

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS)

04 September 2001



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## **Adult Learning Inspectorate**

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

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.

## **Inadequate provision**

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

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

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

## SUMMARY

### The provider

The Community Learning and Skills Service is part of the lifelong learning directorate of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It is based in Walthamstow. As part of its activities, it provides work-based learning in manufacturing (textiles), business administration, retailing and warehousing, hairdressing, sport, childcare and care for the elderly. There are 129 learners following modern apprenticeship and other work-based learning programmes. Most learners have additional learning needs. Learners are either employed or in work placements throughout Waltham Forest, neighbouring London boroughs, Essex and central London. They receive off-the-job training either at the Community Learning and Skills Service's premises or from subcontractors.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of work-based learning is satisfactory in all areas, with the exception of hairdressing, where it is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management are satisfactory. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good, but quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

### Work-based learning for young people

Work-based learning is satisfactory in manufacturing (textiles), business administration, retailing, sport and childcare and care for the elderly. It is unsatisfactory in hairdressing. In all areas, the quality of on-the-job training is good. Off-the-job training is also good in all areas except in sport. Some teaching and training is very well planned and delivered. There are excellent relationships with employers. Learners are well supported in terms of pastoral and programme support, except in the case of business administration and sport, where there is some poor assessment practice and progress reviewing. Initial assessment of learners' needs is particularly thorough in care training. Induction is satisfactory in all areas. In sport and manufacturing, learners benefit from very good practical resources and facilities. Resources in manufacturing are of the latest industrial standards.

Some key skills training is inadequate. While it is at least satisfactory in manufacturing and business administration, it is unsatisfactory in the other areas. Learners in all areas make significant progress considering that so many have serious learning difficulties. The progress made by learners in sport is particularly good. However, on many training programmes, achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework is poor, often because learners leave before finishing their key skills work. Achievement of individual learning programmes is particularly poor in hairdressing.

## Leadership and management

Although the recent changes to the management structure have not yet effectively integrated work-based learning activities, internal communications are good. There are productive partnerships with employers. The management information system is not adequate. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete, although the internal monitoring of the quality of teaching and arrangements for internal verification are significant strengths. The Community Learning and Skills Service effectively promotes equality of opportunity and demonstrates its commitment through its successful initiatives to widen participation. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the implementation of these policies and procedures.

## GRADES

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

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Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	4

### KEY STRENGTHS

- good-quality training
- effective partnerships with employers
- high levels of support for learners
- rigorous workplace assessment in care
- very well-equipped clothing workshops
- well-equipped training facilities in sport
- considerable progress of many learners with additional learning needs
- good internal communications
- effective monitoring of quality of teaching
- thorough internal verification
- effective promotion of equality of opportunity

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement of individual learning plans
- poor practice in assessment and the review of learners' progress in business administration and sport
- inadequately planned delivery of key skills in some areas
- inadequate communication with hairdressing subcontractor
- some inadequate management of work-based learning in the new management structure
- inadequate management information system
- lack of established quality assurance system
- inadequate quality assurance of subcontractors
- insufficient monitoring of implementation of equal opportunities policy

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more systematic approach to recruitment in manufacturing
- better induction in manufacturing and hairdressing
- better use of results of initial basic skills testing in business administration
- more explanation of NVQ system for retailing employers
- fuller retailing jobsearch programme
- more use of successful learners as trainer/assessors in sport
- standardised policy for the submission and return of learners' work in care
- more effective use of the monitoring and review of care work placements
- better document control
- better staff development information
- clearer action points from meetings
- more sharing of good practice

## THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. The Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS) was established in April 2000. It is the successor organisation to the former Waltham Forest Training Agency and the Adult Education Service. It is part of the educational provision of the London Borough of Waltham Forest, in east London, as were its predecessors. CLaSS offers a significant range and number of educational and training programmes, of which work-based learning for young people is only a relatively small part. Most learners work towards NVQs at levels 1 and 2 and foundation modern apprenticeships. Most of the young people enrolled with CLaSS have additional learning needs and around half are drawn from the local minority ethnic communities. CLaSS offers training in manufacturing (textiles), business administration, retailing and warehousing, hairdressing, sport, and childcare and care for the elderly.

2. CLaSS employs 439 full-time and part-time staff. Forty-six of these are involved with the provision of work-based learning for young people. CLaSS's premises for work-based learning are in Walthamstow, east London. This is also the location for all off-the-job training, with the exception of that for hairdressing and sport, which take place at the premises of the two subcontractors concerned. CLaSS uses around 300 employers, both in the immediate area and in central London, for the provision of work experience. It currently provides training for 129 learners following modern apprenticeship and other work-based learning programmes leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Training is funded through a contract with the London North Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

3. The London Borough of Waltham Forest is the 22nd most deprived local authority out of the 354 in England in the local deprivation index. There are high levels of unemployment, which have created pockets of the highest deprivation in the country. In September 2001, unemployment in Waltham Forest was 6.8 per cent, more than twice the rates of 3.3 per cent in London and the national average of 2.9 per cent. Waltham Forest has few large companies, the borough council being the largest employer, but there are many smaller, often owner/manager organisations. Educational performance in the area is below average and there is a particularly low skills base. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers in Waltham Forest achieving more than five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 39.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. The borough has a significant minority ethnic community, representing some 25.5 per cent of the local community at the time of the 1991 census.

