

INSPECTION REPORT

The Honda Institute

08 September 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

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The Honda Institute

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Honda Institute is the training division of Honda UK. Autopeople UK Ltd is a registered company providing a range of consultancy services solely for the Honda UK Institute since 1999. In March 2001, these services expanded to include the management and delivery of the Honda apprenticeship programme on behalf of Honda UK/the Honda Institute. Autopeople UK Ltd provides a number of services to Honda UK's dealership network, including technical training, development centres, a recruitment service and the Honda apprenticeship programme. Particularly, it offers apprenticeship programmes and advanced apprenticeship programmes for work-based learners who are employed in the dealership network across the United Kingdom (UK). It contracts with the National Employer Service of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to fund learners based in England, who account for approximately 76 per cent of the total number of learners on the programme. Currently, 170 learners are following engineering, technology and manufacturing programmes in England, six are on a land-based programme and 16 are on retailing and customer service programmes. The learners on retailing and customer service programmes are following motor vehicle parts courses and have been considered within engineering.

2. The head office of Autopeople UK Ltd and the Honda apprenticeship programme administration centre are based in Eaking, North Nottinghamshire and the off-the-job training is delivered at the Honda Institute's specialised training facility in Colnbrook, Slough, Berkshire. All of the Honda dealership network has access to the Honda apprenticeship programme including its recruitment service. The dealership network consists of 207 car, 145 motorcycle, 75 marine and 228 lawn and garden equipment dealers nationally. Of these, Autopeople UK Ltd deals with apprentices in 121 car, 42 motorcycle, 12 marine and 11 lawn and garden equipment dealers. Learners receive training for the advanced apprenticeship and apprenticeship at employers' premises and at the Honda Institute.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** More specifically, leadership and management are good as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. The engineering provision is also good.

4. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The Honda Institute's staff evaluate the provision on an ongoing basis. The views of staff, learners and employers are used in forming judgements about the provision. Some of the strengths found during the self-assessment process matched those identified during the inspection. Inspectors did not agree with the provider's judgements regarding retention and achievement, which placed too much emphasis on comparison with the low national averages for the industry.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** It has implemented a range of successful improvement strategies including a period of work

experience in the dealerships. Support for learners has been strengthened. The role of the mentor in the workplace has clear guidelines and expectations. The management structure has been strengthened. The review process has been strengthened and is effective. Methods of collecting feedback have been changed to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to comment. However, the improvement strategies have yet to affect overall success rates.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE HONDA INSTITUTE:

- improve success rates
- continue to increase recruitment of women and minority ethnic group members
- improve target-setting for learners
- maintain excellent training resources
- extend quality monitoring to include all activity by learners
- improve qualitative judgements during quality monitoring

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Motor vehicle</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	192	2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. The inspection covered the provider's leadership and management and provision in engineering. There were too few learners in the land-based engineering programme for this area to be inspected separately. However, judgements about this programme are included in the leadership and management section.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	27
Number of staff interviewed	27
Number of employers interviewed	17
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	19
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	1

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- good partnerships to provide professional apprenticeship training
- good communications network with all stakeholders
- good staff performance review and development process
- good strategies to improve aspects of the programme
- good awareness and understanding by learners of equality and diversity
- well-documented equal opportunities arrangements

Weaknesses

- ineffective quality monitoring of some aspects of provision

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good training
- excellent training resources
- comprehensive review process
- effective use of extracurricular activities to develop personal skills
- very good support for learners

Weaknesses

- ineffective target-setting for first-year learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT THE HONDA INSTITUTE:

- that it is a good way to get qualifications
- getting lots of hands-on experience
- being part of a team
- the very good training
- the good social life and extracurricular activities
- the very good practical blocks
- the people
- working with experienced mechanics
- the job satisfaction - it is 'top class'
- the excellent apprenticeship - 'far better than day release'
- 'couldn't ask for a better place to work'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK THE HONDA INSTITUTE COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of travelling required
- the amount of activities in the evening - there could be more
- the breaks at the institute - there could be fewer
- the rate at which learners can progress
- the preparation for staying in hotels for first time
- the frequency of activities for learners staying away from home

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good partnerships to provide professional apprenticeship training
- good communications network with all stakeholders
- good staff performance review and development process
- good strategies to improve aspects of the programme
- good awareness and understanding by learners of equality and diversity
- well-documented equal opportunities arrangements

