



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 1998

REINSPECTION REPORT OCTOBER 1999

Enfield Training Services

SUMMARY

Enfield Training Services offers a wide variety of training. Off-the-job training is provided to all trainees through either local colleges, local training providers or at Enfield Training Services' new centre. Training in construction is good. Trainees are well supported, with their achievements and progress tracked effectively. Training in business administration and hair and beauty is satisfactory, with good-quality work placements, supportive employers and well-qualified and motivated staff. Arrangements for trainees in leisure, sport and travel were unsatisfactory at the time of the first inspection and remain so at reinspection. There is no co-ordination of the training programme, and assessment opportunities are infrequent. Foundation for work training was not structured and was not tailored to meet the needs of individuals with learning difficulties and disabilities, but by the time of reinspection considerable improvements had been made. Training, retention and achievements in this sector are now good. Enfield Training Services has an outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity, which is evident throughout the organisation. Staff go out of their way to support trainees and provide additional practical support to ensure that trainees have the opportunity to achieve their qualifications. Although Enfield Training Services had been through a period of rapid change over the year prior to the first inspection, this had been well managed. It takes its commitment to providing good-quality training seriously, and it has an effective quality assurance system. NVQ achievement rates have progressively and significantly improved between 1996-98.

As a result of the reinspection of Enfield Training Services, the original published report text for leisure, sport and travel and foundation for work has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall introduction and the inspection findings introduction have also been amended to reflect the findings if the reinspection. All other sections of the original published report, which have not been subject to full reinspection, have been left in their original form.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	2
Business administration	3
Leisure, sport & travel	4
Hair & beauty	3
Foundation for work	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	1
Trainee support	2
Management of training	2
Quality assurance	2

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Leisure, sport & travel	4
Foundation for work	2



KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity
- ◆ innovative induction programme
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ off-the-job training provided for all trainees
- ◆ roles are developed in consultation with staff
- ◆ good communications and team spirit throughout the organisation
- ◆ comprehensive and effective quality assurance procedures

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ insufficiently demanding targets for trainees
- ◆ control of subcontractors lacks rigour
- ◆ limited initial assessment

INTRODUCTION

1. Enfield Training Services (ETS) is a trading arm of the corporate development and training section of the London Borough of Enfield Council. ETS has been offering training to the local community and the surrounding boroughs of Barnet and Haringey since 1983. ETS has moved from its premises in the civic centre since the first inspection. It is now based in a new training centre in Edmonton, which is just south of Enfield on the way to Haringey, and west of Barnet. As a managing agent for training services, the company now delivers occupational training at this centre. ETS is now co-ordinated by one manager and employs four full-time staff, 13 part-time staff and one modern apprentice. Some training is subcontracted to colleges. ETS is well established, with careers offices, friends and employers referring many of the trainees. The major occupational areas offered are business administration, hairdressing, construction, engineering and sport and recreation. However, ETS has a commitment to serving the local community and seeks to secure training for estate agency, travel and tourism, hospitality and any other occupational area required by a trainee. Most trainees work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 through national traineeships and modern apprenticeship programmes. The company also offers prevocational training and additional support for trainees with learning difficulties and disabilities. In excess of 85 per cent of trainees are employed in over 135 companies. Other than those on prevocational programmes, all trainees are in work placements. Training is offered to young people through a contract with North London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). ETS also offers training through New Deal and using the European Social Fund. At the time of inspection, there were 270 people training. At reinspection, numbers in leisure, sport and travel had dropped from 30 to 13, and numbers in foundation for work remained static at 17.

2. Over half the employers in north London are small, with fewer than five employees. By contrast, establishments employing in excess of 100 people comprise just 2 per cent of all establishments. Most businesses in north London are in the service sector, and about 8 per cent are in manufacturing. The key occupational sectors in the area are business support services, retailing, hotel and catering, wholesale trades, estate agency services and construction.

