

INSPECTION REPORT

Honda (UK)-Institute

21 October 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** 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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

The Honda (UK)-Institute, situated at Colnbrook near Slough, is the training division of Honda UK. It offers training to advanced modern apprentices for the Honda dealership network. There are 131 learners in training on engineering, technology and manufacture, land-based engineering and retailing and customer service programmes.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the work-based learning in engineering, technology and manufacturing is good. The leadership and management and quality assurance are good and equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

GRADES

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	2

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good on- and off-the-job training
- excellent training resources
- effective strategic planning and management of training
- thorough self-assessment process

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace

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OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- increased recruitment of learners from under-represented groups
- further development of key skills

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 30 days at The Honda (UK)-Institute, at its administration centre near Newark, in a training centre in Doncaster, and at a range of Honda dealerships located across England during October 2002. They visited 20 dealers' workplaces, interviewed 37 learners, 17 staff, and 19 workplace supervisors. Inspectors examined a range of documents including 28 portfolios of evidence and records, Honda (UK)-Institute's plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature and the awarding body's reports. They observed and graded three learning sessions, and observed six review and assessment sessions. Inspectors used the Honda (UK)-Institute's October 2002 self-assessment report as a basis for the inspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Total	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. The Honda (UK)-Institute, is the training division of Honda UK. It provides advanced modern apprenticeship programmes for work-based learners who are employed in the Honda dealership network across the United Kingdom. It contracts with the National Contracting Service of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to fund learners based in England, which account for approximately 85 per cent of the total learners on the programme. Currently, 122 learners are in engineering, technology and manufacturing programmes, three are in the land-based programme and six are in retailing and customer service programmes. The dealership network consists of approximately 200 car, 200 motorcycle and 400 power equipment dealers. Learners receive training for the advanced modern apprenticeship programme at employers' premises and at two off-the-job training centres, The Honda (UK)-Institute, and a specialist training facility in Doncaster. There were insufficient learners in the land-based engineering programme and the retailing and customer service programme to warrant inspection. However, judgements about these programmes are included under the leadership and management section.

3. Before April 2001, an independent training company contracted with the National Training Partnership to manage the Honda modern apprenticeship programme. During the last quarter of 2000, Honda's senior management reviewed this programme and terminated the contract. In April 2001, management of the programme transferred to Autopeople (UK) Ltd, a registered company providing a range of consultancy services solely for the Honda (UK)-Institute.

4. The Honda modern apprenticeship programme supports learners in all regions of England. In May 2002, the national unemployment rate was 3 per cent, compared with the highest unemployment rate in Cleveland at 6.9 per cent and the lowest in Surrey at less than 1 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, was 47.9 per cent nationally, compared with 58 per cent in Surrey and 48 per cent in Cleveland. The 1991 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 6.2 per cent nationally, compared with less than 1 per cent in Cleveland and 2.8 per cent in Surrey.

Work-based learning for young people

5. Work-based learning for young people in engineering is good, as are the retention rates. The management of training is good, particularly the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Training resources are excellent and learners are given very good personal support. Key skills are developed and assessed at the Honda (UK)-Institute. While staff have worked hard to develop the key skills programme, those in the workplace are not recorded effectively. Assessment and internal verification practice is satisfactory. Some mentors and supervisors have good knowledge of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and assessment processes, but others have little or no knowledge. Some of the staff do not use individual learning plans effectively. Target-setting in progress reviews is sometimes vague.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

6. A programme director has responsibility for strategic development of the training programme and for achieving the aims and objectives of the Honda (UK)-Institute. A programme manager has responsibility for operational management of the training programme. A team of four technical instructors, one of whom is a senior post holder, carry out off-the-job training. Three business development managers have responsibility for the recruitment, induction and reviewing the progress of learners. The technical instructors and business development managers also give pastoral support to learners and develop learning materials. Two programme administrators, one with additional responsibility for managing quality assurance arrangements, give administrative support for the training programme. The Honda (UK)-Institute has up-to-date policies and procedures for health and safety, and for the promotion of equality of opportunity. Procedures exist for dealing with harassment and discrimination, but they are not linked to the equality of opportunity policy. These policies have not been formally evaluated to determine their effectiveness. The training team is developing arrangements for assuring the quality of the training programme. The first self-assessment report, was published in February 2002, and has been updated on two occasions, the latest in October 2002.

