



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT SEPTEMBER 1998

Morthyng Limited

SUMMARY

Morthyng Limited offers good training in construction, business administration, manufacturing and basic skills. Foundation programmes are carefully adapted to meet prevocational trainees' needs. Staff work hard to encourage and develop all trainees through individual programme planning and support. Trainees are encouraged to gain additional qualifications, and high rates of employment are achieved. Equality of opportunity is assured. The company's approach to management and quality assurance is satisfactory.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	2
Business administration	2
Foundation for work	2

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ high quality of construction trainees' portfolios
- ◆ good achievement and employment rates
- ◆ high staff-to-trainee ratio
- ◆ excellent teamwork by all staff
- ◆ good mix among the staff team in terms of age, gender and race
- ◆ regular monitoring of trainees' experience
- ◆ four-weekly reviews

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ the aluminium-recycling project is not suitable for the delivery of MAPS
- ◆ basic skills assessment makes little use of naturally occurring evidence
- ◆ employers' equal opportunities policies not monitored
- ◆ induction delivery lacks variety
- ◆ sharing of good practice among individual centres
- ◆ underdeveloped data-collection system

INTRODUCTION

1. Morthyng Limited is a voluntary-sector charitable training provider which has been working with Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTE) and the employment service in the Rotherham area since 1988. Morthyng evolved from two merged organisations in August 1988: Aston Community Enterprise and Maltby Community Programme. The newly created company's strategic aim was to alleviate the stress and strain of unemployment by equipping adults with the skills needed to re-enter the labour market. The necessity to survive has seen the company diversifying in many different areas of funding which cater to the needs of a wide range of people in the community. The needs of the long-term unemployed, and society's most disadvantaged, are still at the heart of the business.
2. Morthyng is a limited company audited in line with the Companies' Act and also a registered charity audited in line with the Charities' Commission Act. As a charity, Morthyng has a legal obligation to be a non-profit-making organisation.
3. Morthyng is a member of the Rotherham Association of Training Managers (RATMs). This is achieved by representing Morthyng and its customers at many different committees and steering groups. Morthyng is Rotherham CCTE's largest supplier of adult training, including prevocational and occupational training and the recruit and train strand. Morthyng runs an English as a Second Language (ESOL) programme, predominantly for unemployed Asian men. This programme is funded in partnership by Morthyng and Rotherham CCTE. At the time of inspection, there were 108 trainees on various programmes run by Morthyng.
4. The company operates as a subcontractor for Sheffield College to deliver a learning-for-life programme. This programme was devised especially to train adults in basic skills. Morthyng offers training programmes funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The programmes offered are provided additionally to mainstream funding, to sustain or enhance participants' chances of obtaining/maintaining full-time employment.
5. Morthyng has successfully gained contracts to deliver the full-time education and training option and a Gateway contract for the New Deal programmes. Morthyng has also secured a contract to deliver the environmental task force option. Long-term unemployment accounts for nearly 30 per cent of all unemployment in the Rotherham area. Analyses have shown that certain social groups (men, the young, the old and those from minority ethnic groups and the less skilled) are disproportionately affected by long-term unemployment. In the Maltby area, the proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups is very low, but, in Rotherham, the situation is different, the town having many people from these groups. Earning power in Rotherham is significantly below the national and regional average. Over a quarter of employment for men is based in unskilled or semiskilled occupations. Rotherham's economy displays a weak industrial structure, typified by a high dependence on a few industries, within which growth in output is not matched



by increases in employment.

6. Rotherham has witnessed an improvement in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and A level results. The number of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C and above was 42.5 per cent, compared with the regional average of 46 per cent and the national average of 53 per cent, for 1997.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

7. Morthyng completed its first self-assessment in June 1998. The senior management team was initially given responsibility for the self-assessment report. It invited staff at all sites to contribute to the process through a series of staff briefings and workshops. The responsibility for preparing the report was given to the contracts manager. The self-assessment report claims several strengths and weaknesses, some of which are no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses which had not been identified by the company.

8. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 20 days at Morthyng in September 1998. Inspectors looked at the provision at three sites, interviewed 45 trainees, 18 staff and managers, employers and TEC staff, observed training and assessment activities, trainees' portfolios and reviewed a wide range of supporting documentation and scheme records.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 2

9. There are 12 youth and adult trainees in this occupational area, six of whom are on a general construction operative (GCO) NVQ level 2 programme, while the remainder is on a painting and decorating programme. Several trainees are sampling construction as part of the prevocational training programme.

