



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT OCTOBER 1998

Jarvis Training Management Limited

SUMMARY

Jarvis Training Management Limited offers satisfactory training in construction. Trainees are well supported by dedicated staff who obtain many good-quality work placements. Regular contact is maintained with contracted training centres which are well resourced. Links between on- and off-the-job training are poor. No assessments or diverse evidence are gathered from work placements. Nearly half the trainees leave the scheme with no qualification, and achievement of level 3 NVQs is slow. Little use is made of data at area offices, and the company's quality assurance system does not adequately address training issues.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good support given to modern apprentice trainees by co-ordinators
- ◆ many good-quality work placements
- ◆ flexibility of scheme to meet trainees' needs
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ programme meets trainees' needs to a high degree

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ high rates of trainees leaving programmes early
- ◆ decline in NVQ achievement rates
- ◆ data not used at area office level to inform management decisions
- ◆ scope of quality assurance system does not cover main elements of training

INTRODUCTION

1. Jarvis Training Management Limited (Jarvis Training) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Jarvis plc, which has major business interests in construction, property, railway maintenance, civil engineering and associated services. Jarvis Training was established in 1989, initially providing a range of training and consultancy services to meet government-funded initiatives. Currently, 108 full-time staff are employed in the company on a variety of projects. At the time of inspection, there were 788 modern apprentices on the scheme, distributed around the country through a network of seven area offices, which are supported by 27 modern apprenticeship co-ordinators. The company divides its operation vertically down the country, with east and west regional offices in Middlesbrough and Liverpool. The company has 41 contracts with training and enterprise councils (TECs), and the co-ordinating TEC for self-assessment is Birmingham and Solihull.

2. Training is offered in trowel trades, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plastering and scaffolding. The distribution of trainees at the time of inspection is shown in table 1.

table 1

Area office	bricklaying	C&J	P&D	plastering	scaffolding
Northwest	37	65	22	0	11
Northeast	30	77	29	3	7
Southwest	16	35	7	1	0
Southeast	23	54	18	2	0
Yorkshire	29	71	20	13	0
Lancashire	25	56	11	5	0
Birmingham	32	57	29	3	0
Total	192	415	136	27	18

3. Eighteen per cent of trainees are in their first year of training, and 11 per cent are in the third year of training, with most working towards national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 qualifications in their chosen trade. All trainees are employed by Jarvis Construction Ltd, and most placements are found through a wide network of specialist subcontractors. All off-the-job training and assessment is delivered through subcontracted provision in 60 off-the-job locations, mainly in colleges of further education.



4. Recruitment is carried out nationally through local careers offices and is supported by good-quality company publicity. Regional variations of levels of school achievement and local unemployment are reflected in the number of trainees on the scheme. The company is currently reducing the number of modern apprenticeship places available and has drastically curtailed the first-year intake in 1998. It is increasing its involvement with such programmes as New Deal and other national and local regeneration initiatives, as they become available.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. Jarvis Training produced its self-assessment report for inspection, following the guidelines of the quantum edge quality statements. Grades were provided for all seven aspects. A group of five managers chaired by the quality manager co-ordinated the preparation of the report. Area staff had limited contribution to the self-assessment process. The report was realistic, with clear cross-referencing of quality statements, followed by a brief evaluation and location of evidence sources. Some action points were identified, but no target dates were included. The report lacked critical evaluation and failed to identify many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. Work placement providers and trainees' contributions were not sought. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that formed by the aggregate in the self-assessment report for the occupational area. They recognised the contribution of the modern apprenticeship co-ordinators and awarded a higher grade for trainee support, but a lower one than that proposed for quality assurance.

6. A team of 15 inspectors spent a total of 75 days at Jarvis Training during October 1998. Inspectors visited all seven areas, into which the company divides its English operation, using Liverpool as the base. Inspectors accompanied modern apprenticeship co-ordinators to 52 work-placement sites, meeting 70 trainees. They observed reviews of trainees' progress and witnessed them working under supervision. Inspectors observed training facilities at 15 further education colleges or private training centres, meeting a total of 42 apprentices working towards qualifications. They met college staff and Jarvis Training's managers, training and administrative staff. Inspectors examined documents, including trainees' files, assessment records, portfolios and reports of both external verifiers and management.