STRENGTHS

- effective strategic planning and management of training
- good communications
- thorough appraisal and staff development
- good analysis of recruitment data
- effective evaluation of training
- thorough self-assessment process

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient auditing of policies and processes
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- increased recruitment of learners from under-represented groups
- more effective evaluation of key policies

7. The Honda (UK)-Institute contracted with the National Contracting Service of the LSC for the first time in March 2001, for its advanced modern apprenticeship programme. The programme has developed well in a relatively short time and offers good training. A comprehensive business plan for 2001-2004 shows clear strategic aims

and operational objectives for the Honda modern apprenticeship programme. Targets for achievement and measures for assessing the performance of the training function are explicit and cover recruitment, retention and achievement rates, and equality. A range of key performance indicators clearly identify what individuals and teams should achieve within specific timescales and focus on the quality of the learners' experience. The business plan covers financial management in some detail. Staff make good use of computer software applications to store, retrieve and report management information.

8. As identified in the self-assessment report, communications within the Honda (UK)-Institute and with employers are good. A wide range of good and easy to understand information leaflets and brochures give good guidance for learners and employers. The Honda (UK)-Institute provides mobile telephones and a laptop or desktop computer to staff to encourage electronic communication with each other and with the administration office. Senior managers receive well-produced weekly and monthly reports on performance of the training programme. Much routine and open discussion takes place between managers and individual staff and teams to assess whether all staff have sufficient time to complete their work, especially the progress reviews. Staff are delegated no more than two reviews each day to enable them to be completed thoroughly and effectively. Monthly management meetings routinely evaluate business performance and minutes show the strategic and operational decisions about the training programme. The training team meet each month to evaluate performance of the training programme and to make recommendations to managers. Meetings have standard agendas which staff can influence. Minutes of meetings are concise and contain actions with specific timescales for achievement by named personnel.

9. Staff appraisal and staff development is thorough and effective. All new staff have a formal six-month induction which incorporates a personal development programme, agreed between the individual and the line manager. The priority of the induction is to ensure that each individual operates quickly to appropriate standards. The formal appraisal process follows induction and takes account of individual priorities for development and the priorities of the business plan. Staff welcome the appraisal process which is seen as transparent and helpful. They have also participated in a wide range of development activities, but these have not been evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

10. The Honda (UK)-Institute is implementing its equality of opportunity policy well in the relatively short time the training programme has been operating. A senior manager is responsible for equality of opportunity within the company and staff review the policy regularly and update it as required. There are separate policies for dealing with grievances and disciplinary issues. All staff and learners are given relevant and detailed information on equality of opportunity during induction. Promotional materials contain positive statements and graphical images to emphasise the company's commitment to employ and train people from diverse backgrounds. For example, careers brochures show a woman technician working in the industry. The training facilities at the Honda (UK)-Institute have good access for people with restricted mobility.

11. Staff routinely collect data relating to ethnicity, gender and disability for all applicants. They evaluate these data thoroughly and present the results at monthly management meetings for discussion and action. Key performance targets identify further recruitment of women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled learners. There are appropriate strategies to promote the achievement of targets and to monitor progress. For example, staff recently advertised modern apprenticeship vacancies in a specialist publication aimed specifically at women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. While the Honda (UK)-Institute has taken significant action to improve performance, the training programme has no female learners, and only 1.5 per cent of learners are from a minority ethnic background or have a disability. All recruitment staff have attended equality of opportunity training which was provided by an external consultant.

12. Advanced modern apprentices feel that they are well looked after and that they are treated equally at work and while attending off-the-job training. They are treated equally with all employees attending the Honda (UK)-Institute. They use the same training materials and facilities as instructors and qualified technicians. Learners cover equality of opportunity during their induction, but there is insufficient monitoring or reinforcement of equality of opportunity in the workplace. Progress reviews do not focus sufficiently on equality, welfare and diversity issues. One dealership workplace has unacceptable images displayed on the walls.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 2**

13. Managers and staff evaluate the quality of training effectively, using a range of methods. The programme manager and the senior technical instructor observe and assess the teaching and learning taking place using a standard form and each observation is graded. Staff are given feedback on their performance. Any agreed development needs are included in the personal development plans which form part of the staff development programme. Staff collect learners' and employers' opinions about the training programme at the end of each block of training and during each progress review. The opinions are analysed and a summary evaluation is published. Concerns identified by learners or employers are dealt with promptly. For example, learners identified that the hotel which was used for the off-the-job training is too far from the training centre. Staff contracted with another hotel closer to the training centre to rectify the situation.