10. Training and assessment take place at premises shared with another training provider and on placement sites arranged by the senior co-ordinator. There are several community projects where trainees are involved in the landscaping of a local school courtyard, the paving of an old people's home, to assist in wheelchair access, and decorating a community centre. All these projects are undertaken with trainees' development and achievement in mind. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ trainees' portfolios are of a high quality
- ◆ innovative sharing of resources with another training provider
- ◆ effective training and work placements to maximise opportunities for training and assessment
- ◆ comprehensive assessment tracking well understood by trainees
- ◆ above-average retention and achievement figures
- ◆ effective working relationships between trainers and trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ not all trainees receive health and safety induction on site

GOOD PRACTICE

Portfolios are of a very high standard and have been used as model examples for other providers and colleges. This was confirmed in letters from lead body external verifiers. Many of these trainees have special training needs.

11. The training centre for construction is owned by another provider and staffed by Morthyng personnel. This effective sharing of resources has benefited trainees, who receive good training, using modern equipment. Work placements provide opportunities for trainees to acquire and practise the skills necessary for achievement. Trainees undertake real tasks on a building site and relate them directly to national vocational qualification (NVQ) criteria. Gaps in evidence are identified and simulations are set up at the company's premises to allow unit completion. Health and safety induction is held every Monday. This means that trainees starting on the other days of the week will not participate in the induction until the following Monday. Those trainees may be required to work on site during their first week.

12. Trainees' portfolios and the internal verification process at this site have been used as examples of good practice by both the lead and awarding body, and training staff have been asked to share their methods with other external centres.

13. Trainers are occupationally qualified and experienced. They have excellent working relationships with trainees, many of whom are long-term unemployed or come from troubled backgrounds. The retention and achievement figures are above average for this sector, with 53 per cent of trainees securing employment at the end of training.

Business administration

Grade 2

14. Morthyng has 24 trainees on business administration and information technology training programmes working towards NVQs at levels 1 and 2. Training and assessment are carried out at the company's Swallownest centre. There are three staff involved in the delivery of these programmes. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that proposed by the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good employment and achievement rates
- ◆ additional qualifications available to all trainees
- ◆ good teamwork among staff
- ◆ carefully planned training and assessment
- ◆ good resources and facilities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ limited work experience
- ◆ lack of systematic evaluation of training

15. During training sessions, enthusiastic staff carefully integrate theory and practice, and trainees' enjoyment is apparent. There are open and effective working relationships among staff, and good teamwork is used to maintain trainees' enthusiasm and raise confidence. All staff are vocationally experienced and hold appropriate assessor and internal verifier qualifications. During the contract year 1997-98, 66 per cent of trainees left the programme to go to relevant employment, which was an improvement on the previous year.

16. All trainees are encouraged to take additional qualifications to improve their employment prospects. Many trainees achieve an NVQ in business administration and information technology, using real work brought in from local organisations. Trainees also have the opportunity to complete word-processing certificates. The Swallownest centre is well equipped with modern office equipment and computers which are programmed with a wide range of software, including access to the Internet. Accommodation is large and spacious, with areas maintained for trainees to work individually, when desirable.

17. Trainees' portfolios are well organised, with assessments planned and clearly documented. Trainees are proud of their achievements and benefit from the opportunity to acquire prevocational qualifications which act as milestones towards the NVQ level 1.

18. Sampling a work-experience placement is a programme target, however, limited time on the programme has led to some trainees missing this opportunity. Placements are organised within Morthyng's sites, where trainees perform such duties as reception and clerical, under the supervision of managers and administration staff.

19. There is no coherent system of collecting or evaluating trainees' feedback, with the result that opportunities for improvement are not highlighted.

Foundation for work

Grade 2

20. The provision of basic skills and prevocational training for adults is delivered from second-floor premises at Morthyng's Westgate Centre in Rotherham. There are three basic skills staff and an assistant supervisor. There are 28 trainees on the prevocational training programme, undertaking entry-level wordpower and numberpower awards, RSA National Skills Profile units and job-seeking training. There are two trainees on employer placements and one on an in-house placement with Morthyng, carrying out reception work. Machine Assembly and Processing Skills (MAPS) are delivered to prevocational trainees at three locations: an

aluminium-recycling plant, a workshop in Maltby and via a subcontractor in Rotherham. There is one trainee at the recycling project, three trainees at the Maltby subcontractor's workshop and three trainees at the subcontractor's premises, all completing the vocational certificate.

21. Prevocational youth training is delivered through the Springboard Project, also at Westgate. There are 44 trainees, three of whom are on placement with commercial employers and a further two on placement within Morthyng's own construction projects. Springboard trainees have particular needs and generally have a background of social and behavioural difficulties, including drug dependency, violence and criminal records. Trainees usually attend between two and four days per week, as decided at the start of their training. Attendance is increased as progress is achieved. There are four staff, with additional support provided by a graduate student on work placement. Manufacturers' premises are very good and have been designed to accommodate those with disabilities.