OCCUPATIONAL AREA

Construction

Grade 3

7. There are 788 trainees on the modern apprenticeship programme, all of whom are employed by the group's construction company and are undertaking off-the-job training at subcontracted colleges of further education or private training centres on either a block- or day-release basis. Jarvis Training secures placements with a variety of construction companies where trainees gain work experience to supplement college learning. Little assessment takes place in the workplace, although most trainees record daily tasks and are encouraged to present these as evidence towards assessment. Trainees are visited frequently by one of the 27 modern apprenticeship co-ordinators, either on placement or at a subcontracted training location. The company's self-assessment report contained few judgements and failed to identify some significant strengths and weaknesses. The three aspects

of the occupational area were graded separately. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that formed by the aggregate proposed in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ frequent site visits and reviews
- ◆ good toolkit provided to all trainees
- ◆ effective working relationships and support among modern apprenticeship co-ordinators, colleges and trainees
- ◆ good-quality work placements obtained
- ◆ good resources at most off-the-job providers
- ◆ trainees have a good understanding of the NVQ programme
- ◆ high level of monitoring of progress and achievements
- ◆ flexible attendance arrangements to meet trainees' needs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no structured training in the workplace
- ◆ very few work-based assessments
- ◆ some poor initial assessments
- ◆ poor correlation between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ high drop-out rates
- ◆ some trainees without placements for long periods of time
- ◆ lack of awareness of scheme by work-placement providers
- ◆ poor achievements by modern apprentices

8. Training staff visit their allocated trainees in the workplace regularly and often meet them weekly, while they attend college. The company supplies trainees with an appropriate basic toolkit, in addition to their personal protective clothing, which they use regularly. Most work placements are good, with trainees well deployed. In the event of any problems, modern apprenticeship co-ordinators address issues promptly and take appropriate action, when necessary, such as removing trainees from placement providers' premises on health and safety grounds. Training provided through local further education colleges is sound. There are good resources at most of the off-the-job providers'. Ample quantities of materials and appropriate ranges of equipment for trainees' use are available. Workshops are of a good size and frequently have study areas. Trainees' progress at college is closely monitored, and additional support arrangements made for those who are not achieving in target time. Off-the-job training is delivered flexibly to meet trainees' needs, and facilities allow them to progress at their own pace to suit their abilities.. Trainers are generally well qualified and have good occupational experience. Some colleges and training centres deliver key skills, but this is not consistent across regions. Trainees, in some regions, have a good understanding of the modern apprenticeship programme and the NVQ requirements. Training co-ordinators are not involved in

carrying out work-based assessment, although some are occupationally qualified and have the necessary assessment qualifications to do so. Most modern apprenticeship co-ordinators have achieved a recognised health and safety qualification which assists when carrying out site audits.

table 2

Year	starters	NVQ level 2 achieved	NVQ level 3 achieved	still on programme	left in scheme
1995	190	85	44	9	96
1996	924	369	112	164	391
1997	1603	339	42	554	710
1998	108	3	-	61	44
Total	2,825	796	198	788	1,241

9. Table 2 illustrates the group achievement analysis since the scheme commenced. Over the first three years of the scheme, the recruitment levels rose considerably, but Jarvis Training has drastically reduced the intake this year. Nearly half of the total trainee intake has left the scheme without a qualification. Twenty-eight per cent have achieved NVQ level 2 and only 7 per cent gained NVQ level 3. Of those currently on the scheme, 357 are working towards their NVQ level 3 award.

