqualified staff. ERP carries out initial assessment and induction to match learners to the programme and identify any additional learning needs. ERP provides additional learning support in workshop sessions carried out by qualified, specialist staff.

Strengths

- particularly good support
- effective monitoring of progress

Weaknesses

- inadequate learners' progress reviews

Achievement and standards

58. The construction site logistics NVQ programme is new. Fifteen learners are progressing well and have achieved either four or five of the six units required for a full qualification award. Four other learners are making slower progress and have not yet achieved any of the required units. Six learners have yet to reach the training stage of the programme. These learners are receiving additional support for literacy and numeracy or ESOL. No learner has achieved a full award. All learners have been successful in achieving the additional qualification of the construction skills certification scheme. Learners develop satisfactory skills within the workplace and demonstrate satisfactory ability in the control and distribution of construction materials and equipment in and around the construction site. Portfolios of evidence are satisfactorily compiled and presented and, while there is little written work, evidence for background knowledge and competence is of a diverse nature. No learners have left the programme yet.

The quality of provision

59. ERP provides its learners with particularly good support. It carries out learners' progress reviews in the workplace every four weeks and more frequent informal visits to support the learner. The company identifies additional learning support needs at initial assessment. It provides effective support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL by qualified, specialist staff in two-hour planned evening sessions at ERP's centres. There is effective integration of literacy and numeracy into the core construction vocational subject. A qualified assessor also visits the workplace each week to assess and support the learners. The company carries out assessment reviews effectively and provides the learners with good written feedback on their progress. All learners are employed and ERP provides the learners with good support to gain employment at an early stage in the training programme. Learners who are not initially employed are placed with ERP's own social employment agency on a weekly 35-hour paid contract of employment. The company provides work placements which are then quickly converted into full-time employment. In co-operation with employers and other external agencies, ERP staff provide good support to sustain employment. Liaison with other existing and planned project groups is taking place to enable the transfer of learners should the need arise.

60. The monitoring of learners' progress is effective. The assessors who know the extent of learners' achievements maintain good records. Detailed duplicated records identify what learners have achieved and what they need to do to progress. This motivates the learners effectively and they speak highly of the close monitoring of their progress. ERP sets targets to encourage employers to provide the required training and the learners to progress. The company updates all learners' monitoring documents regularly and routinely, and monitors learners' progress against target dates. It then reviews and amends learners' individual learning plans to record their progress towards their intended goal. ERP effectively monitors the subcontractor that carries out the assessment process. ERP has records of all learners' progress.

61. Instruction and training are satisfactory. ERP carries out all training and assessment in the workplace. Little formal training is required for some aspects of construction site logistics. The emphasis for this programme is on the recognition and accreditation of skills previously acquired. Experienced, qualified staff in the subcontractor's well-resourced training centre provide any specialist training required, such as the signalling and slinging unit of the NVQ.

62. Resources are satisfactory. All training is in the workplace and little specialist equipment and tools are required. However, ERP provides adequate resources for learners to carry out on-the-job tasks safely and efficiently. The company has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced training advisers, assessors and internal verifiers. Little formal on-the-job training takes place, but when it is required, experienced site logistics staff carry it out.

63. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Assessment is fair, accurate and conforms to awarding body standards. It is planned and learners are aware of when their assessment will take place. The company carries out assessment on a formative basis and records all decisions effectively.

64. The range of provision is satisfactory. ERP limits its construction programmes to a new

programme of construction logistic skills. In partnership with the local LSC, ME and major construction employers, ERP has researched and developed the demand for this provision. It has provided a programme that meets the needs of the industry, employers and learners from disadvantaged areas, the unemployed and people under threat of redundancy. Learners are working towards a nationally recognised construction qualification and an additional qualification that is required before entry is allowed onto major construction sites.

65. Learners' progress reviews are inadequate. ERP carries them out in the workplace every four weeks but they are not thorough and make little reference to pastoral issues. For example, the company does not discuss learners' attendance and time-keeping. It does superficially discuss vocational issues but on some reviews the recording of such topics is incomplete. The company sets some targets but these are in the form of statements and are unrealistic and unachievable in the short-term. Employers are not always involved in learners' progress reviews and are unaware of the immediate training goals set and their role in providing the training to assist the learners' progress. ERP deals with equality of opportunity issues but does not reinforce them. The company asks only closed questions on equality of opportunity and health and safety, and only records a response of yes or no.