Weaknesses

- ineffective quality monitoring of some aspects of provision

7. The Honda Institute has developed successful partnership arrangements to provide a professional apprenticeship programme. Relationships with subcontractors are good. The Honda Institute sets high expectations of its partners. Strategic plans set clear specific aims and operational objectives for the apprenticeship programme. A range of key performance indicators on the number of apprentices that should be recruited, retention and success rates clearly identify what should be achieved within demanding timescales. The Honda Institute also will only work with subcontracted training providers that can achieve high inspection grades. Development planning has successfully prioritised the need to create a programme that provides a high-quality education and training experience for learners and at the same time meets the commercial needs of Honda UK and its dealers. Partners have a shared vision to provide high-calibre employees for the Honda Dealer Network through the apprenticeship programme. Apprentices make a valuable contribution to Honda UK's business growth and success. The Honda Institute has developed good partnerships with the dealerships, all of which operate as private franchises. Since the provider first contracted with the LSC to deliver its own apprenticeship programme, 70 per cent of its dealer network has taken advantage. Partnership arrangements ensure that apprentices work in good working environments and enjoy state-of-the-art accommodation and resources at the Honda Institute.

8. Communication at all levels of the organisation and across all stakeholders is good. Staff are well informed about company performance and strategic priorities through an annual away-day and a presentation by the managing director. Staff within the Honda Institute and out in the field keep in regular contact through a range of formal and informal discussions. Electronic monitoring systems allow staff throughout the company to share information regarding learners' progress. A range of meetings ensures that information is shared regularly regarding business performance. Meetings have concise minutes which contain specific actions and timescales, with identified individual responsibility. Managers receive weekly reports on the performance of the programme against business targets. Communication with employers is effective. Employers have a good understanding of the apprenticeship programme and most make significant investment to ensure apprentices fulfil the requirements of the programme. Employers are

well informed and involved.

9. Performance review and development activities for staff are good. Staff involved in the training programme are well qualified and experienced in their area of expertise. A detailed training and development policy outlines the company's arrangements for the development of its people. Staff are well supported and take part in continuous professional development. They keep abreast of developments in the industry, particularly with regard to the Honda product range and the demanding requirements of the Honda brand. A qualification framework sets out the training and qualifications that staff are expected to achieve, along with timescales for completion. Staff receive ongoing development, both technically and to support this personal capacity, to allow them to be effective in their job roles. New staff undergo a rigorous induction period and have their performance reviewed on a quarterly basis. Regular observations take place on staff performance and outcomes feed into the quarterly review. Staff are equipped with good resources to allow them to carry out their roles effectively both within the Honda Institute and in the field.

10. The collection and use of data is satisfactory overall. Weekly reports provide management information on performance against targets. Data is thoroughly analysed and presented at management meetings where actions are agreed.

11. Learners are given good support for literacy and numeracy at the Honda Institute. Arrangements are in place to provide specialist support should it be required. Although there is no formal strategy that outlines the provider's arrangements to support learners' additional needs, the informal arrangements available work well and are understood by staff and learners.

12. The management of health and safety is satisfactory. Workplaces are appropriately vetted before learners are placed in them, and are suitably monitored throughout the apprenticeship.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

13. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity is good throughout their apprenticeship. Learners adequately cover equality of opportunity during their induction, and this knowledge and understanding is reinforced at every review. During reviews, apprentice and technician development managers present and discuss scenarios on breaches in equality and diversity good practice with learners. Discussions are effective in probing learners' understanding. Apprentice and technician development managers use open questions effectively to expand the discussion and encourage learners to further consider and present their views. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. They understand their rights and responsibilities and have a good awareness of the complaints and appeals procedures. They are treated equally with all employees attending the Honda Institute and use the same training materials and facilities as instructors and qualified technicians.