22. The 'into work team' consists of a co-ordinator and a placement officer. It canvasses employers to fill a job vacancy with an unemployed person who meets certain criteria. There were no ESOL participants on the programme at the time of inspection. The grade awarded by inspectors is lower than that of the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high staff-to-trainee ratio
- ◆ excellent teamwork by all staff
- ◆ emphasis on work in small groups and individual activities
- ◆ value-added exercises via day trips, days out and social events
- ◆ good mix among the staff team in terms of age, gender and race
- ◆ subcontractors' premises are designed to accommodate those with disabilities
- ◆ MAPS award used as a stepping-stone to general construction at NVQ level 1

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient range of tasks at the aluminium-recycling project
- ◆ poor internal verification of MAPS programme at Maltby site
- ◆ basic skills assessment makes little use of naturally occurring evidence
- ◆ few trainees experience work placement
- ◆ poor quality of paper-based learning materials

23. Adult basic skills trainees are based in a large training room which has ample space for small groups to work independently of each other, while still providing peer-group support, and for one-to-one tuition to be provided when required. Resources include an information technology room equipped with six workstations and a range of quality software. Other basic skills resources are paper based and

GOOD PRACTICE

In a large room, 40 trainees were working industriously, five groups all working independently, each with a trainer, the atmosphere was pleasant and groups occasionally talked to one another, but each group continued to concentrate and focus on its own activity.

allow for a variety of activities to improve abilities, either individually or in groups. Training sessions are well planned and delivered, however, the quality of text-based handouts given to trainees is poor and uninspiring. Wordpower and numberpower courses are largely related to the workbook, and the opportunity to use evidence from vocational programmes and naturally occurring evidence is missed.

24. Resources at the MAPS subcontractor's premises are satisfactory, but the aluminium-recycling project does not have the range of tasks required for the training and assessment of the full qualification. The trainee placed at the recycling project has not been assessed since starting in December 1997, and the team leader has little knowledge of the programme's content.

25. Those trainees who want to achieve a construction qualification, but are not yet able to achieve an NVQ in that area, take a MAPS award first. Appropriate evidence gathered for MAPS is carried forward towards the general construction operative at NVQ level 1 at a later stage. In this context, MAPS trainees use construction materials, techniques and skills to manufacture garden ornaments. Trainees are fully integrated with the construction trainees and achieve a qualification which is valid in any manufacturing environment.

26. While the provision and delivery of MAPS qualification at the Maltby subcontractor are satisfactory, the internal verification procedures for this location are poor. Completed workbooks are transported to the internal verifier at another location, where they are checked for completion. No observation of assessor practice takes place.

27. Although employer placement is a milestone of the training programmes, only a few trainees have been placed. Limited programme duration means that many trainees are not considered ready to go out on placement before the end of their entitlement. Emphasis is placed on developing trainees' confidence and coping skills. Support is given to trainees, at the end of their programme, to help them to find full-time employment. Added value is given to the programme by encouraging day trips, days out and social events.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

28. Morthyng has an equal opportunities policy which has been updated to reflect the Disability Discrimination Act. The policy is reviewed annually and updated to reflect changes in legislation. Staff demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities by word and action, and equal opportunities are a standard agenda item at senior management team meetings. The grade proposed by the company in its self-assessment report is confirmed by inspectors.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ regular monitoring of trainees' experience
- ◆ three bilingual members of staff
- ◆ provision of equipment to suit disabilities
- ◆ staff are active in community projects to promote multicultural links

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no access in one centre for those with disabilities
- ◆ no effective monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies

29. Morthyng has 3 per cent of trainees from minority ethnic groups among its recruits. Those with disabilities account for 18.5 per cent of all trainees. Morthyng identified a lack of provision locally for people to improve their English. They have set up an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme which is now an established programme, with staff who are qualified and experienced to support and develop individual trainees' needs. Braille translation is available for trainees with vision difficulties, and mechanical/electrical aids are made or bought for trainees who need them to help them to compete and achieve on an equal footing. Funding for this type of support is available through charities.

30. All staff and trainees receive thorough equal opportunities induction when they start at the training centres. They are encouraged to consider and respect each other's needs. Owing to the roll-on/roll-off nature of the programme, trainees complete an equal opportunities questionnaire every two months, which are analysed and the results presented for consideration at senior management team meetings.

31. Staff are actively involved in the promotion of training programmes through local committees and working groups in Rotherham and the surrounding areas. Community projects carried out by staff and trainees are carefully chosen to promote multicultural links and links with local employers.

