



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 1998

Hull College

SUMMARY

Training at Hull College is good in construction; business administration; hospitality; hair and beauty; health, care and public services; and foundation for work. It is satisfactory in engineering. Hull College is careful to ensure equality of opportunity for all trainees. An annual report tracks the college's progress in eliminating inequality. Support for trainees at all levels is exceptionally strong, with comprehensive specialist care designed to meet individuals' needs. The college has effective systems for routine monitoring of training. There is good leadership and teamwork among staff. There is no regular or systematic sharing of good practise between the two sites. Reliable data on the quality of training are not readily accessible. Quality assurance procedures are excellent in ensuring that programmes are well conceived and well delivered at the college. They are poor in guaranteeing a good learning experience at work.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	2
Engineering	3
Business administration	2
Retailing & customer service	2
Hospitality	2
Hair & beauty	2
Health, care & public services	2
Foundation for work	2

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good teaching at the college
- ◆ generally good learning environment and resources
- ◆ effective promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ high level of pastoral support
- ◆ exemplary support for trainees with disabilities and learning difficulties
- ◆ clarity of management goals and organisation
- ◆ regular monitoring of training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no systematic sharing of good practice
- ◆ data inaccurate and unrelated to quality issues
- ◆ insufficient involvement of employers in planning training
- ◆ quality assurance weak in relation to learning at work

INTRODUCTION

1. Hull College is a large general further education college which has three sites in Hull. Goole College is part of the same institution. It is situated 30 miles from Hull. The college employs 820 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, most whom are directly involved in the training of young people and adults. Hull College first offered work-based training in 1986. It now receives 11 per cent of its income from two separate training and enterprise council (TEC) contracts, between Humberside TEC and Hull College and Goole College respectively.

2. At the time of inspection, Hull College had 640 trainees. Trainees work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 to 3. They study for qualifications in a wide range of occupational areas. These include construction; engineering; business administration; retailing and customer service; hospitality; hair and beauty; health, care and public services; and foundation for work. The college has a contracts management unit based at its Queens Gardens site, from which an assistant principal manages the TEC contract and other external contracts. The Goole site and Hull site are each managed for operational purposes by a senior support manager. The college delegates a small amount of work in engineering to a local subcontractor, which took part in the self-assessment process. All trainees attend college for one day each week and spend the rest of the time at employers' premises. Most trainees attend college in groups which also include students and those supported by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), who pay full fees. Although the college recruits students nationally, most trainees live locally.

3. The population of Kingston-upon-Hull and Goole is approximately 450,000. Less than 1 per cent of these people is from minority ethnic backgrounds. The area is marked by social and economic deprivation. It has an unemployment rate of 8.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 5.1 per cent. Over the last 12 years, the proportion of school leavers staying in full-time education has increased from 2 per cent to 50 per cent. This figure is, nevertheless, well below the national average. Employment opportunities in the area are particularly poor. The labour market is most buoyant in banking and finance, healthcare and education. Job opportunities are scarcer than average in construction and manufacturing. The general picture is similar in Goole, but the local ports provide a significant amount of employment. There is a small percentage of people from minority ethnic groups in the area.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Hull College produced its first self-assessment report with the support of Humberside TEC. The formulation of the report involved staff at many levels. The report accurately identified some weaknesses, but inspectors identified a number of others. Many of the strengths cited by the college were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice, but they identified other strengths in addition. Inspectors agreed with the grades proposed for construction, engineering, business administration, healthcare, foundation for work, management of training and quality assurance. They awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the college for hospitality. The grades awarded for equal opportunities and for hairdressing and beauty, were lower than those proposed by the college.

5. A team of eight inspectors spent a total of 25 days at the college during December 1998. They met trainees, trainers, managers, employers and a TEC representative. They interviewed 149 trainees, 116 college staff, 31 employers and visited 40 work placements. They observed 32 training sessions and eight progress reviews. The grades awarded to training sessions are summarised in the table below:

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction		4				4
Engineering		3				3
Business administration		1	1			2
Retailing & customer service		4	2			6
Hospitality		3	2			5
Hair & beauty		3	2			5
Health, care & public services		2	1			3
Foundation for work		2	2			4
Total		22	10			32

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 2

6. There are 117 trainees in construction. The provision consists of the following trades: brickwork and construction; carpentry and joinery; furniture crafts; painting and decorating; and wood machining. Sixty trainees are young people pursuing level 2 NVQs and 48 are modern apprentices pursuing level 3 NVQs. Ten trainees are based at Goole College, but they study at Hull. One hundred and twelve trainees are employed and five are on work placements. Qualified assessors carry out assessment in the college workshops, and trainees bring other assessment evidence to college from work. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that proposed by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective NVQ tracking systems
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ well motivated trainees who take pride in their work
- ◆ well-equipped workshops
- ◆ fully integrated key skills
- ◆ rigorous internal verification

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ reviews not used to set targets for learning
- ◆ no off-the-job assessment
- ◆ little co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training

7. Training at college is well organised. Trainees learn in modern, well-equipped workshops with a range of equipment and hand-tools. Staff use their experience to the full to encourage trainees' interest. Where appropriate, trainees' work experience provides examples for study at college, bolstering understanding. Staff carefully relate the theoretical aspects of construction to current practice in the industry. Practical assignments are well designed, enabling trainees to improve their skills quickly. Trainees have productive working relationships with college staff, which contribute to their high level of motivation and their enjoyment of training. Trainees value this atmosphere of good will. All the training sessions are well attended and trainees are attentive and busy. Trainees are proud of their achievements and able to describe clearly how their skills have improved.