## THE INSPECTION

4. A team of eight inspectors spent a total of 32 days at CLaSS during September 2001. They interviewed 71 learners, had 48 individual meetings with CLaSS's staff and visited 26 employers' sites, where they interviewed 22 workplace supervisors. They also held a meeting with the director of lifelong learning for the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Inspectors observed and graded 23 training and assessment sessions. They examined a range of documents, including 42 learners' portfolios of evidence, 40 individual learning plans, learners' records, CLaSS's plans, policies and procedures, those of the parent local authority, internal and external verification documents and reports and promotional literature. CLaSS's self-assessment report and action plan of March 2001 were reviewed.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Business administration, management & professional	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	6
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Health, social care & public services	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	9	3

5. There are nine learners working to achieve NVQs at level 1 in manufacturing sewn products. Three of them are following an English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) course and also have severe learning difficulties. The other six learners all have some learning difficulties. Learners are in work placements and receive off-the-job training with CLaSS. Off-the-job training takes place at CLaSS's premises and at fashion design and exhibition centre to which CLaSS has access. The training is managed by CLaSS's curriculum co-ordinator who is also the placement officer, assessor and tutor, and a further tutor, based at CLaSS. The training lasts for between 18 months and two years, depending on the extent of each learner's learning difficulties. Formal review of learners' progress, in simulated work conditions, takes place each week. Learners have access to tutors at all reasonable times. On-the-job assessment is carried out once a fortnight, unless a learner's work-placement provider requests more frequent visits. Internal verification is carried out by the Knitting and Lace Industries Training and Resources Agency (KLITRA) and external verification by the awarding body. Recruitment takes place throughout the year, using local advertisements and the careers service. Some applicants hear about the training from friends. Learners have a one-week induction, introducing them to the practical aspects of their training, including the machinery they will use, and other aspects of their NVQ work. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report, but concluded that there were additional strengths and weaknesses.

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

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started	9		14		20		9		0
Still in training	0	0	0	0	4	20	5	56	0	0
Individual learning plan completed	8	89	7	50	5	25	0	0	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan	1	11	7	50	11	55	4	44	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed	5	56	4	29	3	15	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	0	0	1	7	1	5	0	0	0	0

## STRENGTHS

- very well-equipped clothing workshops
- good training
- good-quality evidence in learners' portfolios

## WEAKNESSES

- low retention
- some poor achievement rates

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more comprehensive induction
- more systematic approach to recruitment

6. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the practical resources at CLaSS are good. The workshop is laid out to simulate a factory floor environment. It has a high standard of machinery and large materials cutting tables. CLaSS learners also have access to the very well-equipped fashion design and exhibition centre. Through the curriculum co-ordinator, CLaSS was involved in setting up this local authority and local partnership facility. The centre is a good working environment and contains the latest equipment available to the textile manufacturing industry. The modernity and variety of equipment is very useful to learners during their training and subsequently.

7. The induction and initial assessment of learners skills is well planned. Learners receive a thorough introduction to the various pieces of machinery in the CLaSS workshop, and subsequently at the exhibition centre, as part of their induction. Some aspects of induction, such as equality of opportunity, are not given enough emphasis. Learners move on to the facilities in the training centre once tutors are satisfied that they will benefit from the more sophisticated environment. Learners acquire a good variety of skills in the early stages of their training programme. Tutors also start to assess learners' practical abilities early. It is often during the very early stages of this highly practical training programme that learners leave the scheme, deciding that they do not want to work in manufacturing.

8. Learners' portfolios of evidence contain a wide variety of work, a strength not identified in the self-assessment report. Tutors encourage learners to maintain two portfolios. This is of great benefit to the learners. Learners keep the portfolio required

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for their NVQ work. In addition, their other portfolio records their personal approaches to practical work, including records of manufacturing methods and samples of finished work. This is a positive contribution towards increasing learners' own confidence and self-esteem and provides a very useful reference book for learners after their training.

9. The training is well organised and well delivered and makes the best use of CLaSS's and employers' staff. Tutors are well qualified and have good, relevant, industrial experience. They liaise closely with manufacturers to ensure that training is relevant and up to date. Careful planning by tutors provides learning programmes specific to the needs of individual learners. Learners are given trial placements in many manufacturing businesses. These 'taster' sessions help learners to understand the working environment and also help to identify suitable work placements for them. The curriculum co-ordinator has very strong links with local manufacturers, chosen on the basis of their positive attitudes to training and their location. The strong liaison between CLaSS and the local manufacturers enables the curriculum co-ordinator to respond quickly when an employer needs to recruit new staff. CLaSS effectively identifies learners' basic skills needs at induction and during the first three weeks of training. Many learners have learning difficulties and many are also receiving English language support. Inspectors observed one learner who had multiple learning problems, language, hearing impairment and practical skills. Another had very little English. Their needs are usually well met, although there are no regular interpreting facilities during recruitment and training, to assist learners with more serious English language difficulties. All learners attend CLaSS for basic skills training twice a week.

10. The assessment of learners' progress is well managed. Learners discuss their progress and other matters at the monthly review meetings with the curriculum co-ordinator and tutor. These meetings take place in an office, away from the noise of the workshop floor, and are valuable for staff and learners. The review process and its recording are effective. On-the-job assessment is carried out once a fortnight, unless the work-placement provider requests more frequent visits. Assessment takes place once a week. However, because of the practical nature of the course, the variety of learners' first languages and additional needs, learners are monitored daily. Internal and external verification are efficiently conducted. Most learners progress quickly, helped by well-structured lessons, to being able to make good-quality garments and soft furnishings. They are enthusiastic about their work. Their practical achievements are good for learners with poor basic skills.

11. The retention figures for the last three years have been poor, with over half of the learners leaving without a qualification. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. Achievement of all the aims on their individual learning plans is poor, at just under 50 per cent of starters over the last four years, excluding those still in training. The number of learners recruited recently has fallen. Although a number of methods are used to attract interested learners, CLaSS has no formal arrangement to promote this scheme to local schools.