Leadership and management

66. The monitoring of learners' performance is good and the company regularly discusses, confirms and verifies learners' progress. All staff provide the learners with good, effective support. Learners are keenly aware of assessments completed and outstanding, and they receive good-quality written and verbal feedback on performance. Enthusiastic and committed staff work effectively as a team and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They share a common goal in providing a quality service and continuous improvement. Frequent staff meetings reinforce consistency and allow the sharing of information. Staff receive regular appraisals and take up staff development opportunities enthusiastically. All management staff contributed to the company's most recent self-assessment report. This did not accurately reflect the provision of the programme. It was based on past provision and did not accurately reflect the current programme. Equal opportunities are introduced during induction but not effectively reinforced at learners' progress reviews. Learners' awareness of equal opportunities is satisfactory. There is a high regard to health and safety issues.

Foundation programmes

Grade 1

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		2
Other government-funded provision	52	2
Work-based learning for adults	41	2
Employer training pilot	23	2
Employability/employment training		1
New Deal for young people	67	1
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	63	1
Entry to Employment	299	1
Literacy and numeracy		2
Other government-funded provision	42	2
Employer training pilot	50	2

67. Fifty participants access literacy and numeracy training through the ETP. Currently, nine employers take advantage of the scheme and a further five are waiting for renewal of funding arrangements. Companies include a large distribution firm, the NHS Trust, a construction project and a housing association. Numbers for the previous year were too few for a valid comparison. Provision is flexible in timing, duration and location with most taking place on employers' premises. Participants' levels range from entry level 3 to level 2. Employers can take advantage of up to 150 per cent of wage compensation for their employees' attendance.

68. ERP has ESF co-financing to support literacy and numeracy participants who could not otherwise access Jobcentre Plus or other LSC-funded programmes. Forty-one are currently on this programme. Those at the lowest level of literacy and numeracy can have individual support. Those participants who can cope with it benefit from more vocationally-related group work. Those who need a short intensive course leading to a qualification follow a 'Move On' course. ERP uses its own centres and community venues for this support. These two aspects of literacy and numeracy provision are managed within the skills for life team. There are four full-time tutors. Eighteen per cent of literacy participants and 13 per cent of numeracy participants are from minority ethnic groups.

69. ERP provides E2E training at eight centres in the Greater Manchester area, including Eccles, Stretford, Moss Side, Stockport, Openshaw, Harpurhey, Wythenshawe and Longsight. There are a minimum of five full-time staff at each centre who deliver E2E. Each centre is based in areas of high level deprivation and 82 per cent of ERP's E2E participants reside in areas that are in 20 per cent of the most deprived wards in the country. At the time of inspection there were 299 learners on the E2E programme. Sixty-seven per cent of young people starting E2E with ERP have no previous qualifications, 18 per cent are ex-care leavers, 40 per cent are ex-offenders and 75 per cent of young people are at entry level 3 or below in both literacy and numeracy. Most learners have a range of significantly challenging barriers to overcome to progress into employment. The E2E programme covers prevocational learning that centres on personal and social development, improving employability, literacy and numeracy, and citizenship. There is open access on the E2E training programme and there is no fixed start or end dates, and learners can attend from

16 to 40 hours weekly. Connexions refers most of them to ERP but some are recruited from other agencies, such as the youth offending team and probation service, and some refer themselves on the recommendation of friends.

70. There are 149 participants on employability programmes. Eighty-six are attending voluntary sector, environment task force or full-time education and training as part of the New Deal for young people. There are 63 participants on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, following BET, longer occupational training (LOT) and short job-focused training (SJFT). BET, LOT and full-time education and training are delivered on site for up to 30 hours each week. LOT, SJFT and New Deal programmes are delivered partly on site and partly on work placement through on-the-job learning. ERP delivers these programmes in eight centres. There are 32 full-time and three part-time staff. Jobcentre Plus advisers refer most participants to the programme.

