



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 1999

REINSPECTION MARCH 2000

# York Training Centre

## SUMMARY

York Training Centre offers good training in business administration and foundation for work programmes, with well-structured and interesting training sessions. Training in health, care and public services is satisfactory. The programme co-ordinators for care and childcare have worked hard to provide a more structured training programme. The centre is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities. The management of training and trainee support is satisfactory and trainees receive good pastoral support, help and guidance. A satisfactory quality assurance system is in place. Self-assessment has been rigorous.

**As a result of the reinspection of York Training Centre, the original published report text for health, care and public services, foundation for work and quality assurance has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings have also been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the original published report which have not been subject to full reinspection have been left in their original form.**

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Business administration	2
Hospitality	3
Health, care & public services	4
Foundation for work	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	3
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	4

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Health, care & public services	3
Foundation for work	2

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ staff commitment to, and support for, equal opportunities
- ◆ high frequency of trainers' contact with, and visits to, trainees
- ◆ good arrangements for staff appraisal and staff development
- ◆ thorough and accurate self-assessment
- ◆ clear commitment in the business plan to helping marginalised and socially excluded groups
- ◆ well-planned and effectively managed prevocational training programme



### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ missed opportunities for assessing key skills
- ◆ failure to give some trainees initial assessment
- ◆ lack of rigour in trainees' progress reviews
- ◆ poorly planned on-the-job training for hospitality trainees
- ◆ employers not always involved in the training process

## INTRODUCTION

1. York Training Centre and its business has grown in the last year. York Training Centre now operates on three sites in York. Staff numbers have increased over the last four years from 17 to 46. New business during this period includes Employment Service contracts acquired for New Deal, work preparation, personal effectiveness programmes for PACT and programme centres (formerly contracts for Jobclub and Job-search Seminars), a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) contract, a European social fund project, a widening participation contract, contracts with ten York schools and a City of York Council contract.
2. York Training Centre now offers training in nine occupational areas comprising agriculture, construction, management and professional, business administration, retail, distribution and customer service, sport and recreation including leisure and tourism, catering and hospitality, health, care and public services and foundation for work. Training is funded through a contract with North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The centre offers modern apprenticeships and national traineeships and other youth training programmes. York Training Centre delivers New Deal training in the following options: full-time education and training, employment, voluntary sector and the environmental task force. There is also a pilot scheme for the New Deal Gateway in Selby and New Deal for disabled people in North Yorkshire. The company also provides a range of privately funded training.
3. York Training Centre was originally part of North Yorkshire County Council, which set up an employment and training initiatives unit in 1983 to respond to the new government initiatives on the alleviation of unemployment. The unit increased in activity in the mid-1980s, eventually employing 60 staff, with over five training centres throughout the county. As a result of local government reorganisation in 1996, York Training Centre, its staff and contracts, transferred to the newly created City of York Council. Its geographic boundaries are roughly defined as the Greater York area. In addition to re-drawing its catchment area, York Training Centre also re-defined the scope of its occupational training areas and concentrated on the main areas of vocational activity reflected in the economy in York.
4. By being part of The City of York Council's economic development group, York Training Centre is able to ensure that its activities meet the city's labour market requirements and help to fulfil The City of York Council's mission statement and economic development strategy. York Training Centre offers NVQ training programmes at levels 1 to 4 for a range of occupational areas. The careers service and North Yorkshire TEC acknowledge that York Training Centre has a role in accepting applicants who are not likely to be taken on by other providers.
5. York has a strong economic base, comprising both manufacturing (engineering, transport, construction, chocolate) and service industries, including banking, financial services and tourism. The unemployment rate for York is 4.2 per cent. Only 0.5 per



cent of the population in the district are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 51.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 39 per cent, in 1999.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. The original self-assessment was produced as a result of extensive consultation with staff, trainees and workplace providers. Each member of staff and several trainees and placement supervisors were interviewed during the self-assessment process. This included visits to placements to identify strengths and weaknesses. A second evaluation exercise was carried out which formed the basis of the self-assessment report which was submitted to the council. Inspectors agreed with all the grades in the self-assessment report except for the grades given for the occupational area of health, care and public services, which they considered was too high.