10. While trainees generally experience a wide range of relevant tasks on site, they depend heavily on the current business involvement of the employers. There is no coherent structured programme of work-based activities to mirror those carried out at college. Work-placement providers are often unaware of trainees' programmes and progress, resulting in a lack of focus and uncertainty about desired outcomes. Not all trainees are clear about who their employer is. In the event of no suitable placement being available or extended college attendance possible, trainees are occasionally set tasks and asked to study at home. Owing to the lack of work-based assessment, opportunities are missed to accredit site experience, and trainees repeat work for assessment purposes under simulated conditions. While initial assessments are carried out to identify any additional support required, the variability and fragmentation of the process result in trainees' initial training plans failing to identify or respond to individuals' needs. This shortcoming has resulted in the demands of the programme being beyond some trainees' capabilities and they have withdrawn. Despite a high level of trainee satisfaction with the programme, retention rates are poor. The rate of achievement is sometimes delayed by late notification of certification from the off-the-job subcontractor. The company evaluates the progress of apprentices who may achieve at NVQ level 2 only and, therefore, do not complete the modern apprenticeship programme. Reviews are frequent, but there is sometimes confusion and a lack of direction, owing to unclear targets being agreed with trainees. Only 25 per cent of those trainees who left the scheme between January and September 1998 progressed to related employment.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

11. A newly appointed task force is the focal point for reporting on equal opportunities issues. The company has a sound policy and takes its commitment to equality of opportunity seriously. A newly implemented monitoring procedure and guide support the policy. The guide is issued to all new employees at induction. Recruitment of trainees and staff is monitored for gender, age, ethnicity and disability. Jarvis Training uses contractual documents when placing trainees with employers which asks signatories to confirm that they will adhere to the equal opportunities codes of practice. Inspectors agreed with Jarvis Training's proposed strengths and weaknesses, as well as identifying further strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ sound equal opportunities policy with supporting documents
- ◆ clear complaints procedure established
- ◆ effective equal opportunities taskforce team
- ◆ local initiatives carried out to break down occupational stereotyping

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no formal target-setting
- ◆ little staff awareness training in equal opportunities
- ◆ lack of marketing materials in languages other than English
- ◆ no systematic analysis of data at national level
- ◆ some minority ethnic groups are under-represented in promotional material
- ◆ some trainees and work-based staff unaware of equal opportunities policy

12. A clear monitoring procedure and a well-written question-and-answer-style guide support the equal opportunities policy. The guide is used as an induction tool with all new members of staff. The monitoring procedure is relatively new and has not yet been fully tested. The company's mission statement also includes its commitment to equality of opportunity. All equal opportunities documents are a part of the formal ISO 9001 quality management system. There is an effective complaints procedure which is well managed by the administration team. All reported complaints are clearly documented, with appropriate actions taken to resolve problems. The company complies with its TEC contracts, although not with all set targets. Both regional areas provide the head office with statistical information, but there is no systematic analysis of these data which do not currently lead decision-making or regular aims and improvement.

13. Early team meetings of the equal opportunities taskforce have been informal. Verbal reports are made to staff meetings and subsequently formalised in documented action points, with key or unresolved issues being raised at senior management team meetings for policy decisions to be made. Only a limited range of training has taken place among staff to raise awareness of equal opportunity issues. Some staff hold a certificate in deaf awareness. Both regional areas have been involved in local initiatives to try to overcome occupational stereotyping and barriers. Local presentation packs have been produced to reflect the rôle of female trainees and to try to attract more recruits, but the results have been disappointing. Girls' schools have been targeted for presentations about careers for women in construction, and work has been carried out in local areas with a high population of those from minority ethnic groups. Marketing and illustrated promotional brochures do not reflect many minority groups and are produced only in the English language. There is a written contractual agreement with placement providers where the signatory confirms that he/she will adhere to the equal opportunities code of practice. However, placement providers often lack knowledge of the issues and the company's policy.