71. Sixty participants are on ESOL Jobcentre Plus programmes. Participants attend training at four centres across Greater Manchester. Twenty-one attend at Ashton and Hyde centres, 18 at Longsight and 21 at Cheetham Hill. Programmes are for 30 hours each week. Fifty-five per cent of participants are of South Asian origin, 22 per cent are from black African-Caribbean backgrounds, and 23 per cent are 'White Other', mainly East Europeans. Participants' employability training includes ICT, Jobsearch and additional qualifications such as first aid. Ninety-eight participants are on the co-financed ESOL projects targeting communities with multiple barriers to learning. Twenty-nine per cent of the participants receive intensive individual training, 25 per cent are on ETP programmes, 40 per cent are on vocational programmes and six per cent are on the 'Move On' course. ETP is mainly delivered on employers' premises and community settings. Training is linked to employers' and employees' needs to improve English language skills related to the work environment and life in the UK. It includes understanding of policies, procedures, health and safety, and cultural beliefs and values. The operations manager leads two adult service managers for ESOL programmes, one for Jobcentre Plus and one for co-financed projects. The Jobcentre Plus service manager co-ordinates two ESOL team leaders based at the four centres. The team leaders manage five tutors and three teaching-support staff who provide training for ESOL, Jobsearch, ICT and induction. The co-financed projects service manager manages two ESOL tutors who provide community-based provision. All staff are permanent and some work fractional hours for family reasons.

ESOL

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective development of employability skills
- good teaching and learning
- good target-setting and reviews
- good range of programmes

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

72. Participants develop very effective employability skills. Seventy-six per cent of them

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are at below entry level 1 English language skills. However, they are benefiting from the current courses and developing their confidence and employability and personal skills. Participants have well-organised files, show good progress and their standard of class work is good. Tutors plan the sessions to enable participants to practise spoken English in the context of real-life situations and work environments. Participants develop effective personal skills to express their views and opinions about equality of opportunity in the work and social environments. Humour within sessions and support from colleagues and tutors are very good. In many sessions, participants use their multilingual skills effectively to support each other, use bilingual dictionaries, and increase their own understanding of abstract concepts. Regular award ceremonies to celebrate participants' achievements motivate them and increase their confidence to further their employability skills. Progression rates into employment are satisfactory in Jobcentre Plus ESOL programmes. Fifty-eight per cent of participants on ESOL programmes have gained employment either before the end or at the end of their programme. Twelve per cent of ESOL participants have work-placement opportunities within ERP. The participants on these placements gain good experience of business and administration skills.

73. Participants on ESOL programmes are offered examination-based qualifications only. However, ERP is introducing a new range of accreditation for 2005-06. Thirty-seven per cent of participants on Jobcentre Plus programmes have achieved ESOL qualifications. The range of additional qualifications gained by Jobcentre Plus participants is good. They gain multiple certificates on short courses, which are related to work, for example health and safety, food hygiene and first aid.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Employer training pilot	2004-05		2003-04													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	46		2	100												
Retained*	0		0	0												
Successfully completed	8		0	0												
Still in learning	23		0	0												

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Other government funded																
Other government-funded provision	2004-05		2003-04													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	79		24	100												
Retained*	0		0	0												
Successfully completed	16		14	58												
Still in training	52		0	0												

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
Work-based learning for adults	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	71		27	100													
Retained*	11		16	59													
Planned learning completed	6		3	11													
Gained job	0		0	0													
Still in training	41		0	0													

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

The quality of provision

74. Teaching in Jobcentre Plus programmes and in the ETP is good. Sixty-seven per cent of the sessions observed were good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Tutors know the participants' needs well. Their profiles are detailed with clearly identified personal backgrounds, needs and learning levels. Most of the lessons are planned to meet the targets set in the individual learning plans. In the good lessons, tutors engage the participants' interest through lively activities that keep them alert and enable them to communicate for a real purpose. In one lesson, participants at level 1 worked effectively in pairs and then as a whole group to consider rites of passage. In pairs they successfully completed a spider graph on overhead transparencies. When they presented their work to the whole group they accepted challenges from colleagues gracefully. Tutors are very encouraging and supportive, and many work sensitively with less confident members of the class. Participants comment on the friendly staff that support them well. In some sessions there are volunteers who provide good individual support. Schemes of work and lesson plans are cross-referenced well to the national core curriculum standards. However, some written tasks are designed for participants at a higher level and those at lower levels experience difficulties.