7. The latest self-assessment report was produced as a result of extensive consultation with staff, trainees and workplace providers between December 1999 and January 2000. The report, plus a status report on progress made to date towards achieving the post-inspection action plan, were presented to the council for reinspection.

8. A team of four spent 16 days at York Training Centre in February 1999. Inspectors observed training and assessment activities for groups and individual trainees, including progress reviews and interviews. They visited 23 employers' premises to speak to trainees and employers at their workplace. They spoke to 43 trainees, all relevant company staff, and representatives of North Yorkshire TEC and other external partners, including staff from the careers service. Inspectors reviewed trainees' files and a range of documents and records of the company.

9. A team of three inspectors spent a total of nine days at York Training Centre in March 2000 to reinspect the areas of health, care and public services, foundation for work and quality assurance. They interviewed 24 trainees, 13 York Training Centre staff, visited 12 placements and spoke to nine employers. Inspectors reviewed training records, trainees' files and documents and records of the company.

Grades awarded to reinspection instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Health, care & public services		4	2			6
Foundation for work		1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Business administration

**Grade 2**

10. There are 15 trainees working towards administration NVQs at levels 1 to 3. Fourteen trainees are employed, two of whom are national trainees and one a modern apprentice. All trainees have two-year training plans. Trainees are employed in a wide range of administrative roles, including work at York magistrates' court, insurance companies and automotive suppliers. They attend the centre on a day-release basis. Two part-time staff are responsible for training and assessment, which take place during day-release sessions. They visit trainees in the workplace to carry out progress reviews. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths and with the two weaknesses cited in the self-assessment report. They found other strengths which York Training Centre had not identified, and they awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ strong commitment of staff to ensuring trainees' success
- ◆ high-quality work placements
- ◆ effective off-the-job training
- ◆ excellent information technology resources

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of workplace assessment
- ◆ ineffective progress review process

11. Staff are strongly committed to ensuring that trainees achieve their qualification. Trainees demonstrate a clear understanding of the NVQ process and are continually encouraged by staff of York Training Centre to explore ways of gathering portfolio evidence. York Training Centre's staff are responsible for arranging suitable placements for NVQ trainees. They have good working relationships with employers and gain their support in helping trainees to achieve their aims. Employers gave examples of tasks which they provide for trainees to generate evidence which is not naturally occurring in the workplace. For instance, one trainee was given the opportunity to assume responsibility for stock control in the department and is now acting as mentor for a new trainee carrying out the same tasks. Employers receive written feedback on trainees' performance, including information about their attendance and punctuality on day-release training and their progress towards attaining NVQs.

12. Off-the-job training is well structured. There is a planned programme distributed to trainees and employers. Day-release workshops provide the opportunity for trainees to gain the necessary underpinning skills and knowledge to complete NVQ units and to progress in the workplace. Training sessions are lively.

Trainees relate well to one another and their trainers and they take part in training activities with enthusiasm. The sessions also cover additional job-specific training which employers have requested. Trainees have access to a well-equipped computer suite, in which they are able to gain additional skills and extend their use of information technology packages. The group has been split into two working groups to ensure that all trainees have their own computer and that the tutor-trainee ratio is never more than one to eight.

13. There is a lack of workplace assessment. Opportunities for trainees to gather evidence of their performance in the workplace are missed. Trainees obtain witness testimonies from employers, but are not able to measure their competence against NVQ standards. Trainees' progress reviews take place quarterly, but do not provide trainees with a clear action plan or target achievement dates. Trainees gather evidence across a range of units. In the current year, 12 trainees have left the business administration programme, and of these, 58 per cent have obtained their qualification. In 1997-98, 14 trainees left and 43 per cent achieved their qualification. In 1996-97, 21 trainees left and 43 per cent achieved their qualification.