14. The Honda Institute has established a good range of documents and measures which promote equality of opportunity well to staff and learners. The quality manager is also the equality and diversity co-ordinator and has direct responsibility for all equality and diversity matters in the organisation. All staff have attended equality of opportunity training, either

provided by an external consultant or through individual training and updating provided by their managers. The comprehensive policy and statement of intent was updated in January 2006 and clearly outlines the organisation's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. The policy clearly identifies roles and responsibilities at all levels and clearly articulates working practices in relation to equality and diversity for various activities within the organisation. It contains good guidance on the organisation's requirements on recruitment of staff, recruitment of learners onto the Honda apprenticeship programme, compliance with legislation, employee development and data management and monitoring. There are separate policies for dealing with grievances and disciplinary issues and for complaints and appeals. All staff and learners are given relevant and detailed information on equality of opportunity during induction. The Honda apprenticeship programme handbook supplied to all learners at the start of their apprenticeship contains key information and policies relating to equality and diversity and contact details for the equality and diversity coordinator. The equality and diversity committee comprising senior managers meets quarterly to monitor the equality and diversity action plan. Equality of opportunity is an agenda item at the monthly management meetings but discussions at these meetings concerning equality are not always adequately recorded and progress against actions on the equality and diversity action plan is not recorded in sufficient detail.

15. Monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace was a weakness at the previous inspection but is now satisfactory. Progress reviews include a suitable focus on equality in the workplace and on equality, welfare and diversity issues. Apprentice and technician development managers use a suitable range of questions to monitor equality of opportunity in the workplace. One dealership has inappropriate images displayed on the walls.

16. The Honda Institute collects appropriate data on ethnicity, gender and disability for all applicants. It analyses the relative conversion rates from initial contact or expression of interest to subsequent recruitment as well as the comparative retention and achievement rates of each group, to identify differences or introduce actions to rectify any apparent underachievement. The data is suitably presented and discussed at monthly management meetings and is also considered on a weekly basis by the managing director. The Honda Institute has set suitable targets to increase the number of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds that it recruits. Appropriate strategies are in place to promote the achievement of targets and to monitor progress

17. The Honda Institute has suitably sought to attract under-represented groups onto the apprenticeship programme. Promotional materials contain positive statements and graphical images to emphasise the company's commitment to employ and train people from diverse backgrounds. For example, recruitment advertisements have been placed in magazines and newspapers aimed at the black African and black Caribbean community and in magazines aimed at teenage women. Careers brochures make use of images of a woman technician working in the industry. The promotion to under-represented groups has achieved moderate success in increasing recruits from these groups. At the time of the previous inspection no apprentices were women. Since then, four women have joined the programme and a further two are waiting to join. Similarly, at the time of the previous inspection, less than 2 per cent of recruits were from minority ethnic communities. Since then, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups has increased to 5 per cent.

18. The training facilities at the Honda Institute and most dealerships have good access for people with restricted mobility.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

19. The Honda apprenticeship programme has implemented a range of successful improvement strategies. Data analysis carried out by the provider identified declining success rates. Further investigation on early leavers acknowledged that one of the major reasons that learners left early was that they had insufficient insight into the motor vehicle industry. A period of work experience within the dealerships introduced 18 months ago has gone some way to remedy this. From the 110 learners that started in 2005-06, 93 per cent are still on the programme at the end of the first year of their programme. In the previous year, 2004-05, 12 per cent of the 68 learners who joined the programme had already left early at the end of the first year. Support for learners has been strengthened. The role of the mentor within the workplace has clear guidelines and expectations. The new apprentice handbook gives clear information to learners and mentors on how this role should be executed to ensure the learners get technical and personal support to help them progress and succeed. In most dealerships this is working effectively and learners value the support they receive.

20. The management structure has been strengthened as the programme has grown. The Honda Institute created a new management post in April 2005 to support the apprentice and technician development managers. The review process has been strengthened and is effective, and dialogue between the employer, learners and reviewer is good. A revised and improved individual learning plan ensures that on- and off-the-job training are co-ordinated. Employers evaluate off-the-job training with the learners when they return from the Honda Institute. Employers support the learners by providing them with the opportunity to practise skills learnt at the institute. Methods of collecting feedback have been changed to ensure that all the learners have the opportunity to comment. Learners are contacted at their workplace by telephone by an independent staff member to establish their satisfaction with all key aspects of the programme. Any issues are promptly fed to the relevant manager for action. All feedback is used for discussion at quality meetings. The improvement strategies have yet to affect overall success rates.