75. Individual target-setting and participants' reviews are good. Initial assessments are satisfactory. ERP uses the results appropriately to set initial individual targets. Most individual learning plans have specific and time-based targets to measure progress. Reviews take place every four weeks and ERP clearly records participants' progress on the reviews and then transfers them to the individual learning plans. Most participants' files contain appropriate evidence and demonstrate good achievement of their targets. However, in some reviews, documents are incomplete, targets are in the national core curriculum language and are not clearly transferred to individual learning plans in the language that participants can understand.

76. ERP provides a good range of courses at local venues for participants to progress from pre-entry levels. There are options for participants to participate in the extensive range of social and personal development programmes. Jobcentre Plus programmes offer additional qualifications in first aid, health and safety and food hygiene. Participants also have jobsearch and ICT sessions. The 'first step' provision in the community settings has flexible modes of attendance. Participants have options to attend in the day or evening and gain additional qualifications. The intensive course offered provides individual training for those who experience difficulties in being part of a larger group. The programmes relate well to

participants' personal circumstances and needs. In some sessions, volunteers help participants at pre-entry levels to understand complex concepts.

77. Resources are satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach ESOL participants. The support staff and one tutor are working towards level 4 qualifications. Teaching and learning materials are satisfactory. Many tutors use relevant, context-based and real-life materials to provide enjoyable learning experiences. For example, in a session on developing comprehension skills, the tutor used newspapers for participants to develop their reading and writing skills. Accommodation at main centres is good and accessible. However, some employers' community venues do not have access for those with restricted mobility.

78. Support, advice and guidance for participants are satisfactory. Participants have appropriate and impartial advice to gain access to higher-level opportunities through learndirect and to enter further education. Participants are offered appropriate childcare. Induction for ESOL participation is satisfactory. They receive detailed information of programmes, health and safety, and equal opportunities. However, induction for participants at below entry level 1 is insufficiently planned to ensure they all fully understand all aspects of the programmes. The bilingual support provided for South Asian language speakers is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

79. Staff have clear, well-defined channels of communication. Regular weekly meetings between team leaders and their staff identify the needs of staff and monitor participants' progress.

80. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Teaching and learning observations carried out during inspection identified similar strengths and weaknesses as those carried out by ERP. The staff have an annual appraisal. The staff training to improve the quality of teaching and learning programme is satisfactory. The skills for life strategy is satisfactory. The ESOL programmes for Jobcentre Plus and co-financed programmes are very new. ERP is developing many new systems to monitor that participants' needs are effectively met and that they achieve appropriate qualifications. They include communication skills assessments of participants to ensure teaching and learning are planned to meet individuals' needs. ERP is receiving its induction programme to ensure that participants at pre-entry levels fully understand the requirements of the programmes. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Participants are aware of the complaints procedures and of the health and safety requirements. ERP responds well to communities' needs by engaging in partnerships to increase and widen participation. Staff at all levels of the company contributed to ERP's most recent self-assessment report. At the inspection, some strengths identified were judged as satisfactory and some weaknesses identified had been improved to strengths.

Employability/employment training

Grade 1

Strengths

- excellent job outcomes on adult learning programmes
- good achievement and progression
- very good teaching and learning

- particularly effective pastoral support for learners
- very effective management of employability programmes

Weaknesses

- inconsistent target-setting

Achievement and standards

81. There are excellent job outcomes on all adult learning programmes. Job outcomes have steadily increased over the past three years for all Jobcentre Plus programmes. The increase on BET programmes is from 20 per cent gaining employment in 2001-02 to 53 per cent for 2004-05 at the time of the inspection. This is an increase over the past three years of 33 per cent and the BET job outcomes are now twice the national target. Similarly, there has been a gradual increase in job outcomes for the New Deal environment task force option, from 48 per cent in 2002-03 to 66 per cent for 2004-05. The New Deal environment task force job outcomes have increased over the past three years by 18 per cent. This is 26 per cent over the national target of 40 per cent. Learners speak highly of their increased confidence at gaining permanent employment. One learner who now works as a maintenance co-ordinator with an employment agency said that gaining a job, through the support of ERP, was one of the best things that had ever happened to him. Over 50 per cent of learners on an SJFT programme with a health trust local employment initiative have gained permanent employment over the past year in a city NHS Trust. Work placements and on-the-job training have led to permanent posts as domestics, porters and trainee healthcare support workers.