8. Good work is regularly produced. Innovative test pieces encourage trainees to extend their skills beyond the requirements of the NVQ. One first-year trainee has recently won a regional competition for plumbing and is among the final eight competitors in the National Skillbuild Competition. He is competing against trainees

with two years' additional experience. Two other trainees have won Institute of Plumbing awards for the best second-year and third-year students.

GOOD PRACTICE

For three years the construction department has worked with a school for girls raising their awareness of the construction industry and breaking down stereotypical barriers. Forty-five pupils from years 10 and 11 have attended college and learned bricklaying. A 90 per cent achievement rate in the foundation level general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in construction has been achieved. The girls are treated with attention and respect in the department.

9. A training support officer, who is technically qualified and has trade experience, regularly visits trainees at work. Reviews cover issues such as health and safety, the general wellbeing of each trainee and progress at work and at college. Review visits have been sporadic, but over the past six months, they have become more regular. College staff carry out reviews of progress at the end of each term, but they set trainees few targets. Reviews at work and at college are closely linked. Trainees' programmes follow traditional day-release patterns, with little or no contact between the college staff and workplace supervisors. Many employers see training as a college activity. This general lack of integration hampers the use of work-based assessment; all assessment is carried out in the college. Trainees are supplied with evidence books and are encouraged to offer documentary proof of their learning at work to add to their assessment portfolios.

10. In all areas of construction staff have worked on the development of key skills training. Workbooks for each key skill have been produced which refer to the rest of the NVQ. Where direct evidence is difficult to gather, occupationally specific assignments have been designed. For example, trainees undergo information technology training in the construction resource centre and achieve computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) at level 1.

Engineering

Grade 3

11. There are 228 trainees, of whom 89 are modern apprentices. Two are national trainees and the remainder is in other work-based training programmes for young people. Hull College provides training in electrical engineering, fabrication and welding, mechanical engineering and motor-vehicle engineering. Some of the engineering provision is subcontracted out. Fabrication and welding and motor vehicle engineering are also taught at the Goole centre. The modern apprentices are working towards an NVQ level 3 and national trainees towards NVQ level 2. Other trainees are pursuing NVQs at level 2 and 3. All trainees work towards key skills at the appropriate level. Progression to higher level training is available. Most trainees are employed. They have one day's training at college each week comprising theory or practical work. The college's self-assessment report did not recognise several weaknesses in engineering, but inspectors nevertheless agreed with the grade proposed.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good workshop facilities
- ◆ well co-ordinated on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ well-presented comprehensive portfolios
- ◆ good progression to advanced training
- ◆ effective use of work-based assessment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ reviews too general in content to guide learning
- ◆ irregular reviews
- ◆ some mismatch between NVQ requirements and on-the-job experience
- ◆ poorly managed training in fabrication and welding

12. All trainees receive a comprehensive induction on entry to their programmes. The college and a subcontractor provide occupational induction, but trainees receive a further induction at work. Workshops at Hull for motor vehicle engineering and mechanical engineering are well equipped. They provide a good learning environment. Practical and theory sessions in electrical engineering are taught, well planned and carefully structured. Trainees are well motivated and contribute to lively discussions in lessons. In electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and in the subcontracted provision, there are strong links between on- and off-the-job training. Over half the trainees are employed. In some areas, trainees' NVQ portfolios of assessment evidence are of good quality, reflecting effective learning. For example, trainees' log books and portfolios in electrical engineering and in the subcontracted provision are exceptionally well presented and very detailed.

13. Trainees in most areas are fully aware of the NVQ structure and assessment process. They are encouraged to progress to a higher level including to national and higher national certificates. With the exception of those in fabrication and welding, trainees' key skills are well developed and fully integrated with the rest of the training. Assessment is carried out both in trainees' workplaces and in the college workshops. A high proportion of assessment is conducted through direct observation of trainees demonstrating their skills at work by visiting college assessors and employers' own assessors. However, in electrical engineering and fabrication and welding, this is not the case. These trainees are assessed mainly in the college, by taking work-based evidence with them. Fabrication and welding trainees at NVQ level 3 are not registered for the qualification specified in their training plans. Some of these trainees have finished training, and others are about to do so. The college is not delivering the NVQs which have been agreed on with the TEC.