**Good Practice**

*Learners are taken to London to look at finished garments in shops, supplied by the manufacturers for whom they work. Some of these garments have been made by the learners, who can compare the quality of their garments with that of rival products.*

**Poor Practice**

*Tutors have limited computer skills and are unable to help learners use the computerised manufacturing machines fully.*

**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	35	3

12. CLaSS offers training leading to NVQs in administration at levels 1 and 2 and foundation modern apprenticeships. It recruits learners through a comprehensive publicity campaign, including close liaison with the careers service, local schools and other community agencies. Learners can join the training programme at three points during the year, in June, September and January. The training is planned to enable most learners to finish within one year. Twenty-three learners are foundation modern apprentices working towards the level 2 NVQ. Sixteen of these are employed and the remaining seven receive an allowance from their work-placement providers. There are twelve learners working towards the level 1 NVQ, who also receive an allowance. Modern apprentices attend the CLaSS training centre for one day a week and level 1 NVQ learners attend for two days each week, one day for basic skills training, the other for administration training. Learners are supported by tutors for off-the-job training and by placement officers at work. Two placement officers work with modern apprentices and one with NVQ learners. All tutors and placement officers are suitably qualified and experienced. Placement officers visit learners at work to carry out coaching, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but also identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started			33		48		33		0
Still in training			0	0	5	10	15	45	0	0
FMA framework completed			0	0	11	23	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			6	18	12	25	0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework			33	100	32	67	18	55	0	0

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NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started	80		106		16		28		0
Still in training	0	0	0	0	2	12	14	50	0	0
Individual learning plan completed	40	50	32	30	8	50	7	25	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan	40	50	74	70	6	38	7	25	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed	12	15	13	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	11	14	10	9	0	0	0	0	0	0

### STRENGTHS

- good on-the-job training
- effective off-the-job training
- good support for learners

### WEAKNESSES

- poor assessment practices
- low achievement rates
- inadequate review of learners' progress

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of results of initial basic skills testing

13. Employers provide good training. Placement officers have established good links with local employers, many of whom have provided jobs and work placements for a number of years. As the self-assessment report recognises, this has resulted in a good level of understanding amongst employers of the needs of learners and the requirements of the NVQs. Communication between employers and CLaSS staff is good, with regular liaison about the progress of learners, including a termly report about each learner from CLaSS. Employers are involved in reviewing learners' progress, together with placement officers. Employers' views are recorded and acted on. Employers also help with planning for assessment in the workplace and provide opportunities for learners to move between jobs, to help learners meet the requirements of their NVQ. There are several

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examples of employers offering additional training for learners and enrolling them on external courses to develop their skills. In many companies, learners are given the same in-house training and development as other employees.

14. Off-the-job training is well organised and well structured, with comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans for all areas of training. There is a wide range of training materials available for learners at all levels, including learners with learning difficulties. In addition to training in administration and key skills, modern apprentices receive computer training at work for two units of the level 2 NVQ in information technology. Inspectors observed an excellent learning session for learners working towards level 1 NVQs. The tutor taught the learners about checking number work, initially by referring to the relevant section of the NVQ and then by asking learners for examples from their workplaces, where they would demonstrate these skills. Throughout, the tutor took care to check that learners understood the language in the NVQ documents and written notes. All learners were fully involved in discussions and the tutor maintained a respectful and supportive approach. Group sizes are small, so tutors can give a high level of support for learners. CLaSS holds a quarterly planning meeting to develop its administration training. All administration tutors contribute to this meeting. All learners are initially tested for their basic skills needs. However, not enough use is made of the information provided by these tests in planning learners' training.

15. Learners receive good support throughout their training. They benefit from thorough initial assessment as part of a well-structured induction programme. Their regular attendance at the training centre provides ready access to tutors and placement officers. The latter visit learners at work on a regular basis. Modern apprentices are visited every three to four weeks and level 1 NVQ learners every two to three weeks. Learners also have access to professional counselling at CLaSS. Additional basic skills support is freely available and CLaSS provides a supported jobsearch programme for unemployed learners. CLaSS also provides assistance for learners with disabilities, an example of which is the installation of a lift at a work placement. Alternative work placements for learners are quickly found if learners' existing arrangements break down. If learners are unable to complete their qualifications before their time in training comes to an end, CLaSS's staff continue to work with them until they do finish.

16. While inspectors saw some good practice, the assessment and review of learners' work is inadequate overall. There is too much reliance on simulated assignments based on off-the-job training for key skills. Although workplace evidence is sometimes used to assess learners' competence in both the NVQ and key skills requirements, this does not happen enough. In some portfolios, evidence which has been assessed is not adequately authenticated. CLaSS does not routinely update records of which units and elements learners have achieved. The cross-referencing of evidence across units and performance criteria is not comprehensive and sometimes learners produce more evidence than necessary. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report. CLaSS keeps the individual learning plans, signed by learners, in its central files. However, the plans are not updated enough and learners do not use them to review

their learning aims or to agree target achievement dates for key stages in their training. Assessment plans are used to record current activity rather than set out a planned programme of future assessment. Action plans are used for short-term assessment planning but lack detail to help the learners prepare for assessment.

17. Achievement and retention rates are too low on all programmes, although they are better among the NVQ learners than the modern apprentices. Over the past four contract years, 41 per cent of learners leaving NVQ training have achieved all the goals on their individual learning plans, compared with only 12 per cent of modern apprentices. The latter also have a poor NVQ achievement rate. In NVQ training in 1998-99, some 50 per cent of the learners shown in the table as leaving without completing their individual learning plans, converted to other training programmes.