32. Senior managers regularly discuss training accommodation at their meetings, particularly those centres where access for trainees with disabilities is limited by stairs or unsuitable lavatory facilities. Plans have been prepared to seek a grant for a new lift at the Westgate centre. Employers' equal opportunity policies are checked before trainees are placed for work experience, but no monitoring takes place to ensure that policies are reviewed.

Trainee support

Grade 2

33. Morthyng has a weekly induction programme. Trainees receive a good basic skills assessment at entry, and appropriate guidance is given on choice of programme. There is a particularly high staff-to-trainee ratio in the organisation which has 41 staff and 80 trainees. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses to those identified by the company and proposed the same grade as that awarded in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high staff-to-trainee ratio
- ◆ high level of individual pastoral care
- ◆ productive working relationships with appropriate networks
- ◆ active recruitment activity, especially with partner agencies
- ◆ four-weekly reviews

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ induction delivery lacks variety
- ◆ pre-entry assessment is inappropriately delivered

34. Staff are particularly supportive and committed to developing trainees. They work hard to give each trainee the maximum opportunities available to achieve goals. Trainees have access to personal help and counselling, when needed. Formal, four-weekly reviews are completed with every trainee to discuss his/her progress and prepare an action-plan to meet individual needs. All trainees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning programme.

35. The company visits a variety of other agencies and locations and has built extensive partnerships. Recruitment interviews are frequently held in external agencies' locations to suit prospective clients' needs, and start dates are set according to individual trainees' needs.

36. Trainees are invited to attend a pre-entry assessment event, at which everybody's basic skills and prior occupational knowledge are assessed. The pre-entry assessment is overwhelming. Trainees are invited to a room where name-cards indicate where they should sit, and the negative aspects of testing are frequently mentioned. The results of assessment are used to prepare trainees' learning plans and to agree on their specific support needs.

37. Induction lacks variety of delivery. Resources used are extensively text based and unimaginative. Additional optional induction training for first aid was delivered without the participants' agreement.

Management of training

Grade 3

38. Policies and procedures are understood and supported by staff, subcontractors and workplace providers. Managers implement policies effectively and set and meet measurable targets. Morthyng has 41 members of staff involved in government-funded training provision, operating across five sites. Frequent team meetings, to discuss trainees' progress and local issues, are held at each centre, with centres' representatives attending the senior management team meetings every two weeks. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ management and staff are clearly focused on all trainees' needs
- ◆ effective staff appraisal and development system
- ◆ business performance carefully monitored
- ◆ open management style

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ examples of good practice not always shared among the individual centres
- ◆ underdeveloped data-collection system

39. Programme review and senior management meetings are held weekly, concentrating on trainees' progress, operational matters and performance against targets. The company has performed consistently well against TEC targets over the past three years, and centre managers are aware of performance against targets. Staff and managers meet to discuss and agree on annual contract targets at the beginning of each year.

40. The six-monthly appraisal system is effective, with relevant staff development frequently occurring as a result. Staff are aware of the company's policies, work effectively within clearly defined rôles and are given the opportunity to contribute their thoughts to policy and operational issues.

41. Collection of data from trainees and staff is not done in a systematic manner and does not always inform management decisions. Links made with the local authority and charitable causes are used to benefit construction trainees, but these opportunities for placement are not fully exploited for business administration trainees.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

42. Morthyng meets the external quality assurance standards required by Rotherham CTE and the awarding bodies. Quality assurance systems and procedures have been developed which are used by all training centres. Monthly audits of trainees' files are carried out by an external quality auditor. Procedures for recruitment, initial assessment and induction are documented for staff to apply. Management and staff hold regular meetings, at which programmes, performance and future needs are discussed. Inspectors identified a balance of strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ subcontractors are carefully reviewed and evaluated
- ◆ managers meet trainers regularly to discuss the training provision's effectiveness

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ evaluation systems are underdeveloped
- ◆ good practice is not shared across the organisation

43. Quality assurance procedures are currently under review, with plans to rewrite them in line with contract variations. Centre co-ordinators are responsible for the collection of evidence of performance, including achievement of targets and reasons for early leavers. Trainees who leave without gaining employment are systematically followed up and are encouraged to return and complete training. This, and other information, is discussed at weekly senior management meetings.

44. Feedback from trainees is not collected about their training experience, either during or at the end of training, resulting in opportunities for improvement not being highlighted. There is some evaluation of the induction programme, through the use of a questionnaire, but the content fails to produce any useful evidence to evaluate trainees' experience or to review the programme.

45. Internal verification systems are very good in some programmes, however, this good practice is not duplicated in all occupational areas.