14. The self-assessment report follows the 'Common Inspection Framework' and thoroughly assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the training programme. It incorporates the views of learners, workplace supervisors and all staff involved in the modern apprenticeship programme. Comprehensive action plans are in place to resolve any weaknesses and to build on agreed strengths. Staff have carried out many improvements to deal with the weaknesses identified through self-assessment. Staff review the self-assessment report action plan at monthly team meetings. The self-assessment report was overcritical of leadership and management and it did not include contributory grades for equality of opportunity or quality assurance.

15. Good graphical flow charts give clear guidance to staff on how key working processes should operate. The charts are used for training new staff at induction. Staff can quickly see what sequence of actions is required and what alternative action should be taken if the process does not follow the expected route. Staff understand the charts, but internal auditing of the processes and the company's policies has not ensured consistent application.

Good Practice

An instructor suspected two learners of mild verbal abuse. The instructor reported the problem to a director who spoke to the victim with the instructor present. Although the learner confirmed there had been some verbal abuse, the learner did not wish to pursue a formal process to deal with the problem. The instructor and the director, dealt with the situation sensitively. All training staff were told about the situation and they monitored the learners' behaviour to ensure no further abuse took place. The incident was recorded in the offending learners' files.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	122	2

16. There are 122 learners, all of whom are employed at 80 Honda dealerships. The tables do not include nine learners in parts/retail and land-based engineering, as these areas were not inspected. The dealers identify vacancies and The Honda (UK)-Institute carries out the necessary recruitment. Learners can apply for a modern apprenticeship at any time of the year. The minimum academic requirement for applicants is three GCSE passes at grade D or above. Applicants are required to complete occupationally relevant tests at the dealers' premises which help staff to assess each applicant's numerical and mechanical reasoning skills, and abstract and spatial awareness. A free writing test is used to assess the use of grammar, punctuation and to assist in the recognition of dyslexia. Academic qualifications are not the sole criteria for selection. The staff identify learners who need additional learning support during the selection process and in the early stages of their training. Learners take either car service, motorcycle service, power-equipment service or parts technician programmes. They work towards an appropriate NVQ at level 3 in motor vehicle maintenance and repair for cars and motorcycles, in vehicle parts distribution, and in land-based service engineering. Learners attend off-the-job training and related background knowledge training at the Honda (UK)-Institute for about one week in every four. Engineering learners attend for 25 one-week blocks during the three years' of their training programme. Parts apprentices attend for 18 one-week blocks of training over the same period. Technical instructors and business development managers carry out the assessments and they are all qualified assessors. Business development managers review learners' progress in the workplace at least every 12 weeks, and sometimes more frequently.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	29		157													
Retained*	29		138														
Successfully completed	0		45														
Still in learning	29		93														

*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

STRENGTHS

- good on- and off-the-job training
- excellent training resources
- good retention rates
- particularly good support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- some poor understanding of NVQs in the workplace
- ineffectively used individual learning plans

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of key skills
- clearer objectives in learners' progress reviews

17. On-the-job training is good in a range of dealerships which specialise in the maintenance of cars, motorcycles or power equipment. Most dealerships are located in modern, purpose built premises, where workshops are spacious, clean and well equipped. All dealerships demonstrate high standards of health and safety, with clearly labelled tool racks, well-organised parts storage and use of appropriate waste facilities for hazardous items. Safety has a high priority at all sites. Many safety posters are prominently displayed. Learners do not operate machinery until they have suitable training. One dealership has a library facility which enables technicians and learners to

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access service manuals. Learners carry out a variety of practical tasks in the workplace to high standards, under the supervision of qualified technicians. Service managers make a concerted effort to encourage learners to progress to higher levels.

18. Off-the-job training is good. Staff plan each block of training thoroughly and at the end of each block, they assess each learner's performance and record the results in detail. Learners who do not meet the required standard at the first attempt are required to retake the assessments. Training resources and learning materials at the Honda (UK)-Institute are excellent and they contribute significantly to learning. The purpose-built workshop is spacious, light and airy and it contains a wide selection of products. The equipment is grouped in specialist sections. For example, a purpose-built marine section, a lawn and garden section, and an all-terrain vehicle section. Numerous sophisticated electrical test equipment and rigs enable instructors to challenge learners to resolve specific faults on engines, electrical systems, brakes, and many other relevant systems. There are ample hand-tools and a wide range of modern garage equipment which enables learners to develop good professional practice. Within the workshop, CD-ROMs provide significant information on all current Honda models, including engine management, car parts, workshop manuals and service details. There are ten well-equipped classrooms, which contain comprehensive digital teaching aids including video projectors and touch-screen displays. Room sizes can be changed to accommodate different groups of learners, and to accept vehicles if needed.

19. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is excellent. Workplace mentors select practical tasks which reinforce the knowledge gained at the Honda (UK)-Institute. Mentors and supervisors question learners when they return to the dealership to review their progress, and arrange suitable related training tasks and work experience for learners. Key skills are developed and assessed at the Honda (UK)-Institute. While staff have worked hard to develop the key skills programme, those developed in the workplace are not identified or recorded effectively in learners' portfolios.

20. Retention rates are good. All of the 29 learners recruited in the current year remain in learning. Of the 51 learners starting in the previous year, 78 per cent are still in learning. One-hundred and thirty-eight of the 157 learners starting in 2001-02, have either completed the training programme or are still in learning. The tables take account of 106 learners transferring from the previous training provider. The Honda (UK)-Institute has supported these learners well, encouraging them to a good level of achievement. Of these learners, 45 have completed their training programme while on the Honda apprenticeship, and 53 are still in learning.

21. The support given to learners is particularly good. Workplace supervisors and the Honda (UK)-Institute staff give personal and occupational support a high priority. Induction programmes are thorough and documents for induction are comprehensive. Learners are allocated a mentor when they start the training programme and they oversee each learner's training and personal development well. Mentors and technicians in the workplace ensure that problems are resolved quickly. Workplace supervisors and learners can contact the appropriate business development manager or

Honda (UK)-Institute staff at any time through a special telephone support line. Good working relationships exist between learners, the business development managers and workplace mentors.

22. Instructors have considerable, relevant occupational experience. They are qualified to teach or are working towards appropriate qualifications. The workshop mentors or supervisors responsible for overseeing the modern apprentices' training are also very experienced and many have worked for the same dealership for several years. Managers and mentors are highly committed to training and this aids learners' progress. Nevertheless, levels of understanding of NVQs in the workplace vary greatly. While some supervisors have been NVQ candidates themselves and have a good knowledge of the process, some mentors and supervisors have little or no knowledge of the current NVQ standards and the assessment process. There is, therefore, a heavy reliance on the support given by visiting business development managers.

23. Learners are encouraged to achieve higher levels of competence as they gain more experience. After week 20 of the block-release training at the Honda (UK)-Institute, learners carry out a series of practical tests. Successful learners qualify for the Honda maintenance technician status. First-time pass rates are 75 per cent. If learners fail this test, remedial training follows and the learner re-sits the test. All learners are expected to gain this qualification before the end of the modern apprenticeship period. Qualified technicians are assessed against the same criteria for maintenance technician status, and the next stage would be for repair technician and then diagnostics technician status.

24. Assessment and internal verification practice is satisfactory. Business development managers visit the workplace every 12 weeks to carry out observation of training and to assess the quality of evidence in the learners' NVQ portfolios. Instructors at the Honda (UK)-Institute carry out assessment of evidence which is generated in the workplace. When attending the Institute, learners spend one day with their assessor to ensure that their portfolios are up to date. Most assessors set measurable targets for learners' achievement, but some of the targets are imprecise and are difficult to measure. Internal verifiers observe assessors doing their role in the workplace and internal verification of portfolio evidence is routinely applied.

25. Staff do not use individual learning plans effectively. Some learning plans contain insufficient information to assess their progress effectively. Some learning plans have the end of funding date for all target achievement dates. Learning plans do not identify the full training programme or off-the-job training requirements. Some learning plans do not identify the support needs of learners. One learner has attendance problems, and is receiving support from his employer and business development manager, but this is not recorded on the individual learning plan.

26. Staff undertake a telephone interview with early leavers and complete a written record. The information gathered from the leavers' survey is analysed, and results in the compilation of a comprehensive report on reasons for leaving. Learners are accredited with units of the NVQ which have been completed and are encouraged to contact their

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business development manager to collect their portfolios of work.

Good Practice

Learners are given free overalls and financial assistance towards their training. They also get good discounts to purchase Honda products. Some learners are a long way from home when attending the Honda (UK)-Institute, and staff organise social and sporting events in the evening to generate team spirit. The Honda (UK)-Institute arranges a special celebration event for learners who achieve their modern apprenticeship. The Institute invites and pays for learners, their parents and mentors to attend the event.