**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	23	3

18. There are 23 learners. Five are on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme in retailing operations. The other 18 learners have been identified as having additional learning needs and are working towards the level 1 NVQ in distributive operations. All learners attend off-the-job training sessions at CLaSS for one day each week. The off-the-job training covers the background knowledge that learners need for their NVQs and also consists of key skills and basic skills training. Placement officers visit learners at least once a month and assess them in the workplace. The placement officers also conduct a review of learners' progress every eight weeks. When learners enrol with CLaSS they have an initial assessment to determine their level of attainment and any additional support that they may need. CLaSS then finds learners a work placement and draws up an individual learning plan outlining how their learning needs will be met. Induction takes place at learners' first off-the-job training session and also in the workplace. Four of the five foundation modern apprentices are employed, as are three of the level 1 NVQ learners. The other learners receive a weekly allowance from CLaSS. Both the retailing and distributive operations training programmes are planned to last for one year. The programmes are managed by a vocational training co-ordinator. There are two internal verifiers, one for key skills and level 2 NVQs, and another for level 1 NVQs. There are two placement officers. One assesses key skills and level 2 NVQ work, and the other assesses level 1 NVQ work. There are four tutors who give off-the-job training in retailing, key skills, distributive operations, basic skills and jobsearch. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths contained in the self-assessment report and one of the weaknesses. They identified an additional weakness.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					12		11		0
Still in training					4	33	5	45	0	0
FMA framework completed					0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					3	25	3	27	0	0
Left without completing the framework					8	67	6	55	0	0

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NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started	40		38		27		23		0
Still in training	0	0	0	0	3	11	10	43	0	0
Individual learning plan completed	17	43	10	26	3	11	0	0	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan	23	57	28	74	21	78	13	57	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed	10	25	5	13	3	11	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	5	12	5	13	0	0	0	0	0	0

### STRENGTHS

- highly effective on- and off-the-job training
- well-supported learners
- strong partnerships with employers

### WEAKNESSES

- key skills training are not fully integrated with NVQ training
- poor achievement of qualifications

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider-ranging jobsearch programme
- more explanation of NVQ system for employers

19. Off-the-job training is demanding and well planned. Inspectors observed good training sessions. There are good lesson plans and schemes of work and the training is given using a variety of methods and materials. Learners are highly motivated by the training and say that it helps their confidence and progress. The self-assessment report recognises the strength of the training being linked to what learners are doing at work. Learners have good opportunities to practice what they have learned. Tutors have an excellent rapport with learners and maintain their interest, for example, by taking them on visits to places, such as major shops, and linking the training to real life situations. In the latter case, tutors give application of number key skills training using the example of selecting and costing a holiday. Learners work out the cost of a loan and analyse

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customer questionnaires that other learners have completed at their workplaces as part of this training.

20. Learners receive particularly good support from CLaSS. The self-assessment report correctly identifies this as a strength. Learners are highly motivated by the interest shown in them by CLaSS's experienced and well-qualified staff. There is regular formal and informal communication between staff so that any problems for learners can be quickly solved. There are opportunities for learners to receive help with jobsearch and attend basic computer training if places are available. The jobsearch programme does not include opportunities for learners to look for actual job vacancies or to apply for jobs. If learners have not finished their training within their allotted time, CLaSS still helps them to achieve their qualifications. There is a good standard of assessment by the placement officers and learners' portfolios are satisfactory. Internal verification is frequent and rigorous with good feedback for assessors and learners.

21. There are very effective partnerships between CLaSS and the provider's work placement. CLaSS has worked for many years with local employers to develop a wide range of work-placement opportunities for learners. Employers support learners by allowing them time off to do training. They create opportunities for learners to gather evidence in the workplace and enable them to apply at work what they have learned off the job. Employers are involved in the learners' progress reviews and very willing to help them succeed. Learners enjoy their work placements and are positive about the way they are treated the same as other employees. Employers say that their ability to support the learners would be further assisted by more information on how the NVQ process works.

22. Key skills training is not fully integrated with the modern apprenticeship training. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. Key skills training takes place both on and off the job, but learners are still achieving their NVQs before they have completed most of the key skills units. Learners often leave the training programme once they have their NVQ because they do not want to do the additional work needed to achieve key skills units. CLaSS is dealing with this problem by developing staff knowledge of key skills training and running key skills workshops that learners can attend outside of their working hours.

23. Learners' achievement of qualifications is poor. There have been no achievements of the foundation modern apprenticeship framework to date, largely because of the failure to achieve key skills qualifications. Only six of the 23 apprentices who started on programmes during the last two years, have achieved their level 2 NVQ, although nine are still in training and are on target to achieve. Very few of the NVQ learners have achieved all the goals on their individual learning plans.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	12	3

24. CLaSS subcontracts the training in sport to a local community group, which targets unemployed young people, predominantly men, from minority ethnic groups, between the ages of 16 and 25. Many learners have previously dropped out of formal education and training. The subcontractor provides training towards NVQs in sport and recreation and in coaching and teaching football. Before the current contract year, learners were on a two-year training programme. There are now 12 male learners, all with additional learning needs, on a nine-month training programme. Learners receive a weekly training allowance and travelling expenses. They also take a first-aid qualification and sport governing body awards, including the community sports leader award, junior team manager and football coaching certificate. The project co-ordinator manages training and a tutor from a local college provides background knowledge training. The subcontractor employs a qualified professional football coach. Learners take part in progress review sessions every eight weeks with the project co-ordinator. They have work placements as football coaches, with schools, play schemes and a local soccer school. Some learners undertake extended work placements with professional football clubs in the United Kingdom and Turkey. All learners play competitive football for the subcontractor each week. Learners' basic skills are assessed as part of their induction. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

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

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					25		18		0
Still in training					1	4	7	39	0	0
Individual learning plan completed					14	56	0	0	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan					10	40	11	61	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed					0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					2	8	0	0	0	0

## COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

### STRENGTHS

- good on-the-job training
- comprehensive pastoral support for learners
- well-equipped training facilities
- good achievement of additional qualifications
- high levels of progression into employment

### WEAKNESSES

- poor assessment practice
- lack of effective basic skills support for learners
- unsystematic planning of training
- poor NVQ achievements

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more use of successful learners as trainer/assessors

25. The partnerships developed by the subcontractor, with such organisations as the police community liaison officers and local housing trusts, provide a route into training for young men who would not otherwise be attracted. Learners have an initial interview to assess their aspirations and learning needs before joining training. They take part in an induction programme covering health and safety, equal opportunities and expected standards of behaviour at the subcontractor.