Trainee support

Grade 2

14. Trainees are attached to individual modern apprenticeship co-ordinators who provide support throughout the training programme. They are responsible for job placements, and regular visits are made to work-placement sites and training centres. Table 3 indicates the workload of modern apprenticeship co-ordinators by region.

table 3

Area	Modern apprenticeship co-ordinators	average number of trainees
Northwest	8	32
Northeast	10	30
Southwest	3.5	36
Southeast	3	35

15. The company identified one strength and one weakness in its self-assessment report. Additional strengths and a further weakness were identified, and inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective working relationships among trainees, college staff and work-placement providers
- ◆ assistance for trainees with travel to training centres
- ◆ well-planned and effective induction
- ◆ financial incentives and vouchers to encourage progress and completion
- ◆ comprehensive personal counselling and referrals
- ◆ very frequent contact with trainees
- ◆ additional training courses carried out to complement NVQ programmes

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unsystematic use of initial assessment and diverse evidence to design individual training plans
- ◆ limited career counselling on leaving programme

16. Close contact is maintained with trainees throughout the programme, and informal telephone contact is frequently maintained between one visit and the next, which trainees appreciate. They are encouraged and motivated by their allocated modern apprenticeship co-ordinator to succeed and progress. Trainees often maintain their place on the scheme because of this support. Formal reviews are carried out on site regularly and include an updated college report, but placement providers are not included in the process, and trainees do not receive copies of reviews. Co-ordinators identify suitable construction sites for trainees to obtain appropriate experience and help them to relocate when sites are completed or if difficulties are encountered. Careful attention is given to health and safety, and trainees are moved immediately if a site is identified as being unsafe. Comprehensive support is provided for trainees who suffer illnesses or accidents, and close contact is maintained with their family, while the trainee is not on the programme. Trainees are encouraged to return to training whenever a positive outcome is deemed possible. Additional support is given to enable trainees to readjust to training and work after periods of absence. Trainees with practical problems, such as housing or finance, are referred to appropriate agencies. The company organises and pays for a coach to transport trainees to college in rural areas and provides a travel subsidy in other areas, except London. Trainees receive systematic induction to their college course. Each site, at which trainees are placed, provides adequate introduction to the workplace. A pilot scheme to improve materials used in initial assessment is being developed in the northern areas. There is a generous bonus voucher system for unit completion, plus a financial bonus on completion of NVQ level 3 to motivate trainees' progress. Trainees are funded to take additional qualifications, such as the safety practitioner certificate, on a distance-learning basis.

17. The results of initial assessment are not used systematically to design individual training plans. Some trainees, requiring basic literacy and numeracy training, have been inappropriately placed on modern apprenticeships, as they have been

subsequently identified as unlikely to achieve NVQ level 3 and removed from training. While all training co-ordinators demonstrate strong commitment to their trainees, recent reorganisations and staff sickness have resulted in a few training co-ordinators having large workloads which affect the frequency of their direct trainee contact. A new education pack has been developed to help training co-ordinators to advise trainees at the completion of their programme. This is not yet fully used, and some trainees receive no guidance on either future career opportunities or possibilities for progression to higher education. Trainees have little expectation of continued employment with the company on completion of their modern apprenticeship programme.

Management of training

Grade 3

18. There are well-documented procedures for all aspects of the organisation. Jarvis Training is an Investor in People. The company divides its operation between Middlesbrough and Liverpool. Regional managers report to a director of the main group board. The quality manager is based in the company's headquarters at Altrincham. Training teams are based in seven area offices, although modern apprenticeship co-ordinators, covering more rural areas, operate from home. All trainees are employed and gain site experience through a large network of placement providers. Off-the-job training is generally subcontracted to local colleges of further education which also carry out all assessments. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified to those noted by Jarvis Training. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good teamwork among staff
- ◆ clear mission statement supported by staff
- ◆ good working relationships with other organisations
- ◆ well-documented staff recruitment and induction procedures
- ◆ comprehensive staff appraisal and safety training
- ◆ effective administrative support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ information does not always reach the staff on the ground
- ◆ management-information system does not always inform local staff
- ◆ weak management of on-the-job training
- ◆ poor co-ordination between workplace and college activities