82. In 2003-04, the first year of E2E, 50 per cent of participants have progressed into employment, further education or training. At the time of inspection, 59 per cent of those on the current programme have achieved qualifications in literacy, numeracy or vocational qualifications at level 1 and above. A range of short courses and internal certificates is used to build confidence, improve time-keeping and motivation, and to achieve targets. On average, each participant achieves at least three of these milestones while they are on the programme. Over a third of them are in work placements or employment, and the development of work-related skills are central to the programme while they are in the training centres or on work placements. At one centre, a participant had been identified with a need to improve their telephone answering skills, by their employer. This was dealt with the following week by the work-placement officer when the participant was attending off-the-job training. The following week the participant was reported to be answering the telephone with increase confidence and ability. There is an excellent range of tasters used to develop participants' work readiness and to help them select appropriate employment. ERP takes into account employers' needs when it plans training and selects placements. Award ceremonies are held monthly at each centre, where certificates of achievement are presented to participants who have achieved milestones and qualifications.

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LSC funded work-based learning																	
Entry to Employment	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	479		492	100													
Progression ¹	103		232	47													
Achieved objectives ²	78		231	47													
Still in learning	270		29	6													

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	153		193	100	207	100	267	100									
Retained*	46		121	63	126	61	157	59									
Planned learning completed	21		64	33	46	22	54	20									
Gained job	34		80	41	60	29	66	25									
Still in training	63		0	0	0	0	0	0									

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal for Young People	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	255		249	100	370	100	461	100	616	100							
Retained*	130		155	62	236	64	291	63	382	62							
Planned learning completed	98		98	39	216	58	279	61	382	62							
Gained job	120		112	45	220	59	280	61	382	62							
Still in training	67		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

The quality of provision

83. Teaching and learning are very good across all the employability programmes. Seventy-five per cent of the sessions that the inspectors observed were good or better and they observed no unsatisfactory teaching. Of the 20 sessions observed, one was outstanding and 14 were good. Staff are very enthusiastic and there are good relationships between learners and tutors, who demonstrate a sound knowledge of learners' needs. Tutors inspire and encourage learners, many of whom suffer considerable barriers to learning. Many of the sessions are fun and cover relevant job-related topics. Tutors use a variety of activities to engage the learners. For example, a jobsearch session made good use of teamwork and feedback from individual learners to help improve communication

skills. Topics in sessions are relevant to improving the skills and knowledge that employers require. ERP incorporated the use of computers well into some of the sessions that the inspectors observed. For example, participants used the internet and researched websites to back up work they were doing in the class. Particularly good use is made of the internet to write e-mail job applications and to research job vacancies. Lesson planning is good, with clear, well-planned aims and objectives, and all sessions have a good range of activities that keep learners interested and reinforce learning. Most tutors use high-quality materials and handouts and use good questioning techniques to draw out information from the learners. They deal with any disruptions effectively. Several tutors delivered sessions using an interactive whiteboard. Additional support for learners is available where needed. For example, a dyslexic learner was provided with additional support in one teaching session. Tutors give good attention to individual learning styles. Most sessions are well paced and tutors give clear instructions. Most training takes place in suitable training rooms but some sessions were observed in slightly cramped rooms.

84. Basic skills tutors provide literacy and numeracy support, or ERP refers learners to learndirect, where basic skills programmes and testing are easily accessible. However, in some programmes there is insufficient attention at review to progress made on literacy and numeracy needs identified at initial assessment.