26. Training at the subcontractor is good. It consists of a challenging combination of physical training and football coaching, complemented by learning coaching skills and life skills training. Learners develop their playing ability and understanding of football as well as their own coaching skills. Learners progressively take greater responsibility for planning and organising football coaching sessions in local schools. Background knowledge training sessions increase the learners' understanding of equal opportunities. Qualified coaches with a broad range of experience in professional football lead practical sessions. Learners identify closely with the coaches, who have experience of competitive sport at the highest level. Learners also attend coaching courses run by the sport's national governing body and are provided with their own training manual and logbook.

27. A range of good-quality facilities helps learners with their training and also to motivate them and develop their self-esteem. Training facilities are well equipped and learners also have access to local indoor training and gymnasium facilities. Learners are provided with tracksuits and a wide range of coaching resources are available. This ensures that learners are able to take training equipment to work placements. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety, which is important in an area like sport. Regular health and safety audits take place.

28. Most learners gain valuable additional qualifications. In 1999-2000, 96 per cent achieved the football governing body's junior team manager certificate, 80 per cent achieved its coaching certificate and 88 per cent an emergency first aid certificate. Most of the current learners are also expected to achieve these awards. Most of the learners successfully completing the goals on their individual learning plans gain employment as football coaches. Two former learners are now professional footballers in Turkey. One learner has recently signed a playing contract with a leading English football club. Although a significant number of learners do not complete the course, over 60 per cent of early leavers gain sports-related employment. Learners work well as a team in encouraging each other to attend training regularly and be punctual. The introduction of a weekly training allowance has improved retention levels. Learners' achievements are recognised through an annual certificate presentation event, displays of press reports and coaching certificates. Learners' confidence is increased as a result of the numerous letters received from schoolteachers and pupils praising the quality of their coaching.

29. Learners receive very good pastoral support. Staff have helped learners to find living accommodation and they have acted as a responsible adult for learners with complex personal needs. Learners who finish training receive ongoing support, including help to find employment in the football industry. The subcontractor has established an effective and innovative community coaching network to help former learners find enough work to become self-employed football coaches. Learners who leave training before completing their NVQ are encouraged to take training with other training providers and can continue to obtain advice and guidance from the subcontractor's staff. Where necessary, learners are referred to professional counselling and careers advice at CLaSS. Former learners, now qualified coaches, continue to receive support to develop their coaching skills and understanding of the game, through voluntary coaching work at the subcontractor. Successful former learners currently act as role models to learners. None of these former learners has become a trained assessor.

30. There is no documented planning of individual learning sessions or long-term training programmes. Many learners have additional learning needs in numeracy and literacy. Although it is readily available, they do not obtain basic skills support at the local college and there is no provision of support in their timetabled training. Learners provide feedback about their experiences in training, but there is no recording or monitoring of this. NVQ achievement rates are poor. Of the 43 learners who started training before April 2001, only 14 have achieved the goals on their individual learning plan and eight are still in training.

## COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

31. Assessment is inadequately planned and insufficiently thorough. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Evidence from learners' coaching qualifications is not effectively used towards their NVQs, and workplace observations are not structured or adequately recorded. External verification has not identified weaknesses in assessment practice. The training programme lacks a qualified and suitably experienced assessor. Progress reviews do not lead to specific short-term targets for learners, who make slow progress. The individual learning plans are not updated regularly to take account of learners' progress and achievements. CLaSS has failed to offer in-house assessor training programmes to the subcontractor.

### Good Practice

*Life skills training sessions are complemented by effective partnerships with the local police community liaison officer to cover subjects such as responsible citizenship, anger management and misuse of drugs.*

*Former learners can join a community coaching network set up by the subcontractor to secure enough work to become self-employed football coaches. The network tenders for large coaching contracts, which individual learners could not manage on their own. The network is effective in providing support and a first step into self-employment.*

### Poor Practice

*The external verifier had not identified that the assessor did not meet the occupational standards for assessing this NVQ in the context of football coaching.*

**Hairdressing & beauty therapy****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	19	4

32. CLaSS offers training in hairdressing leading to NVQs at levels 1 and 2 and foundation modern apprenticeships. There are 14 foundation modern apprentices and five learners following NVQ programmes. Most salons recruit their own learners and request training from CLaSS. Some learners are referred to CLaSS from the careers service and a few are recruited through advertisements. Learners can begin their training at any time of the year. All the learners are employed. Off-the-job training for all learners is subcontracted to a local training provider. The subcontractor has flexible attendance arrangements to suit the needs and requirements of each learner and employer. All learners attend day-release training at the subcontractor's training centre for theory, key skills and practical training once a fortnight. They receive assessment both on and off the job. Others receive training in practical skills and assessment in their own salons and attend the training centre for theory and key skills training. Learners working towards level 1 NVQs attend the training centre once each week for practical and theory training and receive assessment on and off the job. CLaSS placement officers and the subcontractor's assessors conduct progress reviews in the salon at least once each month. The subcontractor's assessors make additional visits if assessment is requested. A team of four assessors from the subcontractor provides training and assessment. All have appropriate experience and qualifications. The self-assessment report reflected some of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. The inspectors found further weaknesses.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started			1		11		15		0
Still in training			1	100	1	9	11	73	0	0
FMA framework completed			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework			0	0	10	91	4	27	0	0

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started	26		35		8		3		0
Still in training	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	0	0
Individual learning plan completed	8	31	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan	18	69	32	91	8	100	2	67	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed	5	19	0	0	4	50	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	3	12	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0

**STRENGTHS**

- good on- and off-the-job training
- effective relationships with local employers

**WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate communication with subcontractor
- poor achievement rates
- some poor key skills training

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- clearer targets for action-planning
- more opportunities for off-the-job training
- clearer induction

33. There is a very well-structured training programme which help the learners to develop the skills and understanding required for their NVQ. All learners and employers have a copy of the proposed timetable for the following six months. The training salon is fully equipped, welcoming and adequate for the group sizes. The lack of a reception area restricts the opportunity to display retailing products and does not meet the requirements of a realistic working environment. There is a wide client base and ample opportunity for off-the-job training and assessment. Learners have a dedicated theory training room and have access to a computer suite. Learning is carefully monitored. Staff check learners' understanding at the end of every theory session. Learners who

show they have sufficient knowledge are prepared for assessment. Those who require further help and support attend further theory training or receive one-to-one coaching until they are ready for assessment. Lessons are well planned and interesting. Key and basic skills, though not fully integrated with the NVQ training, are taught at the same time as theory training.