3. Unemployment in north London has been steadily falling since 1993. In April 1998, it was 7.1 per cent compared with the London average of 6.6 per cent and the national average of 5.1 per cent. There are differences in the level of unemployment at borough level, with significantly higher unemployment rates in Haringey, at 12 per cent, compared with 6 per cent in Enfield and 4.5 per cent in Barnet. The most concentrated area of unemployment of young people aged 16 to 24 in north London is in Haringey, with 13.6 per cent unemployed compared with the north London average of 8.2 per cent. People from minority ethnic groups make up 20 per cent of the population of north London. Estimated rates of unemployment



for people from minority ethnic groups are 17 per cent, compared with the north London average of just under 8 per cent in 1996.

4. In 1998, the number of Enfield, Barnet and Haringey school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 41.5, 56.3 and 26.6 per cent, respectively, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. In 1999, the averages for the same areas respectively are 46.8, 56.9 and 30.3 per cent compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. Enfield Training Services (ETS) produced its first self-assessment report six weeks before the first inspection. The company thoroughly reviewed its training provision. An external consultant was engaged to conduct interviews and seek feedback from staff, employers, subcontractors and trainees. Documentary evidence was also considered, and key processes were observed. All ETS's staff were consulted throughout the process. Some of the strengths identified were judged to be no more than normal practice. The company overestimated the grades in three of the occupational areas. Inspectors agreed with the grades given by ETS for leisure, sport and travel and trainee support. Higher grades were awarded for construction, equal opportunities, management of training and quality assurance. An action plan, which followed inspection, was used to address the strengths and weaknesses identified by self-assessment and inspection. Two self-assessment reports were prepared for the occupational sectors to be reinspected. The report for foundation for work was more realistic and accurate. However, that for leisure, sport and travel did not reflect the strengths and weaknesses accurately.

6. For the first inspection, a team of six inspectors spent a total of 22 days at ETS during November 1998. Inspectors examined company records at ETS and at subcontractors' premises. They examined trainees' files, assessment and internal verification records; awarding bodies' reports; TEC contracts and subcontractor's agreements. Inspectors visited colleges and local community providers with which ETS subcontracts. They met college staff and employers, visited 25 workplaces, interviewed 63 trainees and observed and graded seven off-the-job training sessions.

7. Reinspection was carried out by a team of two inspectors for a total of four days in October 1999. They interviewed 20 trainees, four of ETS' trainers, and four other staff, and one subcontractor. Two work placements were visited. They examined assessment records, trainees' work and portfolios, and observed two training sessions in foundation for work which were graded at 2 and 3.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at first inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction		2				2
Business administration		3				3
Hair & beauty			2			2
Total	0	5	2	0	0	7

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 2

8. There are 38 trainees in construction, all working towards NVQ levels 2 and 3, of whom 16 are modern apprentices, seven are on national traineeships and 15 are on other youth training programmes. Trainees are placed with local employers and work is carried out on a range of construction sites or in construction-related companies in the Enfield area. Many trainees are placed in small businesses. They attend one day's off-the-job training each week at local colleges. ETS has several subcontracting arrangements which allow specialisation of training in the construction sector. Achievement rates are satisfactory. The company identified a range of strengths and weaknesses, many of which were not judged by inspectors to be the key strengths and weaknesses in this area. Inspectors identified additional strengths and awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ progressive assessment and well-recorded achievements
- ◆ reviewed regularly off-the-job training
- ◆ good-quality training resources
- ◆ good commitment to training among employers
- ◆ enthusiastic and well-motivated trainees
- ◆ key skills integrated in training programmes

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ training reviews are perfunctory and lack target-setting
- ◆ some trainees' programme changes are not recorded
- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment

9. Trainees are confident, articulate and highly motivated to achieve their qualification. Encouraged and supported to work at their own pace, they produce work to a high standard and make good progress towards their qualification. Their portfolios include a wide range of assessment evidence. Assessment of trainees' work is well organised, rigorous and happens continuously throughout the training programme. The recording of trainees' achievement and progress is thorough, and college tutors complete termly reviews. There are effective systems to track trainees' occupational and key skills achievement. Training and learning support materials, equipment and assessment rigs are good and effectively support the training programme. Additional learning support is offered to trainees, some of whom complete additional study skills units as part of their college induction. Key skills are effectively integrated in the occupational training programme.

