

LITE Ltd.

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**Inspection date**

1 August 2007

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**Inspection number**

301566

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

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

#### Key for inspection grades

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

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

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

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

- Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

## Description of the provider

1. LITE Ltd (LITE) was established in 1985 as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. It is located in the town centre of St Helens, in Greater Merseyside. LITE has a contract with Greater Merseyside LSC to provide national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and modern apprenticeships. LITE provides veterinary nurse training and has veterinary nursing approved centre (VNAC) status. LITE gained Beacon status in February 2004.
2. LITE has a manager, two administrators, one qualified counsellor, and five full- and four part-time staff who carry out training, assessment and verification. The company aims to provide a comprehensive range of good quality work-based learning opportunities to meet the needs of young people who are working in, or hope to find employment in the animal care industry.
3. Some 37 apprentices, 36 advanced apprentices and one NVQ learner are on programme with LITE. Currently 31 learners are on veterinary nursing programmes, 28 are on animal care programmes and 15 on horse care programmes. Most learners come from Merseyside and Cheshire, with a small number of learners from West Lancashire and Wigan.
4. Much training and assessment takes place in the workplace with off-the-job training provided mainly at the St Helen's centre. Veterinary nursing learners attend the centre for one day a week and animal care apprentices attend for one day every two weeks. Training and assessment for horse care apprentices, and advanced apprentices in animal care, occur in the workplace.
5. In 2002, the unemployment rate in St Helens was 5.8%, compared with 6.3% for Merseyside, 3.6% for the northwest and 3% for England. In 2001, 46% of school leavers in St Helens achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or above, compared with 42% for Merseyside, 46.2% for the northwest and 47.9% for England.
6. Currently less than 1% of the population of St Helens are from minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with 1.8% in Merseyside, 3.7% in the northwest and 6.2% nationally. Employment in the area's traditional industry of glass manufacturing is in a long-term decline. St Helens Council is currently the largest employer in the borough. The four largest industries are manufacturing, utilities and construction, private sector services including distribution, and hotels and banking. The largest employment sectors in Merseyside are life sciences and tourism.

## Summary of grades awarded

<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2</b>

## Sector subject area

<b>Agriculture, horticulture and animal care</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding. Apprenticeship success rates are outstanding and have improved since the previous inspection. Learners develop excellent workplace skills. Off-the-job training is excellent, and LITE has excellent partnerships with employers. Leadership and management, is outstanding. Quality improvement arrangements are effective and improvements in the provision are implemented well. Equality of opportunity is good.

### CAPACITY TO IMPROVE

#### Good: Grade 2

8. LITE has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. Since the previous inspection LITE has successfully implemented actions to improve success rates and the quality of horse care provision. The very effective quality improvement activities enable managers and staff to identify areas for improvement and to take action to quickly correct them.
9. Inspectors judge the self-assessment report to be accurate. The self-assessment process is inclusive and accurately identified the strengths and areas for improvement. A detailed action plan effectively identifies actions to be taken. Corrective action is taken promptly and monitored closely by the manager. The action plan is regularly monitored and updated.

## Key strengths

- Outstanding success rates
- Excellent development of workplace skills
- Outstanding off-the-job training
- Excellent learning partnerships with employers
- Outstanding individual learner support
- Very good management of provision
- Very successful actions to improve horse care provision and raise success rates
- Excellent systems for monitoring learners' progress
- Outstanding employer engagement
- Very effective quality improvement

## Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity to learners

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

10. Overall success rates have improved and are now outstanding. The overall framework success rate for 2006-07 is 79.4%. In 2005-06 overall success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices were 61% and 33% compared with national averages which were 53% and 23% respectively. LITE has successfully implemented the recently introduced veterinary nursing apprenticeship. Success rates for veterinary nurses are outstanding, as at the previous inspection. Currently 86% of nurses achieved the framework in 2006-07 and 86% of veterinary nurse learners achieved the NVQ in 2005-06 compared with a national average of 66%. Achievement of horse care frameworks improved from 38% at the time of the previous inspection to 71% in 2006-07. Pass rates on key skills are high. In the last three years, two learners have been awarded an external excellence award. The standard of learner work in portfolios is good and many learners progress very quickly. Timely success rates are high. Learners are encouraged to progress at their own speed and there is good use of accreditation of prior learning to ensure timely completion.
11. Learners develop excellent workplace skills. Many work at industry standard and achieve positions of responsibility in the workplace. Many progress to more advanced roles such as head nurse or workplace trainers or assessors.

### Quality of provision

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

12. As at the previous inspection off-the-job training is outstanding, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Tutors prepare learning sessions well and are experienced and knowledgeable. Learners benefit from lively discussion and enjoy their training. Explanations by tutors are clear and learners' understanding is regularly checked. An electronic voting system is used effectively to check understanding and to review previous learning. Learning is well planned with detailed schemes of work and lesson plans available on the intranet for all staff. Off-the-job teaching resources are excellent. Tutors make very good use of electronic whiteboards and handouts are thorough and well presented. Resources such as anaesthesia circuits, pet foods and feeding apparatus are available to enhance learning and understanding. LITE is developing e-learning materials. Tutors have produced good, clear handbooks and materials for trainers and learners to use in the workplace. Learners make good progress with their key skills which are taught as an integral part of their NVQ.
13. Learning partnerships with employers are excellent. Employers provide very good work activities to help learners collect NVQ evidence. Working relationships with learners are excellent. Employers and assessors monitor learner progress well and ensure training meets the learners' needs. The veterinary practices used by the provider have experienced workbased trainers and assessors who provide very good support, training and assessment. Horse care learners are supported by workplace trainers who work well with the LITE assessors. Where learners cannot gain all their experience at their employer's premises this partnership allows learners to work for a time with another

employer, for example, nurses may work at more specialist practices. Reviews are thorough and reviewers provide an excellent summary of outcomes for learners and workplace supervisors. Short-term learning is very well planned but insufficient formal long-term planning of learning takes place. Assessment is well planned and carried out in real work situations. Internal verification is thorough and regular. Regular update meetings for work-based assessors take place. Assessors at one employer have regular meetings to standardise and share good practice and LITE internal verifiers can attend these meetings. Very good assessment paperwork assists learners and work-based assessors to collect workplace evidence. A detailed proforma for witness testimony clearly describes the evidence learners should demonstrate to achieve a successful outcome.