### **Hospitality**

### **Grade 3**

14. There are 29 trainees on the scheme working towards a variety of hospitality NVQs at levels 1 and 2. Most trainees are aiming to achieve the NVQ in the food preparation and cooking at level 2, with the other trainees working for a variety of awards, depending on their chosen career route. In addition, all trainees achieve a basic food hygiene certificate and training for this is provided by staff at York Training Centre. All trainees are in work placements and the majority are employed. York Training Centre uses placements throughout the area. Most are in hotels in the city and the remainder are in different types of restaurants. Training is primarily work-based, and trainees are expected to attend the training centre for portfolio-building workshops and off-the-job training sessions. Food preparation and cooking trainees are expected to attend once every two weeks and all the other trainees, once a month. The two part-time trainers/assessors employed by the centre are vocationally experienced and hold the relevant assessor awards. York Training Centre's team leader, who is occupationally qualified and holds the relevant assessment and verification awards, carries out internal verification. Inspectors agreed with three of the strengths in the self-assessment report. They found three weaknesses which York Training Centre had not identified and they agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

#### ***STRENGTHS***

- ◆ exceptionally good working relationships among employers, staff and trainees
- ◆ wide range of programmes for trainees
- ◆ good off-the-job support for portfolio-building

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poorly planned off-the-job training sessions
- ◆ insufficient assessment-planning
- ◆ insufficient learning support material for some trainees

15. A dedicated team of staff is sensitive to trainees' needs and provides them with appropriate help and support. There is an atmosphere of trust among staff, trainees and workplace providers, and trainees value the support they receive to help them to overcome difficulties. All trainees interviewed commented on the high degree of help given by the staff at York Training Centre. Workplace supervisors play their part in supporting the trainees. For example, one trainee who was unsuited to a particular placement was allowed to continue in it until a more appropriate one was found. Trainees are given plenty of time to settle into the work environment before embarking on their NVQ work.

16. Staff have a wide range of experience in the hospitality industry and they are able to offer training leading to a range of NVQs in hospitality at levels 1 and 2.

17. The centre's staff carry out assessments in the workplace. One workplace supervisor has just become qualified as a workplace assessor, and two more are in the process of becoming qualified. No detailed long-term assessment plans are produced, and so trainees only focus on assessment which will take place in the month ahead.

18. All trainees have good access to centre staff for assistance with portfolio building. There are regular and well-planned portfolio sessions at the centre. Attendance at these sessions is not mandatory and those trainees who do not attend them are given further support at their work placement by centre staff. Trainees have a good understanding of the NVQ process. The portfolio-building sessions which take place off the job include some training. This is not planned in detail, however, and the aims for the session were not always clear. Workplace supervisors are unaware of the training given by the training centre. Off-the-job training and on-the-job training are not co-ordinated. The food preparation and cooking trainees all receive an up-to-date NVQ-specific textbook. However, trainees working for other qualifications do not have easy access to textbooks which are held in the training centre. The centre has produced case study and other support materials which are helpful to the trainees.

19. All trainees are highly appreciative of their basic food hygiene training, and several trainees said they would welcome further off-the-job group training. During the current financial year, two trainees achieved a level 1 award and two trainees achieved a level 2 award. Several trainees are expected to complete their awards in the next two months. In 1997-98, 29 trainees completed the hospitality programme and 31 per cent achieved their qualification. In 1996-97, 14 trainees completed programmes and 36 per cent achieved the qualification.

## Health, care & public services

## Grade 3

20. York Training Centre provides training leading to qualifications in early years care and education and care at level 2 and 3 and key skills training to level 3. There are 54 trainees of whom 14 are modern apprentices, 16 are on a national traineeship programme and 24 are on other youth training programmes. Twenty-two are working towards qualifications in care, 25 are completing early years care and education qualifications and seven are on dental nursing courses. Trainees work in supervised placements in primary schools, nurseries, residential homes, nursing homes and dental practices. Vocational training sessions take place on a half-day each month at the York Training Centre. Training in the key skills of application of number and information technology is also available at the training centre. All assessment takes place in the workplace. A suitably qualified member of staff carries out health and safety checks on each workplace before trainees are placed there. The seven trainees working towards the National Certificate for Dental Surgery Assistants attend training which is sub-contracted to the Department of Health Studies at a local university. There are two part-time co-ordinators, one for childcare and one for elderly care, and two trainers/assessors. The co-ordinators provide support to the trainer/assessors and the work-based assessors, and internal verification of their own programmes. Ten of the employers now have staff who are qualified work-based assessors. All staff are vocationally experienced and qualified to train, assess and verify internally. All staff take part in regular personal development courses to increase their knowledge of the elderly care and childcare sectors.