14. In some occupational areas, but not all, trainees are reviewed regularly at work by college staff. In fabrication and welding, some trainees have not received a review for several months. The review process involves the employer and the trainee and is intended to provide pastoral care. It does not help in directing trainees towards achievement of individual NVQ units.

Business administration

Grade 2

15. Hull College has 56 trainees in business administration. The present numbers are lower than the totals of 120 in 1995-96, 195 in 1996-97 and 61 in 1997-98. Of the 56 trainees, 23 are based at Hull College. They comprise six modern apprentices and 17 trainees on other programmes who are working towards a range of NVQs at levels 1 to 4. The remaining 33 trainees are based at Goole College. They comprise

25 modern apprentices, seven trainees who are working towards a range of NVQs at levels 1 to 4, and one trainee in prevocational training. With one exception, all 31 modern apprentices are full-time employees. Of the other 25 trainees, 17 are employed and eight are in work-placements. All the off-the-job training, assessment and internal verification is carried out by Hull College, at either Hull or Goole. All trainees receive one day's theoretical and practical training at college each week. In a few instances, attendance is in the evening. Although the college's self-assessment report accurately identified some strengths and weaknesses, some strengths are no more than normal practice. Other strengths and weaknesses emerged during inspection. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ constructive working relationships with employers
- ◆ very good new assessment and review documentation
- ◆ good use of activity at work to provide assessment evidence
- ◆ staff with recent industrial experience
- ◆ trainees well aware of NVQ and key skills requirements
- ◆ good quality portfolios
- ◆ well-integrated key skills

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little accreditation of prior learning and achievement
- ◆ some review records not signed or dated
- ◆ some discrepancies in signing and dating assessment records

16. Trainees in business administration have good training opportunities in college and at work. Work placements are managed well. Trainees are highly motivated and receive a great deal of help and guidance to make their training more effective. Reviews are carried out regularly, at eight-week intervals or less. They fully involve employers and trainees. New documentation, which was developed and tested at Goole, is used to describe and help regulate the full process of training, from initial to final assessment. It includes forms for evaluating reviews, which are completed by trainees and employers. It is being introduced to the other occupational areas at Goole. Assessment is well planned and largely takes place at work. It makes very good use of observation of trainees using their skills and of collection of other workplace evidence. College assessors carry out assessments at work, usually at the same time as regular reviews. Where assessment has to take place at college, workplace evidence is used wherever possible. Trainees understand the assessment process well. Assessment is rigorous and fair and it contributes to learning. Assessment portfolios are good. They are well planned and neatly presented. Staff have current vocational experience at a high level. Training facilities, including those for information technology at college, are more than adequate. The college's

premises at Goole are not as good as those at Hull, but are nevertheless suited to their purpose.

17. All trainees are well aware of NVQ occupational and key skills requirements. The documentation prompts them to look carefully at the standards. This process is helpful in indicating individuals' training needs. The college teaches key skills as a matter of course, not only to modern apprentices, but to all its other trainees as well. The key skill is usually developed to the same level as the NVQ. Key skills are well integrated with the rest of NVQ training. They are seen as having a particular affinity with business administration qualifications. The quality of portfolios at both Hull and Goole is high. At both centres, the results achieved by trainees meet or exceed TEC targets. In 1997-98, achievement of NVQs per hundred leavers was 89 per cent against the TEC target of 50 per cent.

18. Although trainees' induction takes place over two days, many do not remember what they were told. At the start of programmes, accreditation of prior achievement and prior learning are not always used appropriately. At Hull, some trainees, who could benefit from accreditation, do not know that it is possible. Some review documents are not signed or dated. Some assessment portfolios have summary record pages and personal statements signed off by the assessor without the candidate's own signature. Some evidence reference sheets are signed by assessors and dated before the evidence to which they refer was produced. These discrepancies are unusual, but they should be eliminated.

Retailing & customer service

Grade 2

19. Hull College has 42 trainees working in retail operations, distribution and warehousing, and customer service. They are studying on the modern apprenticeship scheme for employed trainees, national traineeships and other work-based training for young people. Although the strengths listed in the self-assessment report were considered to be no more than normal practice, many additional strengths were identified during inspection. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that proposed by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-integrated on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ good portfolios of assessment evidence
- ◆ well-chosen work placements for achievement of NVQ level 3
- ◆ imaginative assessment methods for trainees with learning difficulties
- ◆ well-integrated key skills
- ◆ strong resources for key skills

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some incomplete documents
- ◆ poor delivery of induction material
- ◆ mix of trainees in sessions at college causes confusion