21. The provider has developed a good range of policies and procedures to cover all of its operations. Quality procedures are well presented to staff and learners within the employees' and learners' handbooks. Detailed work procedures cover all activities from learners' entry application through to exit. Graphical flow charts give clear guidance to staff on how processes are intended to operate. Ongoing usage, discussion and feedback by staff provide information as to the effectiveness of the quality arrangements. A quality plan and review cycle determines when quality processes are due for review. Nominated staff are responsible for auditing documents. Overall responsibility is taken by the lead auditor who is also the quality manager. Management meetings are used as a forum to review policies and procedures and this is evident in the minutes of meetings.

22. Feedback is collected from a variety of sources. Learners' views are gathered at the end of each block of training using an effective online system. Feedback is analysed and issues raised by learners are dealt with promptly. For example, learners raised concerns about the hotel used during the block training. An alternative hotel has been secured which provides more evening activity, such as use of a leisure centre.

23. The arrangements for the monitoring of the two subcontractors are good. The service level agreement is strong and forms a sound basis for regular review meetings. Trainers visit the subcontractors during each block of training to ensure they continue to provide good-quality training. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out with the subcontractors' staff.

24. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. There are sufficient qualified and experienced internal verifiers to quality-assure assessment practice across the qualifications. An effective web-based internal verification monitoring system allows the lead internal verifier to monitor internal verification activity. The external verifier is also able to access this system from home and uses it effectively when planning visits to the centre. Feedback to assessors is recorded well using the online system. However, this is not always kept up to date and it is sometimes unclear if actions have been completed.

25. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff evaluate the provision on an ongoing basis. The views of staff, learners and employers are used in forming judgements about the provision. Some of the strengths found during the self-assessment process matched those identified during the inspection. However, inspectors did not agree with the provider's judgements regarding retention and achievement, which were cited as strengths during self-assessment when they were in fact no more than satisfactory. The provider's self-assessment placed too much emphasis on comparison with the industry's low national averages for achievement and retention.

26. Quality auditing does not focus sufficiently on the quality of the information written on documents. Errors found by inspectors in individual learning plans and review documents had not been identified through the quality assurance system. The quality assurance system did not pick up weaknesses in target-setting for learners. Staff involved in teaching within the Honda Institute and assessors out in the field are observed as part of the quality assurance process. Observations of assessors in the field are planned and take place on a five-weekly cycle. Observations during the off-the-job training do not take place on a systematic basis. All observations are graded and key strengths and weaknesses are highlighted. However, feedback following observations is insufficiently evaluative. The grades given are not supported by clear written evidence. Too little emphasis is given to the learning that takes place at the Honda Institute and the effect that teaching has on learners' progress in the training sessions. To date, insufficient improvement to success rates has occurred.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle		2
Apprenticeships for young people	192	2

27. There are 192 learners on engineering apprenticeships. Of these, 121 are following programmes in motor vehicle engineering, 39 are in motorcycle engineering, 10 are in marine engineering, six are in land-based engineering and 16 are in parts and retail. All learners are employed in Honda dealerships throughout the UK.

28. The dealers identify vacancies and the Honda Institute carries out the necessary recruitment. Learners can apply for an advanced apprenticeship in car and motorcycle engineering or an apprenticeship in marine, land-based or parts and retail. Applications are considered at any time of the year. The minimum academic requirement for applicants is three general certificate of secondary education passes or equivalent 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 their abstract and spatial awareness. A free writing test is used to assess applicants' use of grammar and punctuation and to assist in the recognition of dyslexia as well as to provide information towards the interview.

29. The Honda Institute's staff identify learners who need additional learning support during the selection process and in the early stages of their training. Learners take car service technician, motorcycle service technician, power-equipment service technician or parts adviser programmes. They work towards an appropriate national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and level 3 in motor vehicle maintenance and repair for cars and motorcycles, or a level 2 NVQ in vehicle parts operations, in marine engineering and in land-based service engineering. Learners attend off-the-job training and related background knowledge training at the Honda Institute for approximately one week in every six. Learners on car programmes attend for 20 one-week blocks during the three years of their training programme, motorcycle apprentices attend for 19 weeks during the three years of their training programme, parts apprentices attend for nine one-week blocks of training over the two years of their training programme, and lawn and garden and marine learners attend for 13 one-week blocks over the two years of their training programme. Apprentice trainers and apprentice and technician development managers carry out the assessments. They are all qualified assessors. Apprentice and technician development managers review learners' progress in the workplace at least every 10 weeks, and sometimes more frequently.