At the first inspection, inspectors identified the following main weaknesses:

- ◆ inconsistent implementation of workplace induction
- ◆ lack of rigour in assessment
- ◆ insufficient number of work-based assessors
- ◆ failure of on- and off-site training to meet trainees' needs
- ◆ underdeveloped key skills training
- ◆ high number of early leavers

21. Most of the weaknesses identified in the first inspection had been addressed by the time of the reinspection and the remaining weaknesses were being addressed.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good workplaces with supportive employers
- ◆ opportunities for additional training
- ◆ high achievement rate for dental nurses

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ some missed opportunities for assessing key skills
- ◆ failure to maximise use of evidence
- ◆ low achievement in care and childcare

22. Training is well structured for the practical and theoretical aspects of the programme. Training sessions are held for a half day each month for all care trainees and for childcare trainees working towards an NVQ at level 2. Childcare trainees working towards an NVQ at level 3 undertake theory training in the workplace. There is a bank of planned lessons available covering a six-month period so that continuity of training is maintained when a trainer is absent. Each lesson is well-planned and clearly identifies the objectives, methods of delivery and resources needed for completion of all units. The training room is well equipped with teaching resources. Employers receive a copy of the topics to be covered during the training sessions and give trainees time out of the workplace to attend. Childcare trainees work in all areas of the nursery so that they can experience working with children of all ages to cover the range of activities required to achieve the NVQ.

23. Employers take part in the trainees' progress reviews. They comment on trainees' progress with their qualification and their performance in the workplace. Both the trainee and York Training Centre have a copy of the review. Trainees are offered the opportunity to meet confidentially with staff if they have any problems. York Training Centre has not regularly reviewed the group of seven trainees working towards the Certificate for Dental Surgery Assistants.

24. Many trainees have attended additional courses and training days covering subjects such as child protection, non-physical restraint, understanding Alzheimer's disease and other diseases. Employers arranged the training for their staff and gave trainees the opportunity to attend. One childcare trainee has attended a training course for a half day each week. These training days enhance the trainees' experience and provided supporting theory for their NVQ.

25. The original inspection found variations in the implementation of workplace induction. Most trainees interviewed during the reinspection had good recall of induction to the workplace and their rights and responsibilities as trainees with York Training Centre. Training for health and safety, equality of opportunity and how to gather evidence for NVQ was also well remembered.

26. A lot of progress has been made with training and assessing key skills but some opportunities for their assessment are missed. Trainees have a key skills log book but achievement of key skills has not yet been recorded. Two trainees have prepared and presented information about training or resources relating to their work and have useful documentary evidence from people familiar with the key skills awards. This evidence has not been recorded in the trainees' key skills logbook as having been achieved. One co-ordinator has almost completed a

portfolio of evidence for the key skills trainer's award, other staff have arranged to attend key skills workshop and to gather evidence for their key skills trainer's award.

27. There are detailed records of assessment observations in the workplace. Some completed assessments record the trainee's competence in actions or activities, which are required in more than one unit. This evidence has been used for one unit but not been cross-referenced to other appropriate units. This has slowed trainees' progress through their NVQ.

28. Of the 30 care trainees who started training in 1997-98, seven are still in training and 70 per cent of those who have left achieved the qualification. In 1998-99, 26 trainees started training on care programmes. Fifty per cent of these trainees are still in training and four of those who left the programme achieved the qualification. In 1997-98, all the trainees on the dental nursing programme achieved their intended qualification. Of the dental nursing trainees who began training in 1999-2000, 50 per cent have achieved their qualification and the remainder are still on the programme.