34. There is a wide range of evidence in learners' portfolios and the standards of work and presentation are often good. This reflects learners' enthusiasm for their work. Learners have a full understanding of the thorough assessment process and are aware of exactly where they are in their learning programme. Some greater precision in the targets for improvement set for learners would be helpful. Day-release attendance at the subcontractor's premises is fortnightly. Many learners and employers would like more frequent opportunities for off-the-job training to develop skills and knowledge to a greater depth. On-the-job assessment is frequent and often available on demand, enabling learners to maximise assessment opportunities and make good use of the wide client base in their salons. Assessment arrangements are flexible, to suit the individual needs of the learners. For example, a learner working in an Afro-Caribbean salon completed all relevant assessments in the workplace, while assessments for European hair were carried out off the job.

35. The self-assessment report properly highlighted the good and longstanding relationship between CLaSS and a large number of employers. CLaSS carefully matches the characteristics and environment of a salon to the personality and aspirations of the learner before sending the learner for interview. Learners receive high levels of support in the salon through monitoring visits by the CLaSS placement officer and assessors from the subcontractor. The visits ensure the employer is fully informed and completely involved in the training. Salon owners are very supportive and CLaSS strongly encourages them to pay higher than average rates for their learners to improve retention.

36. Communication between CLaSS and the subcontractor is inadequate. There is little direct communication between the two organisations. Arrangements for regular meetings and evaluation, which were made at the start of subcontracting, have not been followed. CLaSS receives progress reports every two months, which highlight achievements of learners. However, this is too infrequent to allow prompt action by CLaSS to improve achievement of learners' targets. Despite both CLaSS's and its subcontractor's staff visiting learners frequently, there is little sharing of information between them. The subcontractor draws up action plans following work-based assessment, but has only recently shared these with CLaSS.

37. The self-assessment report recognises the poor achievement for all learners. No learner has ever completed the modern apprenticeship framework and completion of individual learning plans is very low. However, there have been improvements in retention of learners since CLaSS started using the present subcontractor in early 2001. There has also recently been an improvement in NVQ achievement rates. In NVQ training in 1999-2000, over half of the learners leaving without achieving all the aims on their individual learning plans transferred to other training programmes.

## COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

38. Key skills training is inadequately managed and taught. Some learners have begun work on key skills projects and have been assessed, while others have little knowledge of the content levels of key skills training or when they will be working on it. CLaSS gives information about key skills to learners at induction. However, CLaSS's flexible entry policy means induction mainly takes place informally in the workplace. Learners sometimes fail to realise they have been through an induction process and can later remember little of its content.

### Good Practice

*After learners achieved NVQs at levels 1 and 2, a salon owner displayed their framed certificates in the reception area with photographs of the learners. This clearly identified each learner as the holder of the qualification and encouraged clients to book with them, enabling them to build up their own clientele.*

### Poor Practice

*Both the vocational assessor from the subcontractor and the CLaSS placement officer visit learners in the workplace. The vocational assessor focuses on NVQ and key skill assessment while the placement officer deals with employment matters. Both areas are important for the well-being and progress of the learner, yet the two organisations do not share information. Neither the vocational assessor nor the placement officer is fully aware of the others' findings.*

## Health, social care &amp; public services

## Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	31	3

39. There are 31 learners, all on work-based learning programmes lasting for 18 months. Five are advanced modern apprentices in care; nine are foundation modern apprentices in early years and childhood education; four are on NVQ training leading to level 2 NVQs in care and 13 are doing practical caring skills training leading to an NVQ at level 1. Learners spend one day each week at CLaSS's training centre and one day receiving additional learning support. The remaining three days are spent in work placements. Placement officers arrange these placements, conduct workplace assessments, carry out monitoring visits to the workplaces every four weeks and progress reviews every eight weeks. Following a recent restructuring, one of CLaSS's vocational training co-ordinators is responsible for on-the-job aspects of training and a curriculum co-ordinator is responsible for off-the-job training. One full-time tutor and one part-time tutor report to the curriculum co-ordinator and assess learners' background knowledge. Until a second placement officer is appointed, a part-time assessor is helping with the workplace assessments. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report, but also identified additional weaknesses.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					7		1		0
Still in training					4	57	1	100	0	0
AMA framework completed					0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed					4	57	1	100	0	0
Left without completing the framework					3	43	0	0	0	0

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started	12		18		33		29		0
Still in training	0	0	0	0	1	3	12	41	0	0
Individual learning plan completed	6	50	5	28	7	21	1	3	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan	6	50	13	72	25	76	16	55	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	7	58	7	39	7	21	1	3	0	0

**STRENGTHS**

- high standard of off-the-job training
- extensive support for learners
- thorough workplace assessment
- thorough initial assessment
- effective links with work placements

**WEAKNESSES**

- poor achievement rates
- slow implementation of unit accreditation
- some inadequate key skills training

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- standardised policy for the submission and return of work
- more target-setting when visiting learners

40. The standard of off-the-job training is high, a strength not mentioned in the self-assessment report. The current programmes are coherent and offer progression. Tutors plan sessions thoroughly. They share learning objectives with learners, who are clear about what is expected of them. Tutors use a variety of activities to maintain learners' interest and conduct training at a pace to challenge and stimulate them. The content and methods of training link to what learners are doing at work. The effectiveness of

these sessions is illustrated by the perceptive contributions of the learners, demonstrating their learning. Communications with employers are good. Many employers comment favourably on the promptness with which staff respond to concerns or queries. Each training session includes setting learners tasks and research. Written notes state clearly what is expected. Portfolios are well organised. Those of childcare learners are well presented. Foundation modern apprentices receive more detailed comments on their written work than do learners on the practical caring skills course. Trainers do not have a team policy on the promptness with which work is submitted and returned. There is some variation in how quickly this is done. Training accommodation and equipment are satisfactory.