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good training

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- excellent training resources
- comprehensive review process
- effective use of extracurricular activities to develop personal skills
- very good support for learners

Weaknesses

- ineffective target-setting for first-year learners

Achievement and standards

30. Success rates are satisfactory but have declined from 61 per cent in 2003-04 to 56 per cent in 2004-05, which is 11 per cent above the low national average of 45 per cent. LSC figures show that success rates are 57 per cent for 2005-06. Timely success rates have declined from 59 per cent in 2003-04 to 50 per cent in 2004-05, which is well above the low national average of 25 per cent. All learners who remain on their programme for its full duration are successful.

31. Learners work to satisfactory standards and produce adequate portfolios. Portfolios are well referenced and contain diverse sources of evidence.

32. Most learners attain maintenance technician status at Honda in the first two years of their apprenticeship. A few learners have progressed to diagnostic technician or master technician status and been given supervisory roles in their dealerships.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	56	61	57	61	46
		timely	56	59	34	59	27
	2004-05	overall	16	56	57	56	45
		timely	16	50	33	50	25

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

The quality of provision

33. Off-the-job training is particularly good. Learners attend for up to 20 one-week blocks of training, dependent on their programme. Each block is very well planned and consists of background knowledge, practical and key skills training. At the end of each block, learners are assessed and their progress is recorded. Learners who do not meet the required standard at the first attempt are required to retake the assessments. All teaching sessions observed at the Honda Institute were graded as good or outstanding. Background knowledge training is built into the practical sessions in the workshop to develop learners' practical skills and understanding. The better practical sessions observed drew out evidence for key skills units during the activity, such as during the disassembly of a manual transmission system and the calculation of its gear ratios.

On-the-job training is carried out in a range of dealerships on cars, motorcycles or power equipment. Most dealerships are in modern purpose-built premises, many on out-of-town technology parks. Workshops are spacious, clean and well equipped. Learners are not allowed to operate machinery until they have been suitably trained. All workplaces exhibit high standards of health and safety, with clearly labelled tool racks, well-organised parts racking and appropriate waste facilities for hazardous items. Safety is given a high priority at all sites. Many safety posters are clearly displayed.

34. Training resources at the Honda Institute are excellent and contribute significantly to learning and development. The purpose-built workshop is very spacious, light and airy and contains a wide range of Honda products including cars, motorbikes, all-terrain vehicles and gardening equipment. Numerous test rigs for engines, electrical systems, brakes and many other relevant systems are used effectively to develop and challenge learners to carry out effective problem-solving activities. There is a good supply and range of handtools and a wide range of modern garage equipment that enables learners to develop effective professional practices. Within the workshop area there are computer stations giving access to engine management data on all current Honda models, their parts, workshop manuals and service details. All of this is stored on compact discs. Adjacent to and overlooking the workshops are 10 classrooms, all equipped with a comprehensive array of teaching aids including multimedia projectors. Rooms contain good furniture and all contain relevant models as effective visual aids, such as a mobile frame containing the front forks and suspension from a motorbike. Trainers have considerable relevant occupational experience, and most have recognised teaching qualifications. Staff in the dealers' workshops are also very experienced and many have worked for the same company for several years. Managers and mentors are committed to training and aid the learners' progress. Workshops are clean, bright and well laid out. Garage equipment is very modern and of a good standard.

35. Learners benefit from a comprehensive review process which is completed every 11 weeks by an apprentice and technician development manager who also carries out the workplace assessments. The review process consists of the learner, the apprentice and technician development manager and the mentor and is designed to encourage discussion on a wide range of issues which affect the learner. These include progress on their NVQ, technical certificate and key skills qualifications, as well as topics such as health and safety, timekeeping, motivation and attendance, and equality of opportunity. The monitoring of learners' progress and personnel development is an essential component of the review. Progress on the block provision is included at the next review, enabling further progressive monitoring of the learner. The company also receives a detailed debrief from the Honda Institute. Good use is made of unit percentage progression documents and flash cards are used to reinforce learners' knowledge of equality of opportunity and health and safety. At the better reviews, action-planning is thoroughly discussed to ensure that the learner understands the implication of the tasks that have been set. Opportunities are available for the learner and employer to add detailed comments on any aspect of the review process. Yearly health and safety checks are carefully monitored during the review process to ensure that any outstanding items requiring attention have been dealt with.