## Foundation for work

## Grade 2

29. There are 24 trainees on the prevocational work preparation programme. The work preparation programme lasts up to 26 weeks. The programme offers trainees support to develop their employability and job-search skills and to sample work experience with companies in their preferred occupational area. Current trainees are placed in shops, a brewery, elderly care homes and childcare nurseries. On completion of their training, trainees are directed towards further occupational training through youth training or modern apprenticeship programmes or full-time employment. All trainees are assessed on entry to the programmes to identify their individual learning support needs. Those foundation trainees who are identified as requiring numeracy and literacy support, following initial assessment, complete approved numeracy and literacy programmes at entry level or level 1. Some trainees are working towards achievement of a key skills certificate at level one in communication. Higher levels of individual support are given to foundation trainees. The programme is co-ordinated by a full-time trainer/assessor, supported by one part-time and one full-time trainer/assessor, all competent in basic skills. The basic skill trainer/assessor left in February. The vacancy has been advertised and filled and the new post holder is expected to start employment with York Training Centre in April. Staff share the training and assessment for the wordpower and numberpower programmes.

Inspectors at the first inspection identified the following main weaknesses:

- ◆ low referral rates of trainees to basic skills programme
- ◆ poorly structured pre-work experience for foundation trainees

- ◆ no planning of on-the-job training
- ◆ trainees' uncertainty about the length of their training programme
- ◆ inadequate recording of trainees' support needs

30. Corrective actions have been taken to address the weaknesses identified in the first inspection. Some of these actions have been fully implemented. Other weaknesses have been addressed in part but it is too early in the cycle to measure the overall impact on the trainees' learning. One weakness remains the same. All the strengths identified in the first inspection have been maintained.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ strong team working between staff to give high levels of support
- ◆ high percentage of trainees progressing to employment
- ◆ carefully chosen work experience tasters
- ◆ well-planned and effectively managed training

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ employers not always involved in the training process
- ◆ informal system for monitoring activity during unsupervised hours
- ◆ some missed opportunities to use naturally occurring evidence

31. Training staff work as a team. They are knowledgeable about each trainee and their progress. Both trainers are qualified to teach and assess basic skills. They are highly experienced and knowledgeable about meeting the additional needs of prevocational trainees. Training and assessment activities are shared between the two staff and frequent changes are made to the training sessions to meet the needs of the group or individual trainee. Additional support is provided on demand and additional visits and meetings are arranged as required. Trainers frequently discuss the progress that trainees are making, often on a daily basis. This information is generally shared verbally, but it is not always documented.

32. Trainers are careful to match work placements to each trainee's needs. Trainees are asked at their interview to identify the type of work that they would like to do. As part of the job-search programme trainees are instructed to use their out-of-centre training hours to identify local companies where they would like to work. They then prepare and send a speculative letter to inquire about any possible full-time job vacancies or a chance to take part in a work-experience taster. Employers are briefed at the beginning of each placement.

33. Last year 10 out of 19 trainees (52 per cent) left the programme to go into further training and/or employment. This year that percentage of successful trainees has been maintained, with 11 out of the 21 trainees who have left prevocational training moving into other training and/or employment. At the time of the first inspection only three of the nine trainees on prevocational training

programmes were working towards achievement of basic skills qualifications. Now all prevocational trainees are working towards a qualification such as wordpower and numberpower at entry level or level one and/or the key skills unit of communication at level one. So far this year, seven trainees have gained either a wordpower or numberpower qualification and one trainee achieved an NVQ at level 1 in distributive operations.

34. Weekly training sessions are structured to allow for variety of activities and the opportunity for trainees to work with one another. Trainees are encouraged to talk about their own experiences and to participate fully in the learning activities. Trainers generally rely on activity worksheets for the majority of evidence used for basic skills qualifications. Naturally occurring evidence from both work placement and everyday activities has been missed. Written statements from staff who have witnessed the trainees' effective written and verbal communication at work are not gathered from employers for those trainees who are on work-experience tasters. Training sessions are held in one of several rooms in the building, which are used for other purposes and lack appropriate display materials to assist the trainees' learning. Trainers are required to carry any equipment, files and course resources to the appointed room for each session. A laptop computer has recently been provided for the use of trainees during training sessions. All the communal meeting rooms are well equipped with a whiteboard, an overhead projector, flipchart and furniture.