20. Retail and warehousing training sessions take place at college for half a day each week. The remainder, including assessment, take place at work. Customer service training and assessment are carried out mainly at work. The college's specialist departments provide additional learning support. It includes help with literacy, numeracy and other key skills. Naturally occurring evidence from work and witness testimonies from employers and work-based supervisors, are evaluated by assessors, both at college and in companies. A continuous flow of new achievement is evident to trainees. Employers and work placement providers understand NVQs and they are able to help trainees to learn the necessary competencies to succeed. Employers offering training opportunities for young people with learning difficulties are especially supportive. They offer close supervision and perceptive care. College staff help trainees with learning difficulties to make the best use of their abilities by the intelligent use of questions about what they have learnt. They gain a higher level of confidence about everyday working practices in retailing from the encouragement given. Assessment portfolios are good. Photographs of working environments, displays and recordings of discussions with assessors enliven portfolios. Trainees working towards level 3 have opportunities to take responsibility. They conduct customer surveys and have the chance to introduce the improvements which result from them.

21. In the Humberside TEC area, NVQ contracts in the 'way ahead' programme require the integration of three key skills: communication, information technology and application of number. The college's modern apprenticeship programmes in customer service at Goole require five key skills and cover this wider range. The college gives expert tuition in key skills. An information technology suite has been allocated for the purpose. This is especially important for retailing because most shops do not have personal computers available, and their electronic point-of-sale equipment does not have the necessary scope to meet the demands of the award. Where trainees are unable to come to college, laptop computers are taken to them at work and they are trained and assessed there.

22. Some employers do not give trainees a thorough induction to their work. Workloads for young people who are employed are such that sometimes, induction in the customer service provision, is rushed. Their knowledge of equal opportunities issues and of the important complaints and grievance procedures can also suffer. The result can be unnecessary confusion during training. Trainees from different programmes, and working at differing levels, are taught together, exacerbating the problems of managing learning effectively. Internal verifiers for the retail NVQ programme at Hull do not check the quality of their assessors' work outside the college, nor do they give written feedback on their findings. Some individual training

plans do not reflect trainees' progress accurately, even though assessors hold detailed information. Some trainees' files, which are held by assessors, lack detailed important information, which would help them in their work with trainees, though it is available elsewhere in the college. These shortcomings are relatively easy to put right.

Hospitality

Grade 2

23. There are 29 trainees at Hull and 10 more at Goole. Most work towards catering and hospitality NVQs, which include food preparation and cooking at levels 1 and 2; serving food and drink at levels 1 and 2; housekeeping at level 2; supervisory management housekeeping or food preparation and cooking at level 3; and on-licensed premises supervision at NVQ level 3. Five of the trainees at Hull are bakers who are working on craft baking NVQs at levels 2 or 3. Twenty-five trainees are on a two-year youth programme which is designed to help them to achieve an NVQ at level 1 or 2, with key skills at complementary levels in communication, application of number and information technology. This programme provides work placements for trainees or employment, and one day's training each week at the college. In the past three years, the programme has been increasingly successful in helping young people into employment. Thirteen trainees are modern apprentices, and one baker is a national trainee. The number of trainees has fallen significantly this year. The number of NVQs per 100 leavers has increased over the past three years by over 10 per cent. College staff are occupationally experienced and qualified teachers or trainers. Most assessment is carried out in the colleges' kitchens, or its bakery by qualified assessors. The college's self-assessment report was realistic, and inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good learning resources and equipment
- ◆ staff promote achievement by offering close support
- ◆ well-integrated key skills
- ◆ training well adapted to individuals' learning needs
- ◆ careers advice helps trainees to progress
- ◆ most staff widely qualified and with current professional experience

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ employers do not understand requirements of training
- ◆ underdeveloped opportunities for workplace assessment
- ◆ some poor co-ordination between on-the-job and college training in baking

24. The specialist department in the college at Hull draws on a wide range of learning support resources and applies them effectively. Training at the college is well planned, interesting and highly relevant to work. Good use is made of question-and-answer techniques in lessons to involve trainees and check how much they are

learning. Schemes of work are comprehensive and well written. Resources and equipment are modern, reflecting the types of working environment found in catering, hospitality and bakery. During practical training at college, trainees are kept busy and involved. Working relationships are constructive. Trainees' motivation is high. The organisation of key skills workshops is good, with trainees given attention which suits their needs, either individually or in groups. Trainees work on key skills assignments which are occupationally relevant. Trainees receive a great deal of help from both staff in hospitality and key skill specialists. The wide occupational experience of college trainers and their up-to-date knowledge of the industry are put to good use. They give appropriate careers advice and are able to talk informatively about the opportunities for professional advancement. Trainees take a lively interest in the industry, and are ambitious to succeed.

25. Employers' awareness of the content, and often also the structure of training programmes, is low. They do not understand the implications of the NVQ programme for them and are frequently confused about key skills. Some employers are unaware that their trainees are learning key skills. Others are not aware of what happens at college or how this relates to activities at work. College staff mainly carry out assessment in the workplace, but, some employers are trained as assessors and they carry out workplace assessments. Some encouragement is given to employers to become assessors or to take a part in assessment, but this is not universal. Opportunities to engage employers in assessment are missed. The recent introduction of a logbook for trainees by the college complementing awarding body assessment materials, has proved useful to both trainees and their employers. In bakery, the link between on-the-job and college training is more tenuous than that in catering and hospitality. The member of college staff who monitors bakery provision at work is not occupationally experienced, and other staff are unable to communicate sufficiently well with employers.