14. Individual learner support is outstanding, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Learners' needs are carefully identified through a range of processes including the interview and selection process. LITE arranges taster work placements to help learners make better career choices before they enrol. Individual support is given in the workplace and when learners attend off-the-job training. Learners can telephone assessors for support outside the normal working day. Some assessors act as advocates for learners in meetings with other agencies. Learners are accompanied to external examinations. Considerable investment and work has been put in to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs or with dyslexia. Learners are provided with laptops with voice recognition software or specialist spell check programmes. Learners make good use of the services of the organisation's qualified counsellor. Learners' needs are assessed at team meetings and additional or more frequent visits to the workplace are provided as necessary. This support is monitored at staff team meetings.

## **Leadership and management**

**Outstanding: Grade 1**

### **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Leadership and management at LITE is outstanding. Managers have taken effective actions to improve horse care provision and success rates. At the time of the previous inspection learners had been transferred from another provider and success rates were low. Rigorous action has been taken to bring about improvement. LITE evaluated all employers and now works only with those able to provide a good learning experience. The provider's demanding requirements and expectations for employers are clearly set out in the employer handbook and monitored thoroughly. LITE staff visit work placements frequently to assess learners, check their progress and support employers.
16. Management of the provision is very good, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. The company manager gives strong leadership, setting clear objectives and standards for staff. Individual staff members are set clear targets and have their performance monitored and development needs assessed at regular appraisal meetings. Staff are very well qualified and appropriately experienced and staff turnover is low. The organisation structure is matched well to the needs of learning programmes. Teams are well organised. As identified at the previous inspection internal communication is

good. Staff meetings are managed well and all aspects of the provider's performance are analysed thoroughly. The company has invested significantly in learning resources including electronic whiteboards and good quality reprographic equipment.

17. Systems for monitoring learner progress are excellent. LITE has excellent and well used management information. Data is accurate, easily available and used well to track and monitor learners' progress. Staff use the system to effectively record individual learning plans. The manager checks that review, assessment, and verification actions are completed on time. Staff monitor learner progress closely at monthly staff meetings, and actions are agreed to tackle issues causing concern. Actions are monitored at the next meeting. Achievement rates of learners have improved steadily since this process was implemented.
18. Engagement with employers is outstanding. Each assessor has a caseload of training providers which they visit regularly. They have excellent working relationships with workplace supervisors and assessors, and provide them with good guidance and support. LITE produces a regular bulletin to update employers on employment, equality of opportunity, and health and safety issues as well as changes to qualifications. LITE staff mentor employers in business issues as well as those related to learning. LITE collects regular feedback from employers and arranges regular updates, training events and workshops including equine excellence events to meet their needs. These events are well attended and the feedback from employers and workplace supervisors is good.
19. Arrangements for quality improvement are very effective. Recent changes have been made in the way learning sessions are structured, in the use of external speakers, and the preparations made for veterinary nursing practical examinations. LITE has made good progress to correct all areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The quality improvement system is clearly recorded, well organised and managed and is understood by staff. LITE collects the views of employers, learners and other stakeholders through surveys and consultation at meetings. Feedback is analysed, considered and acted on. The self-assessment process is well managed and inclusive. Curriculum teams use a range of evidence including data to make accurate judgements about the performance of their programmes. The self-assessment report is detailed and thorough. The self-assessment report accurately represents the provision. The action plan is realistic and sets clear targets for improvement. The manager and staff monitor progress with the action plan regularly at team meetings.
20. Equality of opportunity is good. A variety of effective actions have been taken to widen participation and promote social inclusion. Currently 20% of learners have disabilities, learning difficulties or health problems. LITE liaises frequently with the parents and employers of those learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and agrees joint actions. LITE has developed innovative contextualised posters, using breeds of dogs or horses to reinforce equality and diversity. LITE has amended its literature in an attempt to attract more male learners. Male veterinary nurses are used effectively as positive role models.
21. Development of staff awareness of equality and diversity was a weakness at the previous inspection. Action has been taken. All learners now attend an equality of opportunity training workshop. Assessors ask questions about equality and diversity issues during learner reviews. However, insufficient recent staff development has taken

place and changes to learner reviews do not adequately reinforce learners understanding of equality and diversity issues.

## What learners like:

- Friendly and supportive staff
- Being treated as adults
- Small classes
- Relaxed atmosphere
- The learning is really fun and enjoyable

## What learners think could improve:

- There were no suggestions for improvement

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes** managed by the provider/college 2004 to 2006

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	4	25	48	25	31
		timely		0	30	0	19
	04-05	overall	6	67	53	33	34
		timely	5	0	35	0	24
	05-06	overall	2	100	58	50	44
		timely	3	33	32	33	23
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	49	61	57	51	37
		timely	42	17	31	14	21
	04-05	overall	50	52	56	50	42
		timely	53	23	33	21	26
	05-06	overall	41	63	63	61	54
		timely	39	38	39	33	32

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

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

Veterinary nursing learners have followed NVQ programmes until 2005-06 and are not included in the tables.