36. The Honda Institute uses extracurricular activities effectively to promote the personal development of learners. It has introduced the extracurricular activities to improve learners' confidence and teambuilding and social skills. Learners are able to take part in a

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wide range of activities which include go-karting, motorcycle training, paintballing, water-skiing and off-road driving activities, which helps to develop their leadership and teambuilding skills. Most learners comment on how much they enjoy these activities. All learners benefit from a one-week placement at the Honda manufacturing plant which gives them an insight and practical experience into the manufacture of the vehicles they maintain. Parts apprentices benefit from similar work experience in the art logistics facilities.

37. Support for learners is very good. The Honda Institute and workplace providers consider support for learners to be a high priority. Learners benefit from a thorough induction programme at the Honda Institute and in the workplace. Advice and guidance are good. Learners' parents are invited to attend the workplace induction so that they can appreciate the requirements of the apprenticeship. Learners derive great benefit from a period of work experience, which allows them and the employer to judge their suitability for employment in the motor trade. The documents provided by the Honda Institute and the employers are thorough, including instructive handbooks on company systems and procedures which learners can use for guidance. Prior to induction, learners take an initial assessment test to determine if they have any additional learning support needs. These needs are catered for at the Honda Institute by specialist support staff. All learners are allocated workplace mentors. The mentors attend the first block of training at the Honda Institute to support the learners during the initial phase of their training. The mentor system is effective, ensuring that all aspects of the training programme are discussed and understood by the learners. Learners are issued with a helpline list of staff contact details for vocational advice, key skills or any personal needs. Other supportive measures in place for learners include the reviews of learners' progress and assessment processes. A very good communication structure enables learners to contact appropriate staff when needed, confident in the knowledge that any problem they have can be solved.

38. The co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training is satisfactory, although there is a greater degree of co-ordination at some dealerships than others.

39. The standard of learners' practical work is appropriate to fulfil the practical elements of the qualification, with many learners acquiring a wide range of skills. The standard of written portfolio work is satisfactory.

40. Assessment is adequately carried out on a regular basis with appropriate awarding body documents being satisfactorily completed. Learners are issued with a copy of the documents which are inserted into their portfolios. Learners have an appropriate awareness of progression opportunities to technician status within Honda, but are mainly unaware of further education programmes which could enhance their wider career opportunities.

41. The recruitment process is satisfactory. Potential learners are recruited through Connexions, through dealer advertising or by directly contacting Honda. Learners are invited to attend for interview and, if successful, generally undergo a short period of practical activity to confirm suitability for employment.

42. Learners attending block-release programmes are issued with a scheme of work for each week of block-release, with each learner performing the same activities. Learners' progress is satisfactorily recorded and is monitored and progressed while they are on the

block-release programme. Training documents are satisfactorily completed and sent to each dealership for review and debriefing on the learners' return to work.

43. Employers have a satisfactory knowledge of the structure and content of the qualifications, having had previous experience of technicians completing the same apprenticeship programme.

44. Learners' generally have satisfactory knowledge of the content of the qualification and apprenticeship framework.

45. There is some ineffective target-setting. Apprentice and technician development managers raise action plans during progress reviews, which contain agreed targets for the learner to achieve by the following review or earlier. However, particularly in the first year, these targets are very broad, non-specific and difficult to measure. Learners not achieving their targets then have these targets extended to successive reviews without amendment or sufficient investigation into the reasons for non-achievement. The Honda Institute's trainers carry out interim reviews and, in some cases, discuss the achievement of targets with learners. At times, targets are reset in a more specific manner but some are just identified as 'in progress' and do not give specific, short-term aims to the learner. Some second- and third-year apprentices benefit from more specific and effective target-setting. Progress against targets is not always appropriately recorded, and individual learning plans are not always accurately updated.

Leadership and management

46. Internal verification is thorough, well planned and recorded and completed on a regular basis. Assessors are observed at least twice a year and are given effective developmental feedback by their internal verifiers. Staff are appropriately qualified in their vocational area. All staff hold assessment or internal verification qualifications or an appropriate teaching qualification. Workplace mentors are managers or qualified technicians. Co-ordination meetings between the apprentice and technician development managers team take place every two months. Staff have contributed appropriately to the self-assessment process. Most of the judgements in the self-assessment report matched those of the inspectors, but inspectors found weaknesses in target-setting and progress recording which had not been identified by the provider.