Hair & beauty

Grade 2

26. There are 77 trainees on hairdressing programmes, of whom 59 are working towards NVQ level 2 and 18 towards NVQ at level 3. There are 33 trainees on youth training programmes, 26 on national traineeships and 18 modern apprentices. Some modern apprentices have recently completed NVQ level 3 and key skill qualifications. Level 2 trainees attend for one day's training each week at Hull where both theory and practical skills are taught. Modern apprentices working at level 3 attend one evening each week. The rest of their time is spent in employment in salons, where they are visited regularly by college monitoring staff, and occasionally by a college assessor. All trainees have the opportunity to work towards an additional qualification, the salon hygiene certificate. Most of the assessments are carried out in the college, using employers' witness testimonies and, in some cases, work-based assessments. The college's self-assessment report accurately identified both strengths and weaknesses in hairdressing. Although some of the strengths identified in the report were confirmed, others were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Additional weaknesses were identified. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that proposed.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible provision
- ◆ theory sessions relevant to trainees' work
- ◆ good working relationships with employers
- ◆ rigorous internal verification
- ◆ good trainee support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no specific NVQ unit target-setting during reviews
- ◆ some missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ trainees unaware of their training and assessment plans
- ◆ some accommodation in need of refurbishment

27. Trainees are taught in the college's purpose-built salons, which attract external clients. Programmes are well planned, with an appropriate mix of theory, practical and demonstration sessions. The work is relevant to the current demands of the industry. Some equipment is in need of refurbishment or replacement. Theory sessions make good use of group discussions and independent learning materials. The programme is flexible enough to allow trainers to start and finish when they need to. Attendance is good. As level 2 trainees near completion of their awards, they are introduced to more advanced work so that they have the knowledge to consider progression to level 3. Throughout their programmes, trainees are encouraged to enter competitions challenging them to improve skills and to learn good presentation and demonstration. Employers and trainees are surveyed to assess their satisfaction with the programmes. They are pleased with what the college offers, with the exception of level 3 trainees who comment that they would benefit from more resources and a more varied programme.

28. Trainees are encouraged to keep a diary of their activities in commercial salons. Employers grade their work is graded and these appraisals supplement college assessment. Some employers have their own qualified assessors, and a few salons provide both training and assessment themselves by special arrangement with the college. There is a rigorous internal verification system to assure the consistency and accuracy of assessment, which involves work-based assessors. The standard of trainees' work is appropriate to their length of time on the programme.

29. Employers are involved in trainees' reviews. The review records do not prompt target setting towards NVQ unit achievement. A new system of action planning has been introduced, but was not being used when the inspection took place. Some trainees are unaware of the requirements of their programmes or of their progress towards qualification. Many are unfamiliar with their individual training plans, with assessment planning and with the college's appeals procedure related to assessment.

Health, care & public services

Grade 2

30. Training and assessment in care are available on both sites. Hull has 17 care trainees, one childcare trainee, and 19 dental care trainees. At Goole there are 10 care trainees. In this total of 28 trainees, five are modern apprentices, four are national trainees and the balance consists of youth trainees. The trainee dental care nurses do not follow an NVQ programme. They sit for professional examinations at the end of their course. Approximately half the trainees are employed and the rest are in work placements. All but one, are working in private and voluntary sector care and nursing homes, looking after elderly people. One trainee works in a day nursery. Assessors in the workplace either have, or are working towards, assessor qualifications. The residential care and nursing homes, which offer work placements, or employment, are exceptionally good. Many of their staff are also training at a variety of more advanced levels. The self-assessment report contained a number of statements listed as strengths, which were regarded as good practice. Most of the remaining strengths were confirmed. Inspectors did not agree with the weaknesses identified, but identified others.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ rigorous assessment and internal verification
- ◆ good assessment portfolios
- ◆ very good work placements
- ◆ well-prepared and enthusiastically taught lessons at college
- ◆ effective blend of theory and practice
- ◆ training rooms well equipped for specialist teaching
- ◆ enthusiastic involvement among employers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little integration of key skills
- ◆ no systematic sharing of good practice across sites
- ◆ low NVQ achievements

31. Teaching sessions for dental nurses and care trainees are well planned. Lesson plans contribute to a carefully designed annual scheme, which covers both theory and practice. Resources and equipment for both dental nurses and care trainers are very good. The dental nurses' training room is exceptional, in terms of dental equipment and demonstration models. Different teaching techniques are used to relate theory and practice effectively. They include sessions, in which trainees act the part of elderly people in care, so that they come to understand the feelings involved.

