

INSPECTION REPORT

Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited

11 November 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

Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited	1
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
Key Findings	2
What learners like about Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited	7
What learners think Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited could improve	7

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Temp Dent Dental Agency Limited (Temp Dent) is a private limited company, based in Whetstone, North London. It was originally founded to supply temporary and permanent dental nurses to dentists in and around Greater London. It has provided training for dental nurses since 1999, and began offering publicly funded training in September 2000. Its learners follow a level 3 national vocational qualification (NVQ) in oral health care. They are employed in dental practices across London and receive weekly off-the-job training at the company's offices. Temp Dent's managing director is supported by a full-time training administrator and a training team. The training staff consists of three full-time tutor-assessors, one of whom has just completed her internal verification qualification, two full-time assessors, two part-time internal verifiers and a further seven part-time staff who work as tutors or assessors. The area of London where Temp Dent is based is culturally diverse with a constantly changing population, particularly East European economic migrants. Learners at Temp Dent reflect the local population well, with 37 per cent being from minority ethnic groups and 20 per cent from East European countries.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

2. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Temp Dent's leadership and management, and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are good. Provision in health, public services and care is also good.

3. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Temp Dent has a well-established annual self-assessment process that takes account of the views of staff, learners and employers. The resultant development plan is regularly reviewed and actioned and the self-assessment process is taken seriously by staff. The report accurately reflects the provision and is positively affecting the ability of Temp Dent continuously to improve its provision.

4. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** An upward trend exists in rates of retention and achievement. The company and its staff are very keen to make improvements that positively affect the experience of learners and a great deal of teamwork is focused on the delivery of training.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED:

- continue improving retention and achievement rates
- maintain the focus of the company on quality improvement
- fully implement the key skills strategy
- formalise target-setting for recruitment from different learner groups
- complete the company's move into new accommodation

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

Health, public services and care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Dental</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	111	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

5. A team of two inspectors spent a total of eight days at Temp Dent's training centre and visiting dental surgeries. Two of the days were spent earlier in the inspection week observing off-the-job training. All aspects of the dental nursing provision were reported on and graded.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	30
Number of staff interviewed	10
Number of employers interviewed	5
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	5

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

6. The retention rate at Temp Dent has been improving and, at 80 per cent for the 2004-05 intake of learners, is good. Learners display good work skills working alongside dentists, demonstrating particularly good safety practices and having sterilised equipment ready when needed. Those learners who complete courses progress well to other dental courses.

7. Learners are now making good progress. Progress through the NVQ has been slow and achievement rates have been low in the past, but progress has been improving with each

new intake of learners. Comparisons of data for September 2003 starters and July 2004 starters 14 months into their programmes show dramatic improvements in the number of units gained, with 25 per cent and 62 per cent of learners respectively having six or more units. All leavers who have qualified leave Temp Dent in employment. Several learners have gained promotions to more senior posts such as practice managers before completing their qualification.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Health, public services and care	0	3	2	0	5
Total	0	3	2	0	5

8. **Off-the-job training is good and managed well.** The pattern of delivery is tailored to meet the needs of learners. For example, classes take place in the day, evenings and on Saturdays. All sessions are planned well and tutors make effective use of teaching resources such as dental models and products. The sessions hold the interest of learners, who enjoy them. Tutors demonstrate good questioning techniques and learners are fully engaged in the learning process. Tutors link sessions well to learners' practical activities at work. There is very clear improvement in the knowledge and understanding of learners.

9. **Assessment opportunities are planned well and flexible.** Assessment plans suit the needs of learners and employers, with some assessments taking place at weekends. Detailed assessment plans are developed for each learner, enabling learners easily to identify what they are expected to achieve by the time of the next assessment. Suitable simulations take place at the training centre for emergency procedures. Feedback provided at assessment is thorough and supportive, promoting effective learning. Assessors offer effective support to learners to help them complete their qualification. If assessment opportunities are limited at a particular dental practice, assessors ensure that learners can carry out work in alternative practices. Additional assessments are provided to support those learners making slow progress. Weekly meetings of assessors are used to share good practice to improve the assessment process.

10. Very effective support is given to learners who have no previous dental experience. Learners undergo foundation training for two months so that they become more 'job-ready', and are generally employed within their first three months of training. Tutor-assessors handle learners' personal problems sensitively, helping them complete their assessments after a break if necessary. Some learners have been 'fast-tracked' to complete early.

11. Employers give learners effective support and have a good understanding of the NVQ. Many learners are part of their employer's appraisal system and are encouraged to attend additional training sessions as well as the on-the-job NVQ training. Many employers have particularly good dental surgeries, with up-to-date equipment. Temp Dent meets the needs of employers and learners, offering progression opportunities.

12. Learning resources are satisfactory, with tutors making effective use of good models and posters. Temp Dent has developed some very good learning materials to support off-the-job training. Learners currently have restricted access to information and

communications technology (ICT).

13. Progress reviews are satisfactory and take place quarterly. Specific targets are set, and previous targets are checked. Employers are actively involved in the review process and their comments are recorded. Individual learning plans are amended.

14. Support for learners with additional learning needs is adequate. Temp Dent gives learners a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and refers them to specialist providers if necessary. Results of initial assessment are recorded on individual learning plans and tutor-assessors give additional support, usually on an individual basis. **However, the extensive support given to learners is poorly recorded.**

Leadership and management

15. The apprenticeship training programme at Temp Dent is well managed. Teamwork and communication are particularly good among the tutor-assessors. **Development and support for staff is good.** Communication with staff is regular and effective. A monthly staff meeting covers a variety of matters directly affecting learners, such as rates of achievement, retention, progress, possible withdrawals and learners' feedback. Actions arising are clearly identified and are routinely followed through. Staff use e-mail and company-supplied mobile phones effectively to maintain contact. All staff have one day a week where they undertake professional development activities. Induction for staff is good, with a detailed timetable for each new employee.