19. The company's clear mission statement is widely understood by staff who are clearly focused on the its objectives. Teamwork is good, and staff value the support of their colleagues. Management and staffing structures are straightforward. Managers have close working relationships with staff, providing a high level of administrative support and supervision. Staff recruitment and induction procedures are clearly stated and operate effectively. There are well-documented job descriptions, and staff understand what is expected of them. Staff development and appraisal are firmly linked. Training needs are formally identified through an annual cycle of interviews and personal development is encouraged. Internal communication is generally good, and regular meetings encourage discussion and provide adequate support. However, information does not always reach the staff on the ground and many of the modern apprenticeship co-ordinators rely on informal links. All work-based staff are well trained in health and safety, most holding recognised qualifications.

20. Lines of communication between staff and outside bodies are well conceived and generally effective. Those between the subcontractors and workplace supervisors are less reliable and are often poorly co-ordinated. The management-information system is not used to provide data to local staff, and some are isolated and ill informed. Management between on- and off-the-job aspects of the programme is often uncoordinated and ineffective.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

21. A quality assurance manual is issued to all area offices by the company's quality assurance manager. There is a formal policy which states arrangements for the quality assurance management system and revision of policies and procedures. There are 'working forms' files and a means by which local procedures can be developed and recorded. Each regional manager has a nominated member of staff, responsible for quality assurance. All staff receive training in implementing quality assurance arrangements. An internal team of trained staff audits the implementation of the quality assurance system across the training division. The system is externally accredited to the ISO 9001 quality standard. In the past eight months, two postal surveys of trainees have been carried out. The self-assessment report accurately defined the quality assurance system as a strength, but only one weakness was identified, relating to the effect of the company restructure on systems and procedures. Inspectors identified further strengths but more weaknesses, and awarded a lower grade than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ robust, well-documented quality assurance system
- ◆ staff are well informed and trained in company systems and procedures
- ◆ active quality assurance taskforce

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ scope of quality assurance scheme does not directly address key elements of training
- ◆ no systematic data kept on trainees' destinations
- ◆ system does not inform steadily improving performance
- ◆ weak policies and procedures for arrangements with subcontractors
- ◆ no systems for evaluation of training

22. Quality assurance is taken seriously by the company and supported by an organisational infrastructure led by a senior manager who is responsible for quality assurance. Policies and procedures are well defined and published in a comprehensive manual, which is issued to specific personnel across the organisation. Documentation is strictly controlled, and revisions to policies and procedures are systematically managed and distributed. The company has been accredited with the ISO 9001 quality standard. There is a team of internal quality auditors in the company which samples compliance on a monthly basis and issues corrective action requests which are well recorded and promptly followed up. Through its various TEC contracts, the company carries out regular internal quality assessments. There is a policy and procedure in the quality manual for implementing the self-assessment report and quality development. Staff are aware of the quality policies and procedures. All staff are inducted to the quality assurance system, and there are regular briefings on developments and revisions. A quality assurance taskforce deals with quality development and has encouraged the introduction of an extra health and safety training-certificated programme over and above the standard requirement for a group of trainees.

23. The current quality assurance arrangements do not cover the main elements of training for which the company is responsible. The scope of the quality system does not directly address the procedure for carrying out initial assessment, the manner in which reviews are to be carried out, the way in which trainees' plans are reviewed or the expectations regarding structured work-based training and arrangements. The company subcontracts significant elements of the training delivery and assessment. Arrangements for quality assuring subcontracted provision are not clearly specified. Contractual arrangements do not identify the information required or the frequency of returns to assure the quality of provision. There is no system specified for evaluating the overall effectiveness of training. Analyses of leavers are fragmented and localised, with no systematic attempt to capture data about trainees' destinations across the organisation. The working relationship between quality assurance and performance, in terms of trainees' achievement of qualifications, is not covered by the quality assurance policy, resulting in an absence of any impact on performance results.