32. Learning and assessment opportunities are planned in meetings of college trainee support staff, college assessors and work-based assessors. This process is used to ensure that access is available to the necessary resources and that the desired

outcomes are defined in detail. College staff visit trainees at work every month, formally reviewing progress every eight weeks. Learning is reviewed and additional pastoral support is provided if it is needed. Trainees' portfolios are methodically organised and they clearly show the development of skills and knowledge. Trainees are taught to organise their portfolios and gradually assume full responsibility for them. Assessment documents are properly kept, with signatures, dates and assessment specifications completed meticulously. Employers see themselves as partners in training and assessment. Three employers worked with the college care team in preparing the self-assessment report. This increased employers' sense of involvement in NVQ training. The means of teaching key skills differs between the two sites: trainees at Goole are introduced to key skills from the beginning of their programmes. Trainees at Hull are critical of the way key skills are taught, particularly the application of number, which is not deliberately related to the rest of the NVQ.

33. Communications between the teaching teams based at Goole and Hull are inadequate. Information, resources and innovations are not shared for the benefit of trainees or the improvement of the learning programme. The Goole site has recently become an accredited assessment centre in care, so there is no need to send portfolios to Hull for verification. This further reduces contact between the centres and inhibits standardised verification. At both sites, the achievement of NVQs is low. The previous academic attainments of many trainees are well below those normally found in this occupational area. Because Hull is an area of high unemployment, trainees who are offered employment tend to accept, despite lacking formal qualifications.

Foundation for work

Grade 2

34. There are 18 trainees on foundation programmes at the Hull site and 16 at Goole. Of these, 17 are young people on initial training courses and 17 are adults on prevocational training courses. At Hull, youth trainees undertake a 16-week programme, including a period of work or project placement. They complete a profile of achievement on one day each week, either at college or during their project. At Goole, youth trainees attend college full time, sampling different occupations and completing a profile of achievement on one day a week. Adults at both centres are given a six-month or one-year programme, according to their needs. They complete a profile of achievement at either of the college sites. All trainees with numeracy or literacy deficits undertake wordpower or numberpower qualifications. The self-assessment report for this sector highlighted different strengths and weaknesses at the two sites. Several strengths were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Additional strengths were identified and inspectors awarded the same grade as that proposed.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ project placements stretch trainees
- ◆ well-structured occupational sampling
- ◆ trainees' personal skills are significantly improved

- ◆ comprehensive initial assessment
- ◆ well-developed peer support
- ◆ ample staffing
- ◆ close supervision by college staff for trainees away from college

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ job search not available to all trainees
- ◆ lost opportunities to recognise key skills achievements
- ◆ not all trainees have target dates for completing each part of their programmes
- ◆ low progression to mainstream programmes and jobs

35. Participants in the programme have a wide range of special training needs. The college is effective in helping all of them to make significant progress towards their individual goals. Many trainees have social and personal problems, in addition to their learning difficulties. At Hull there are three specialist projects which are used to enable trainees to develop skills in suitable environments. At Goole, trainees are given a structured programme of four occupational tasters in the college, enabling them to make an informed career choice. Trainees gain self-esteem and confidence. Training sessions are planned to allow them to work at their own pace. Groups are small, with a high level of individual attention available from staff. Tutors encourage trainees to respect others and a close-knit network of peers grows up which helps everyone towards their personal goals. College staff maintain frequent contact with trainees when they are in work placements or projects. Good working relationships between placement supervisors and college staff assist in the development of a sheltered environment for trainees. Initial assessment covers trainees' personal, behavioural, vocational and learning needs. The results inform training and placement plans. Adult trainees at Goole have individual programmes, which make good use of the courses available in the college. Training plans at Goole are well documented and updated regularly. At Hull, training plans for adults are narrow in scope at the outset and few additions are made to them subsequently. While tutors set short-term learning targets towards the attainment of wordpower and numberpower, dates by which they should be achieved are neither set nor recorded. Trainees sometimes work for up to a year with no real focus in their programme and no individual goals to work towards.

36. At Hull, adult trainees do not receive methodical instruction in seeking work. In the last year, only 7 per cent of trainees found work after leaving. No trainees progressed to further training or education. Progression for youth trainees to mainstream training at Hull is poor. Only 22 per cent of leavers in 1997-98 progressed to further training or education, or left with a job. Youth trainees produce good work, which also shows development of key skills. When they progress to mainstream training, key skills are mandatory. However, there is no procedure to ensure that their initial training is taken into account when they commence their mainstream key skills units.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