41. Most staff have valuable recent or ongoing professional practice experience and others keep well updated by arranging staff development time in care settings. All have appropriate professional qualifications and many have teaching qualifications. Shortage of placement officers has required some to continue to conduct assessments which is outside their new job roles.

42. Learners receive good support and guidance. A systematic initial assessment identifies each learner's level of basic skills. CLaSS offers all learners a 'taster' period in training so that learners can make an informed decision about the suitability of this occupational area. One learner has made very good progress since switching from work with the elderly to childcare. Virtually all learners have additional learning needs for which they receive help each week. They value highly the level of contact they have with tutors and placement officers, and the useful support and guidance they receive from them. Equal opportunities matters are covered effectively in induction and are an integral part of the curriculum.

43. Work-based assessment is thorough and leads to constructive feedback to learners. CLaSS's assessors carefully plan their assessments to match the work learners are doing. Trainers also link theory training to workplace activities. Placement officers and tutors monitor learners' progress carefully. CLaSS does not use progress reviews and monitoring visits to work placements, to set targets for learners. Nor are workplace managers and supervisors sufficiently involved in the process. Internal verification is becoming more effective.

44. Achievement rates are consistently poor. This is not mentioned in the self-assessment report. All advanced modern apprentices since 1997-98, other than early leavers, have achieved their level 3 NVQ but have refused to undertake the key skills components. Therefore no learner has achieved the full NVQ framework. Most foundation modern apprentices obtain good results in their additional first aid and food hygiene qualifications in the early stages of their NVQ programmes. Most learners who left were prevented from continuing, despite the extensive help of staff, by severe social problems. After its previous self-assessment report, CLaSS planned to seek accreditation for each unit a learner completes rather than waiting for the whole NVQ to be finished. However, CLaSS has only recently started to implement this plan. Training for the information technology and application of number key skills is inadequate. Although

## COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

CLaSS is now beginning to integrate key skills training with the rest of its training, most learners have covered key skills too late to be of value to them. For NVQ training in 2000-01, around half the learners leaving without achieving the goals on their individual learning plans left to join other training programmes.

### Good Practice

*Learners are allowed a 'taster' period of up to four weeks to discover whether they want to do this type of work. The value of this period was clearly shown by one learner who initially wanted to work with elderly people. She found the work unstimulating and was unable to make links between her work and the content of the off-the-job training, so her progress was very slow. Following a monitoring visit to her placement, the learner expressed her misgivings and after thorough discussion, transferred to work with young children. Since then, the learner has made very good progress, supplemented by effective additional learning support, and is expecting to complete her training programme on time.*

*In a session on loss and bereavement with a group of practical caring skills learners, the tutor gave every other one an orange and asked these learners to mark it in such a way as to make it their own. Time to do this was brief. The tutor then took the oranges and gave them to the learners without an orange, asking them to mark it to make it theirs. The tutor skilfully enabled learners to share their reactions to losing the orange. Their responses were insightful – 'why did this happen to me?', 'what am I going to do without the orange?' Equally perceptive were the reactions of the other learners towards those who had lost their orange – 'I want to say something but do not know what to say, scared I might say the wrong thing'. Learners related this clearly to their workplace experiences. Not all learners contributed but all were attentive and engaged. Drawing on their knowledge of people who had experienced a loss of somebody or something, the tutor effectively checked their understanding of the concepts of loss and bereavement.*

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT****Grade 3**

45. CLaSS is part of the lifelong learning directorate of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The head of service is responsible for the overall management of CLaSS, strategic planning and external communications and is accountable to the executive director of Lifelong Learning. The head of service is supported by a senior management team consisting of five curriculum managers and an operations manager. Government-funded training is managed by a contract development manager who reports to the operations manager. Three vocational training co-ordinators are responsible for the day-to-day management of work-based learning within specific curriculum areas. Nine placement officers are responsible for interviewing learners, agreeing individual training programmes, monitoring training and undertaking assessment. Off-the-job training and additional support arrangements are managed by five curriculum co-ordinators. CLaSS has subcontracting arrangements with a local community group to provide football coaching and with a local training provider to provide training in hairdressing. CLaSS has an equal opportunities policy and an action plan which are reviewed regularly. The head of service is responsible for equal opportunities. A quality and accreditation manager is responsible for quality assurance. CLaSS has an annual staff training and development plan and a training budget. It first undertook self-assessment in 1998. Its latest self-assessment report was produced in March 2001. A detailed action plan has been developed to deal with the weaknesses identified in the action plan.

**STRENGTHS**

- good internal communications
- strong partnerships with employers
- effective promotion of equal opportunities
- considerable progress of many learners with additional learning needs
- effective monitoring of teaching quality
- thorough internal verification

**WEAKNESSES**

- some inadequate management of work-based learning
- inadequate management information system
- insufficient monitoring of implementation of equal opportunities policy
- lack of established quality assurance system
- inadequate quality assurance of subcontractors

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer action points from meetings
- better document control
- better staff development information
- more sharing of good practice

46. Communications between managers and other staff are very good. Staff are kept informed about all aspects of CLaSS and its training programmes through a cycle of meetings and through regular informal discussions. Staff report that information about recent organisational changes has been effectively communicated and shared. There are regular senior management team meetings. All staff involved in work-based learning meet with the contract development manager every six weeks. They discuss progress towards the achievement of contractual targets and receive information from funding and awarding bodies and the senior management team. Vocational training co-ordinators and curriculum co-ordinators are in regular contact and six-weekly team meetings are held to plan, monitor and review training programmes, to address operational issues and to resolve problems. The meetings ensure the development of a strong team approach and have led to better co-ordination and planning of on- and off-the-job training. Some meetings are minuted but minutes and notes of action to be taken are not used systematically enough.