35. In most weeks, trainees who are not completing a work taster attend the centre for an average of three days. Trainers set projects for each trainee to complete during their unsupervised training hours. Trainees are given an activity sheet but no copy is retained in the office as a record of work set or a checklist of what work has been completed.

36. There is no systematic planning of on-the-job training for trainees on work tasters. Trainers do not inform employers of what they are required to do to support their trainees' development. Trainers do not devise a training plan for trainees to complete or employers to monitor. Progress reviews usually take place every four weeks. The content of reviews lacks detail. Employers' views about a trainee's performance at work are seldom gathered or recorded.

37. The system for assessing individual trainees' support needs at the beginning of the programme was standardised after the first inspection. All trainees are tested. The results are used to plan individual training programmes. Individual training plans are produced on a computer. The document format does not allow trainers to record the extent of support provided to each trainee. Trainers use several additional documents to record an individual trainee's support needs. These documents are held in the trainee's training file. Information is detailed but fragmented between the different documents. It is difficult to get a clear summary of any trainee's support needs and how they have been reviewed.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

**Grade 2**

38. York Training Centre has a clear and comprehensive equal opportunities policy, issued to all staff and trainees at induction. It carefully addresses disability discrimination, grievance and harassment procedures and the rights of all staff and trainees to fair and equal treatment. Staff take their commitment to equal opportunities very seriously. York Training Centre's success in promoting equal opportunities is reflected in the wide range of trainees which it recruits. There is good access for wheelchair-users throughout the training accommodation and offices. Inspectors found some of the strengths in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice. They identified other strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good staff commitment to, and support for, equal opportunities
- ◆ good working partnerships with external agencies and experts
- ◆ clear commitment in business plan to helping marginalised and socially excluded groups
- ◆ successful mixing of trainees of all abilities on programmes
- ◆ effective marketing forum

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ many employees' lack of understanding of equal opportunities
- ◆ no centralised information about placement employers' attitudes to equal opportunities

39. York Training Centre has usefully built on The City of York Council's current policies and procedures. The council's mission statement and economic development strategy provide a focus for the centre's work with marginalised and disaffected groups. The centre has an excellent reputation and is well respected in the community for its work. York Training Centre has commissioned experts to design an up-to-date policy on equal opportunities. Staff keep abreast of equal opportunities issues through their work with local government offices and in the community.

40. All staff demonstrate a genuine concern for the well being of all individuals. Staff are committed to helping people to find work or training opportunities most appropriate to them. Trainees' success rates are good. One trainee who has cerebral palsy has been helped towards a career in childcare. The centre successfully mixes trainees of all abilities on its training programmes and in work placements.

41. York Training Centre has recently established a marketing group. The group aims to influence programme-planning, induction procedures, the equal opportunities practices of employers and provide relevant information. Regular staff development takes place which focuses on equal opportunity issues. Equal opportunities form a regular agenda item at staff and management meetings.

42. Monitoring of workplace practice in relation to equal opportunities is weak. The centre maintains insufficient information about the way equal opportunities policies and procedures are implemented in the workplace. Such information as is collected is not used to inform action planning for improvement. The induction programme does not cover equal opportunities effectively. Documentation containing information about equal opportunities is not couched in clear and simple language which the trainees can understand. Trainees do not acquire a proper understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities.

### Trainee support

### Grade 3

43. York Training Centre's staff provide the pastoral support for all trainees. They have regular contact with trainees both on- and off-the-job. Trainees receive induction to inform them about their chosen training programme. Trainees are initially assessed to determine their training and support needs. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade as that given by the centre.