37. There is a comprehensive equal opportunities policy, which applies to both the Hull and Goole sites. At the last review of the policy, the omission of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) was not rectified. All trainees receive an equal opportunities statement at induction. Recruitment literature is designed to challenge traditional perceptions of gender rôles. Social deprivation is widespread in the community, and the college attempts to identify and overcome obstacles for trainees who live in deprived areas, by monitoring postcodes. There is a small percentage of people from minority ethnic groups in the local population and at the college. At the time of inspection, there were two trainees from minority ethnic groups and 11 trainees with disabilities. The college's self-assessment report failed to recognise all the weaknesses identified during inspection. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that proposed by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ college-wide equal opportunities monitoring
- ◆ plan for improvement reviewed and amended regularly
- ◆ positive images of minority groups used in all college publications
- ◆ wide promotion of equal opportunities policy

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ targets not set for the recruitment of under-represented groups
- ◆ no progressive awareness-raising for trainees and employers
- ◆ poor promotion of action-plan to college staff

38. The college has made considerable progress in promoting equal opportunities. It can show many examples of positive action. An equal opportunities monitoring group meets termly. It addresses problems and receives an annual report on progress towards eliminating inequality in the college. The plans produced by the group form a rolling programme of activity and amendment. The college uses a checklist to ensure that its publicity materials promote equal opportunities. Teaching materials are not yet monitored in the same way, and some packs of learning materials depict people in stereotypical gender rôles. Policy statements on equal opportunity are included in the numerous course guides, information leaflets for parents, trainee and employer agreements and staff handbooks. Staff support the college's equal opportunities position, but they are not well informed about the plan which is designed to make it a reality.

39. There is a staff development plan designed to raise awareness of equal opportunity. Many of the sessions equip staff with the skills they need to support trainees who are disadvantaged by social, mental or physical disability. Attendance

GOOD PRACTICE

At Goole, staff identified a high early-leaver rate among women in mixed sex training groups. In response the college recruited a group of eight women for a five-week community education programme of personal development. The course was promoted through radio interviews and newspaper articles. All the women completed the course and moved on to further training programmes.

is encouraged, but less than 50 per cent of staff who teach or support trainees on government-funded programmes have chosen to undergo training. The college monitors the gender and ethnicity of recruits, but no targets are set to increase recruitment of under-represented groups to particular occupations. Occupational training areas place differing levels of importance on diversifying recruitment. Trainees' understanding of equal opportunities issues is poor. With the exception of the care sector, little is done with trainees to raise their awareness of rights and responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities. Employers and work placements are not systematically monitored to ensure that there is fair treatment for all trainees. Most employers are unaware of their part in fulfilling the college's equal opportunities policy.

40. There are good appeals and complaints procedures. Complaint forms are readily accessible throughout the college. Trainees with disabilities are well catered for. There is wheelchair access to all sites, safe assembly points in the event of fire, and lifts fitted with Braille buttons and audio instructions. Braille versions of recruitment literature are available.

Trainee support**Grade 2**

41. Trainee support involves specialist staff, assessors and monitoring staff at Hull and Goole. Close contact among college staff, trainees and employers allows help and guidance to be given almost continuously. Staff see most trainees weekly. They are formally reviewed for the first time four weeks after they start and thereafter, at eight-week intervals. There is a college learning support department staffed by qualified advisers. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ frequent staff contact with trainees
- ◆ high levels of pastoral care
- ◆ comprehensive additional learning support
- ◆ exemplary support for trainees with disabilities and special needs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ initial assessment process incomplete
- ◆ poor delivery of some information during induction

42. All trainees receive a guidance interview before starting their NVQ programme. It includes an analysis of their previous qualifications and experience. The information is used to accredit prior learning where appropriate. Trainees receive two days' general and vocational induction. Health and safety information is particularly well communicated, both at the college and in work placements or

employment. During weekly sessions at college there are opportunities for lecturers, assessors and other staff to advise trainees and help them to overcome any problems. Both social and training problems are dealt with as they arise at work. College staff often spend a day or more helping to solve complex problems for a single trainee.

43. The college learning support department offers professional counselling on drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, social or clinical problems such as depression, eating disorders, financial concerns and homelessness. Difficulties associated with disability or learning difficulties are dealt with by qualified specialists. There are programmes offering help with dyslexia, audio and visual impairment and other physical disabilities. There are close links with external support organisations for homeless people, in drugs and alcohol rehabilitation, and other specialist areas. The college arranges free bus services in the winter months for trainees who have to attend evening classes. There is childcare for single parents. Trainees learning to support themselves and to keep up a commitment to learning receive considerable help.

44. There are two different initial assessment processes. Both result to a greater or lesser extent, in late identification of additional training needs. At Goole the Basic Skills Agency numeracy and literacy test is used, supplemented by a narrative handwriting test aimed at the early detection of dyslexia. At Hull, despite the availability of a 100-word reference test designed by the college's dyslexia specialists, only a basic skills test is used. The current array of available tests is incomplete. It is insufficient to cope with the needs of trainees from an area identified in national surveys as having some of the worst numeracy and literacy problems in England. The initial testing system at both sites is inadequate to inform the key skills support programme. At Goole staff intend to remedy this problem but at Hull there is no plan to do so. The two-day induction on its own is not sufficiently memorable to ensure that trainees retain knowledge about a range of matters, including the complaint and grievance procedures. There are no refreshment or reinforcement techniques used at later stages in the training programme.