16. **Temp Dent uses data particularly effectively to improve performance**, forming the basis for routine monitoring and management of learners. A weekly meeting between the managing director and staff looks at learners' progress in terms of NVQ unit achievement, and checks aspects of the support offered through assessment visits and reviews. The reasons why learners leave programmes are continually analysed and actions are taken to counter identified problems. The managing director carries out routine performance monitoring by ethnic background or by tutor groups, taking appropriate action where necessary.

17. Temp Dent's strategic planning is satisfactory. It has a clear three-year development plan linked with an annual business plan, which uses a good mix of previous data, detailed targets and more aspirational aims. The main objectives of the business plan, and the strengths and weaknesses from the self-assessment report, are then translated into actions in a single development action plan.

18. Day-to-day management of Temp Dent is carried out well. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and an appropriate degree of autonomy. The managing director plays a key role in the monitoring and quality improvement activities, and understands all elements of the business well. All processes linked with learners are very clearly laid out in an extensive series of procedures, which are maintained on an ICT system that all staff can access.

19. The strategy for literacy, numeracy and language skills support is satisfactory. A significant number of learners are now recent arrivals in England and speak English as an additional language. Temp Dent's staff assess their potential needs through the literacy test, interview and the results of a dental knowledge test. Learners are generally pleased with the literacy, numeracy and language help that they are given.

20. Staff resources are appropriate and Temp Dent makes good use of part-time staff and external consultants to meet training and assessment needs. **Temp Dent's current accommodation is too cramped**, however. It is too crowded for some larger groups, and does not provide accommodation which can be used flexibly for the various types of teaching. There is very little space for learners to relax or work outside of the classroom or for private interviews. A new plan to relocate to much larger and more modern premises is close to completion.

21. **Equality of opportunity is well promoted by Temp Dent.** Staff and learners have a good awareness of equality of opportunity, developed at induction and reinforced by additional training. A detailed equal opportunities policy and disability statement are prominently displayed in training rooms. A well-thought-out strategy and procedures document for staff outlines Temp Dent's approach to promoting equality. Effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints are regularly reinforced with learners. Learners complete an induction checklist in the workplace that covers their employer's equal opportunities policy and grievance procedures. All learners take an NVQ unit on equality of opportunity early in their programme. Staff have received annual training in equality of opportunity for several years. Promotional materials and press advertisements include an equal opportunities strapline. Equality of opportunity is regularly discussed at staff meetings.

22. Temp Dent's monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. It collects data on the age, gender, ethnicity and disability status of learners, together with their prior educational attainment. Comparisons are made between each intake to look for trends in early leavers and achievers. Progress reviews are used to monitor the implementation of equal opportunities policies and to reinforce learners' awareness of the complaints and appeals procedures. The training premises are not fully accessible to wheelchair users. Temp Dent has arrangements for learners not able to access the training centre and is close to securing new accommodation.

23. Recruitment of learners is satisfactory overall. The profile of learners from minority ethnic groups is similar to that of the local population. Temp Dent advertises widely in trade magazines, London-wide newspapers and through the internet. It maintains regular contact with the careers service and also recruits through recommendation by friends or dental practices. Although Temp Dent continues to promote men as dental nurses to the industry very few men have applied for training. **The company has informal targets but has not set formal targets for recruitment that would further focus efforts on attracting under-represented groups, particularly men.**

24. **Temp Dent has a particularly effective focus on quality improvement.** The self-assessment report and development action plan provide a formal structure for improvements. Performance monitoring and improvements are a key part of routine work. Meetings with individual staff and quarterly reviews concentrate on the achievement of challenging targets linked with learners' performance. A regular, helpful observation scheme for tutors has been in operation for some time and staff believe they benefit from the experience. Assessors' workloads have been reduced to allow them to spend more time with individual learners to meet their concerns. Actions taken have had an immediate positive effect on retention rates and entry into employment.

25. Temp Dent regularly collects and analyses learners' feedback. These views have a significant effect on Temp Dent's development activity. Weekly assessor meetings are held and standardisation is a key area of discussion. Internal verification is well planned and a range of evidence is internally verified. Feedback on observations is constructive and aimed at further improving the quality of assessments.

26. The self-assessment process is good. The self-assessment report is based on useful data, including learners' and employers' feedback, and has involved all staff in its development. It is largely accurate and the development plan gives clear targets for improvement that are understood by staff and are being dealt with. All the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been dealt with.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good development and support of staff
- very good use of data to improve provision
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- particularly effective focus on quality improvement

Weaknesses

- cramped accommodation
- limited formal target-setting for recruitment of groups of learners

Health, public services and care

Dental

Grade 2

Strengths

- well-managed and delivered off-the-job training
- flexible assessment opportunities for learners
- good partnerships with employers

Weaknesses

- poor recording of support given to learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED:

- the supportive assessors
- revision for written exams
- the team of staff
- gaining qualifications in the workplace
- 'they know what they are talking about!'
- 'they help me out when I have trouble understanding questions because of my limited English'
- 'my assessor is always on time, in fact she is usually here before me'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK TEMP DENT DENTAL AGENCY LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the space in teaching room when classes are big
- 'the vending machine needs sorting!'