#### **POOR PRACTICE**

*During progress reviews for some foundation trainees, the trainer failed to complete the necessary documentation. At the end of the review, the trainee did not receive or sign a record of what had been agreed. Instead, the trainer took the documentation away and filed it in the trainees' reference files. The trainee did not receive or sign a copy of it until the trainer's next progress review visit, when the same unsatisfactory practice was repeated. Trainees were left with no written advice on how they might improve their performance between one progress review and the next.*

#### **STRENGTHS**

- ◆ good pastoral support and counselling for all trainees
- ◆ good progression opportunities for some trainees
- ◆ trainers' frequent contact with, and support visits to, trainees

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ inconsistencies in induction in some programme areas
- ◆ failure to carry out initial assessment of trainees in some programme areas
- ◆ lack of rigour in progress reviews

44. Trainers in all programme areas demonstrate a high level of concern for their trainees' progress. Trainees on hospitality, care and foundation programmes are visited regularly in the workplace. Many trainees are visited fortnightly. Trainees on administration programmes have weekly contact with their trainer in the training centre. Visits to business administration trainees in the workplace are less frequent. All trainees are complimentary about the empathy which staff have and praise their commitment to helping them to achieve their qualifications and succeed in their jobs. Professional counselling is available to all trainees on request. Trainees taking part in hospitality and foundation programmes are encouraged to progress to higher-level

qualifications and to achieve additional complementary skills. A sound network of employers and potential placements has been developed by staff in all departments. This provides with a wide range of opportunities for trainees and enables those with additional training needs to be supported in specially identified placements.

45. Induction of trainees is not carried out with consistent thoroughness on all training programmes. Some trainees do not remember having taken part in an induction session. Many trainees' files do not include completed induction checklists. Other files have checklists which are not completed, but are signed by the trainer and trainee. Initial assessment is not used consistently across occupational programmes. Care trainees receive no initial assessment. Business administration trainees take a skills test, but the results are not taken into account when planning their individual learning programmes. Hospitality trainees are given an appropriate occupational test to decide the qualification and level most appropriate for them. There are inconsistencies in the way the initial assessment of trainees on the foundation programme is carried out and these are addressed in the centre's action plan. A standard test has been purchased and is currently being introduced. Trainees' progress reviews lack rigour. Some trainees have not received reviews regularly. Records of progress reviews lack detail. Action points are superficial and trainees are not set targets. Trainers do not check with the trainees that previous review action plans have been implemented fully.

### **Management of training**

### **Grade 3**

46. The management team has recently been reorganised. Trainers and assessors are grouped into occupational sectors reporting to a line manager who regularly reviews their progress. All staff have a job description which links to the business plan. Management found that subcontracting arrangements were proving unsatisfactory for several reasons. It was, therefore, agreed that, where possible, training and assessment would be carried out at the centre. This decision has been successfully implemented for all but a small group of trainees. Inspectors agreed with all the strengths and two of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good arrangements for staff appraisal and staff development
- ◆ good internal communications
- ◆ effective development of employers' network

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no sharing of good practice
- ◆ uncertainty of staff about lines of accountability

47. All new members of staff receive a comprehensive six-month induction to the company. All new staff are issued with a staff handbook. Annual appraisal is linked

to staff development, and staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities through The City of York Council's training department. Two staff are currently working towards the key skills assessor award. All staff have job descriptions and are aware of their individual roles in the company. They clearly understand the aims of the organisation and their performance is regularly reviewed in line with their development plans.

48. There are monthly staff meetings. Working groups help to prepare the agenda for these. For example, the monthly meeting of managers' incorporates the internal verifiers' meeting. Matters arising are discussed at the monthly staff meeting. Similarly, the health and safety officer reports on outstanding issues, and the marketing group provides information on progress made in the further development of external links with schools and the careers service. However, good practice is not shared among different programme areas. Systems which are working well in one programme area have not been identified and adopted by other programme areas.

49. Following the internal reorganisation, some staff are confused about the management structure. Staff are involved in several programmes, some of which fall outside established reporting arrangements. Some staff are uncertain who their line manager is and to whom they should report. Staff are set departmental targets. Issues which arise during the training year in relation to such matters as recruitment, trainees' achievements, early leavers, completion rates, are addressed at team meetings.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Grade 3**

50. York Training Centre meets the quality assurance requirements of North Yorkshire TEC and awarding bodies. It has recently recorded policies and procedures in a standard format and has produced a quality manual. A designated senior manager has responsibility for quality assurance.