Management of training

Grade 3

45. The college has a well-defined management structure. Co-ordination, assessment and verification of training are managed separately from occupational teaching and learning services. Training programmes are managed at Hull by the contract management unit the leadership under an assistant principal for curriculum. The training centre head at Goole is responsible for managing a separate TEC contract. The college is clear about its purpose, and the mission statement is central to ensuring that staff understand it. The college achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1997. Managers are close to their staff and they provide a high level of support and supervision to them. Annual staff reviews are firmly linked to the staff development programme. Many of the strengths and weaknesses listed in the self-assessment report were confirmed. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that proposed by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-defined mission statement which is supported by staff
- ◆ clearly understood management structures
- ◆ effective staff review and development
- ◆ training provision enhanced by good teamwork at Goole

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ management data not readily accessible
- ◆ insufficient data to inform development of training programmes
- ◆ staff induction training not focused on trainees' needs
- ◆ too little involvement of employers

46. Staff actively support the college's mission. They subscribe particularly strongly to two of its strands: creating a learning culture and social inclusiveness. Management and staffing structures are clearly defined. Staff understand their rôles in the organisation and there are firm lines of accountability. There is comprehensive documentation available to staff, the most important of which is the curriculum handbook, the tutors' guide and the staff handbook. All of these are updated regularly. Managers are effective, working closely with staff and providing encouragement. Administration is thorough. There is an annual cycle of staff reviews organised by a staff development manager. Reviews identify training needs and plans for staff development are made accordingly. Staff also request development to help them deal with emerging changes in their work. Five days each year are allocated to development for everybody. At least one of these days is a whole-college event. Teamwork among staff is generally good. Communication at Goole is good. The compact nature of the site is helpful in achieving this. Formal contract compliance meetings are held weekly among training staff and there are meetings of course leaders.

47. Management data are used routinely. They relate closely to compliance with TEC contracts. Additional data are available about trainees, but in an aggregated form which make them hard to use in managing the quality of training. Inspectors found difficulty in both obtaining reliable data from the college and in interpreting the information that was presented to them. The progress of trainees was difficult to track. Information about trainees' retention, achievement and progression was deficient. Programme team meetings are used to discuss training issues, but the agenda is uninformed by information which is reliable enough to enable the quality of training provision to be considered objectively.

48. Staff induction is satisfactory, covering a broad range of college programmes. Staff have the support of a mentor after their initial induction. New staff have experienced difficulties in contributing to work-based programmes. They feel unprepared to deal with trainees' enquiries and the special administrative requirements. Employers' involvement in advisory committees varies considerably

among the different occupational areas. The absence of any guidance to help them to contribute effectively is unhelpful in giving this significant part of the college's work a sense of direction.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

49. The college has a well-documented system for managing quality. There is a well-defined cycle of quality assurance checks throughout the year. The committees of staff in the college systematically carry out these checks. No distinction is made between trainees and students funded through the FEFC or elsewhere. College policy is to offer a similarly good service to all. Course team reviews consider opinion from trainees and their employers about the provision, and the extent to which it meets their needs. The college also targets training programmes across a variety of vocational areas, to obtain special feedback from consumers. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ quality assurance policy and its means of implementation widely understood
- ◆ easy flows of information
- ◆ regular feedback sought from trainees and employers
- ◆ rigorous validation of all new provision against quality assurance standards

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient monitoring of the quality of on-the-job training
- ◆ some immature elements of the quality assurance system

50. The system of quality assurance in the college is described in detail in staff handbooks, course handbooks and the curriculum handbook. The vice-principal leads the quality committee. Among its members is a lay governor who also chairs the college audit and quality committee. The quality assurance system applies equally to both sites to ensure consistent standards. Staff are aware of the quality assurance policy and the broad contents of the curriculum handbook. New training provision is proposed by course teams and approved by the board of studies, before undergoing a rigorous validation procedure by the quality committee. If approved, the college council and the academic board must still ratify the proposal. The college recently introduced a teaching observation team. Tutor staff assess the quality of training in the college by directly appraising delivery. Groups of trainees and their employers are contacted three times each year to check their satisfaction and the relevance of the training they receive. Results are monitored by the quality committee and passed back to course review teams for action. A cycle of quality assurance tests has been established. It is too early to evaluate their effectiveness.

51. The method of sampling for internal verification is used effectively to ensure a thorough internal verification system. External verifiers visit assessors regularly. Actions required by verifiers are fulfilled. Training in the college is monitored regularly and effectively, but training at work, which occupies most of trainees' time, is not evaluated systematically. The college is still examining means by which it might do this. Consideration is being given to production of independent learning materials related to each unit of the care NVQ, coupled to work-based projects.