85. There is particularly effective pastoral support for all learners on all employability programmes. In all the centres that deliver E2E programmes, breakfast clubs are held each morning to encourage participants. Lunch is also purchased for learners if they are hungry or have no money. ERP uses its effective links with outside agencies to support learners and help them overcome their barriers to progression. Support is available for anger management, for drugs rehabilitation, and from housing support agencies, and the black health agency. ERP makes very good use of the Connexions personal adviser to offer objective individual support each week for learners who are at risk of dropping out. The company uses the disability employment advisers based in jobcentres to nominate supported employers on the work preparatory programme for learners with special needs, to access a work placement. When learners are on work placements there is regular communication between the employer and ERP. It provides learners with practical adaptations to aid learning, such as the use of coloured filters to help dyslexic learners.

86. ERP reviews learners regularly but there are some inconsistencies in target-setting when the E2E Passport and reviews of progress are completed with E2E learners. In some cases, the content of the targets set are unclear and some reviews are not sufficiently detailed. A small number of learners are not set sufficiently challenging targets and a few are entered for qualifications that are too easy for them to achieve. Some learners complete work quickly and easily when in the training centre and become bored. The company uses a range of initial assessments during the first six weeks of the programme and this is satisfactory. There is some inconsistent recording of targets on adult learning programmes, but most targets are very detailed and relevant to the learners' needs.

Leadership and management

87. The management of employability programmes is very effective. Staff are enthusiastic and committed, suitably qualified and experienced at dealing with the learners. The senior management team, and team leaders based at each of the centres, use management information effectively to monitor learners' achievements and progress, and programme improvement. Communication between the centres is particularly effective because there

are a variety of meetings held each week and month to keep staff informed and to share good practice. ERP uses these meetings to share best practice around each of the centres and improve the service to young people. Team leaders complete a weekly summary report of all activity at their centre for that week, which includes monitoring of referrals, achievement and progress, details on the sessions that have been planned for that week for the delivery of the E2E programme, and any best practice. These are then sent to their line manager and to the team leaders in each centre for them to share with their staff. ERP holds an annual staff conference where development strategies are agreed with all staff. The company sets realistic targets for all staff for improvement and collects a wide range of information to monitor individual and team performance, which is discussed at weekly and monthly team meetings.

88. All staff at each centre have good working relationships with employers, which understand and are sympathetic and supportive to the client group. There is a wide variety of work placements, such as those for street rangers, hospital porters, groundsmen, and care workers, and work in animal sanctuaries and larger companies. There is good regular communication between employers and ERP, and staff react quickly to the needs of employers. There are good links with local and national organisations to continuously improve programme delivery.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective use of accreditation
- good target-setting and progress reviews
- good range of flexible programmes
- very good support for learners with dyslexia

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

89. ERP has significantly increased the availability and take-up of external accreditation. Learners are entered for the certificate in adult literacy or numeracy at any level from entry 1 to level 2. Entry-level learners complete the assignment-based award as soon as they are ready and can take the level 1 or 2 national test each month. This is soon to be offered online each week. Learners take tests at all venues, including on employers' sites, which increases their accessibility. Learners and employers value this formal accreditation. Sixty-one per cent of all learners on the ETP have gained literacy and/or numeracy certificates so far, which clearly exceeds the national average of 29 per cent. The first intake of learners from one NHS Trust had particular success, with 75 per cent awarded a literacy certificate and 100 per cent a numeracy certificate.

90. On other government-funded programmes, achievement is satisfactory at 33 per cent. There is a good range of additional outcomes. One learner receiving support for literacy and numeracy was also proud of her certificates in food hygiene, first aid, health and safety, and manual handling. She is attending her first job interviews following redundancy from a job she held for 16 years. This learner praised ERP for the help with her curriculum vitae,

assertiveness and stress-reduction techniques. A supervisor from a housing association noticed the improvement in the ease with which he wrote reports and his line manager was impressed with his progress, just three weeks into an ETP communications course.