At the first inspection, inspectors identified the following main weaknesses:

- ◆ monitoring of trainees' programmes and progress is poor
- ◆ no well-established effective quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ insufficiently rigorous monitoring of workplace training
- ◆ weak internal verification in some occupational areas
- ◆ failure of some staff to complete documentation properly

51. Considerable improvements have taken place since the first inspection. All the weaknesses have been addressed. The post-inspection action plan has been monitored and reviewed. The self-assessment report identified eight strengths and five weaknesses and awarded a grade 3 for quality assurance. Inspectors confirmed that a standardised procedure for internal verification has been developed for use across the organisation. Inspectors also agreed with two other

strengths and the remainder were considered to be normal practice. Action had been taken to address three of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors confirmed the remaining two weaknesses. The grade awarded was the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ thorough and realistic self-assessment
- ◆ managers and staff work enthusiastically toward continuous improvement
- ◆ effective sharing of good practice

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ weak monitoring of subcontracted provision
- ◆ some incomplete documentation

52. Senior managers in City of York Council have worked with staff in developing a system of continuous quality improvement. Two independent consultants have been brought into the organisation to advise and assist in the process. One is from a nationally recognised quality and development organisation. Staff are enthusiastic in their approach to quality assurance and are keen to maintain the process. Action taken following the first inspection has resulted in improved performance. A status report showing the progress made was written and where action was not complete this was transferred to the new self-assessment report. All staff were involved in the latest self-assessment process.

53. The quality procedures are clearly written and in a standard format. There are a few remaining areas of the organisation's work to be addressed. Many of the procedures were in place at the last inspection but were not documented. The staff copies have recently been circulated as reference documents but they are not yet fully implemented. A draft outline of the procedure for auditing and monitoring the use of the quality procedures has been produced but has not yet been circulated. The organisation is developing processes for evaluation and analysis as part of the quality process. Questionnaires seeking the views of trainees and employers have been completed on three occasions since the first inspection. Those completed in 1999 have been thoroughly analysed and a detailed report produced with the assistance of one of the independent consultants. The report clearly identifies the actions to be taken. Some of these have been addressed and changes implemented. A summary action plan has been produced. The document is to be discussed by senior managers to identify areas of responsibility. Data is now regularly supplied to occupational teams, which allows them to monitor achievement and destinations and their progress against targets more effectively.

54. The monitoring of on- and off-the-job training is satisfactory and further improvements are still under development. The quality procedures give clear guidelines on the planning of off-the-job training. A process of observation of off-the-job training sessions has begun, but not all staff have been observed. The

monitoring of staff training in the workplace has also been introduced. Assessors also monitor on-the-job training. Employer handbooks include a breakdown of the NVQ which is used to identify the employers' input in training. Amendments have been made to the trainees' review process to include and record employers' comments on the trainees' progress. However this does not adequately record the completion of training to be carried out in the workplace.

55. The internal verification procedure is clear and has been implemented effectively in some occupational areas. Support is given to less experienced internal verifiers through the regular internal verifiers' meetings and additional support meetings. Good practice is shared at these meetings. The internal verification procedures state that assessors should be observed annually carrying out the assessment process and new assessors should be observed more frequently. Standardised documentation has been produced, although in some instances there is a choice of two documents which may be used to record a particular aspect e.g. feedback to assessors following internal verification. Tracking documents are in use to record the sample of units, which have been internally verified. At this stage there is no sampling plan devised for use prior to internal verification.

56. The organisation has been active in standardising some of its documentation. In addition to that produced for internal verification, assessment documentation has been standardised. The contents of trainees' files have also been standardised. New documents are now dated to assist in the document control procedure. However, staff are still failing to complete documentation properly. Some training has taken place and is ongoing.

57. As identified in the self-assessment report, the monitoring of subcontracted provision is variable. Some meetings take place between the provider's staff and subcontractor's staff and some information is shared. Two subcontractors recently completed a questionnaire. However, there is no service level agreement or contract which defines the commitment and role of each party and against which the provision can be monitored. A draft contract has been produced but is not yet in place.