47. There are strong, well-established partnerships between CLaSS and local employers, enabling them to work together effectively. CLaSS works with a diverse range of large and small employers, maintaining a large employer database and continuing to promote training to employers. Its placement officers work with employers to ensure that learners' learning, evidence, additional learning and support needs are met. CLaSS works with employers to deal with learners' problems. For example, employers have arranged flexible hours for young women to enable them to remain in work during pregnancy and have agreed absences for learners to deal with housing and other personal problems. Many of CLaSS's learners have additional learning needs and make considerable progress.

48. Some aspects of CLaSS's training are not adequately managed. CLaSS has undergone significant organisational change in the past 18 months. CLaSS has replaced its previous structure, in which work-based learning was not managed separately. Staff now have specific responsibilities for work-based learners, although these arrangements are not yet fully integrated with the new curriculum based structure. There is some lack of clarity concerning job roles and responsibilities. This has been compounded by the continuation of responsibilities from the previous organisation while staff appointments are made. Curriculum managers are not yet fulfilling the new roles envisaged for them.

49. Managers do not have sufficient data to enable them to make informed decisions about the management of both on- and off-the-job training or the overall performance of training programmes and the achievement of targets. For example, one curriculum

#### COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS)

manager does not have any data for work-based learning for the 2001-02 contract year. Information is not collated and analysed centrally to determine patterns and trends. The use of targets to improve performance is inadequate. For example, the data on retention, completion and early leavers that curriculum managers hold have not been analysed by qualification level or type to enable comparisons between different training programmes. Data are not routinely shared with subcontractors.

## Equality of opportunity

## Contributory grade 2

50. The promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of CLaSS's activities. It serves its local multi-cultural population, many of whom are disadvantaged. Most learners have additional learning needs. Some learners receive both vocational training and help with other needs, for example English language problems or severe hearing impairment, from CLaSS. CLaSS recruits a higher proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups than is represented in the local community, 53 per cent compared with 22.5 per cent, respectively.

51. CLaSS's commitment to equal opportunities, for employees and learners, is detailed in a comprehensive, up-to-date and clearly written set of policies and procedures, including those for dealing with racial and sexual harassment. Additionally, more detailed equal opportunities procedures are published by the borough council. These have been updated very recently to form a clear expression of expectations with regard to equality of opportunity. The most recent CLaSS policy, that for inclusive learning, deals with key aspects of inclusive learning and the widening of participation. Good equal opportunities documents have been produced for use with employers and subcontractors, including a demanding checklist for use by placement officers. In this respect, CLaSS has already put right a weakness identified in the self-assessment report.

52. CLaSS collects data about learners' gender, ethnicity and disability. Details of learners invited for interview, those attending interview, those starting training and those gaining employment, are collected and monitored annually. Issues arising from monitoring are discussed at meetings of the contract development managers and curriculum managers. Monitoring has identified the need to recruit more men to hairdressing training, and the reluctance of learners from some ethnic groups to train in care for the elderly. CLaSS's inclusive learning working party provides a positive focus for the review and development of equal opportunities arrangements. It has identified a number of specific staff development needs. Staff have received training in such areas as dyslexia awareness, sign language and learning styles. However, the overall monitoring of the implementation of the equal opportunities policy is poor, with no one group or person responsible.

53. Learners complete annual questionnaires in which they can express their views on equal opportunities. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that recent questionnaires indicate high percentages of learners are satisfied with their treatment. However, learners do not always discuss equality of opportunity enough during their training programmes. Induction does not consistently or adequately cover equal opportunities. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. New induction arrangements were introduced in September 2001, but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness. Assessments and progress reviews do not cover equal opportunities adequately. Learners are generally well aware of the CLaSS complaints procedure, which is detailed in their learning agreements.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 4**

54. CLaSS does not have an established quality assurance system. There is a quality assurance policy and a range of procedures covering many aspects of its work, but there is no coherent overall system. Neither is there central monitoring of the implementation of the various quality assurance procedures. Placement officers and vocational training co-ordinators are fully involved in preparing the self-assessment report and action plan. Curriculum managers have had little involvement and learners and subcontractors are not involved. Employers' responses to a CLaSS survey contributed to the evidence used in the self-assessment report. The senior management team does occasionally receive information on aspects of quality assurance but does not systematically monitor or evaluate quality assurance or its implementation. For example, inspectors found inconsistencies in the quality of induction and in the use of individual learning plans. CLaSS has recently introduced some measures for improving attendance and retention and for sharing good practice in assessment. However, these are not yet widely implemented. There is no routine system of document control to ensure correct completion of the paperwork relating to the training. Not all paperwork is systematically dated.

55. There is inadequate quality assurance of training delivered by subcontractors. CLaSS has little direct contact with them and there have been no observations of training and no quality assurance audits of their work. Information which subcontractors gather from learners through questionnaires is not routinely shared with CLaSS.

56. CLaSS has developed a rigorous and effective system for monitoring the quality of teaching, through the observation of all teachers once a year. The observers have all completed training in the moderation of observations and giving feedback. Some are also accredited classroom observers. Tutors are given feedback following the observation, staff development needs are identified and an action plan is agreed. The professional development co-ordinator monitors progress towards the achievement of the action points and reports regularly to the training team. Information about staff development opportunities is not always available to all staff, particularly part-time staff.

57. Internal verification is well planned and thorough. Learners' portfolios contain substantial evidence of assessments which have been internally verified. Extensive checking includes assessment of all assessors and learners at different stages of training. Assessments of on-the-job training are verified regularly through observation. Observations are more frequent if the assessor is inexperienced or if the need for closer attention is identified. There are regular and productive meetings of assessors and internal verifiers. Cross-curriculum internal verification meetings are held three times a year to check consistency, to report changing requirements and to share good practice. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. However, it often gave too few weaknesses, particularly those in relation to learners' achievements and retention.