91. Retention is not specifically measured on these new programmes, but tutors monitor learners' attendance carefully and report to management.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Employer training pilot	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	77		1	100													
Retained*	0		0	0													
Successfully completed	16		1	100													
Still in learning	50		0	0													

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Other government funded																	
Other government-funded provision	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	64		29	100													
Retained*	0		0	0													
Successfully completed	17		5	17													
Still in training	39		3	10													

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

The quality of provision

92. Learners benefit from good target-setting and reviews of progress. A new cross-organisational policy means each learner has an initial and diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. ERP employs a good format for individual learning plans. Most targets on these plans are specific and measurable. They relate clearly to course aims, assessed levels and individual needs, though not always directly to employability skills. Tutors hold monthly reviews, spending time in a confidential interview with each learner to reassign new motivational targets. The manager for this area is piloting a system for monitoring and auditing individual learning plans, checking specifically on the adequacy of target-setting and assigning actions to tutors who do not fully comply. A small proportion of targets are expressed too closely in terms of the adult core curriculum and in language inaccessible to lower-level learners.

93. Learners participate in a good range of flexible programmes. ERP has succeeded in bidding for new funds and deploying them imaginatively to develop different programmes. It offers individual support and group work of varying durations and at a time to suit the learners. The content of all programmes is tailored to suit individual need, as negotiated with employers and learners themselves. ERP targets the most vulnerable learners and those in areas of high deprivation. Effective use of other government funding means learners who are ineligible for other programmes can receive support. This also applies to

learners who complete their allotted work-based learning but still need help. One learner was given individual support to boost his skills to the required minimum level for ETP funding. Funding from the same source is used to subsidise specialist dyslexia assessment and support.

94. ERP makes very good support for learners with dyslexia a priority. Two members of staff are trained to postgraduate level in dyslexia diagnosis and support, and a further two plan to get qualified. Comprehensive dyslexia awareness training has been delivered in-house, giving tutors hints on what to look out for and strategies for support. Teaching staff are beginning to use dyslexia support strategies in their general teaching.

95. One member of staff has dyslexia support as his major work role. Currently, 13 learners are supported individually in all programmes except E2E. ERP has purchased a computerised dyslexia-screening tool, which it uses extremely effectively. The company sensitively reassures learners about the nature of the tests, using humour and positive images of famous dyslexic people to help them feel good about the possible outcome. Results come instantly as a graphic printout, which confirms the likelihood of dyslexia and its severity. The tutor uses further diagnostic assessment as needed. One learner on a work-based learning scheme was referred by her course tutor following an unaccountable lack of progress. The screening identified specific memory deficits, which the tutor immediately recognised as a possible cause for her problems and arranged appropriate support.

96. Teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Of the eight sessions that the inspectors observed, five were good. The better sessions included varied topics and pace and clear explanations. Tutors used active questioning to check the learners' understanding. Schemes of work for ETP are well planned to cover a mix of generic literacy and numeracy at the outset and they move on to more specifically job-related projects later. However, in the satisfactory sessions, the tutors relied on work sheets, using paper-based activities in preference to real-life resources or learning aids. Numeracy tasks are not sufficiently concrete and practical, making it so much more difficult for learners to grasp concepts. By concentrating on the end product of getting an answer right on a sheet, learners fail to benefit from articulating the skills they have gained and the new understanding they have. Two learners at pre-entry level and entry level 1 worked on an abstract phonic-based scheme, with little account for the functional aspects of their literacy. Some resources used are inappropriate for the age of the learners. Although equipment is available, no computers or audiovisual aids were used.

Leadership and management

97. ERP has developed a skills for life policy and has convened a cross-organisation strategy group, which is in the early stages of implementing its plans. Curriculum development takes place within this small team through monthly meetings, feedback from supervisions and appraisals, and through the process of observation of teaching and learning. The four tutors are well qualified and have attended an appropriate range of professional development training.

98. ERP holds a good range of published resources in a central base. Its documents and tutor-designed learning resources are enhanced by the use of a shared computer network, where new items are checked by a manager for quality before being accessed by others. ERP's use of premises for the delivery of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Venues are

local and accessible. Most rooms are of a good size, are well furnished and have good motivational displays. Of particular note are posters based on high-quality photographs of current learners, with aspirational slogans that epitomise equality of opportunity.

99. All staff in this area are involved in the self-assessment process at various stages. The team has particularly worked to improve two weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report relating to target-setting and accreditation, such that they are now considered strengths in this inspection. A significant number of strengths and weaknesses that ERP identified were considered by the inspectors to be simply satisfactory.