10. Assessment opportunities are identified during off-the-job training sessions. Although employers' commitment is high, opportunities to assess trainees at work are not being pursued. ETS recently produced information on NVQs which could form the basis for the planning of training at work. However, there is little encouragement by staff or subcontractors for work-based assessment. Reviews of trainees' progress take place regularly, but lack detail and set few targets. Although progress among trainees is satisfactory, the trainees are not stretched or challenged. Some reviews fail to record employment and programme changes, and planning documentation is incomplete.

Business administration

Grade 3

11. ETS offers training in business administration and information technology. There are 114 trainees working towards NVQs at levels 1 to 3, of whom 26 are modern apprentices. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to a local college and a community-training provider. All trainees participate in a two-day induction programme which includes health and safety, equal opportunities and the NVQ framework. Delivery of off-the-job training is well planned and clearly related to the workplace. Trainees attend college one day each week during the academic year and are employed in a range of companies in and around the north London area, including the private and public sector, telecommunication and electrical companies, financial houses and legal firms. Achievement rates have improved over the last two years: in 1996-97, 64 per cent of trainees achieved their qualification; in 1997-98, 74 per cent of trainees achieved. The self-assessment report is fairly accurate in this area, although inspectors identified additional weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-qualified and motivated training staff
- ◆ regular reviews support trainees' progress
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ productive working relationships between trainers and trainees
- ◆ good training resources at college

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor key skills development, integration, achievement
- ◆ missed opportunities to assess trainees in the workplace
- ◆ insufficiently demanding targets set with trainees
- ◆ poor assessment tracking

12. Staff responsible for training and assessment are well motivated and use their knowledge and expertise of the occupational area to engage and enthuse trainees. In addition to holding assessor qualifications, staff have a wide range of academic and education and training qualifications. Trainees are placed in a variety of good-quality work placements which offer varied and occupationally relevant experience for business administration trainees, who have positive and open working relationships with their employers. Employers support and encourage trainees to attend off-the-job training. At work, trainees are given the opportunity to carry out tasks which stretch their skills and underpin and extend their knowledge. Progress is supported by regular review sessions, during which they receive appropriate guidance and comprehensive advice on how they can progress to other qualifications. Reviews are also the focus for discussing issues about the workplace, and staff demonstrate their willingness and approach to resolving problems promptly as they arise. Trainers work closely with employers to the benefit of trainees.

13. Employers have an understanding of the qualifications towards which trainees are working, but little is done by ETS to harness this commitment and understanding to support trainees more practically at work. Employers are not encouraged to assess trainees or help them to identify evidence in a structured way. The primary source of evidence is witness testimony. Assessment takes place, in the main, at college. Assessment records lack clarity in tracking achievement and do not record trainees' progress as they advance through their qualification. Training and assessment are geared to the college year. For many trainees, targets set are insufficiently demanding, giving overgenerous timescales for completion. In addition, targets are not effectively monitored, and trainees are not spurred on to meet their learning aims.

14. Trainees enjoy a good rapport with training staff which further underpins the review process and provides a good basis from which trainees feel confident to raise and discuss issues of importance to them. Attendance at college contributes positively to the good working relationships between trainers and trainees. College facilities thoroughly support off-the-job training and include a well-resourced and accessible library and well-equipped information technology workshops and classrooms. Trainees have little knowledge or awareness of key skills. Achievement of key skills is slow. Integration of key skills is at an early stage of development and opportunities for the collection of key skills evidence from the workplace are not being identified as part of individual training targets.

Leisure, sport & travel

Grade 4

15. There are 13 trainees on the sport and recreation programmes. All trainees are working towards NVQs in sport, recreation and allied occupations. One is working towards level 1, three are specialising in operations and development at level 3, and

nine are specialising in coaching, teaching and instructing at level 2. There are three modern apprentices, four national trainees and six in other training. Trainees are placed with three local employers: two local football clubs and water-sports centre. Assessment is carried out by a subcontractor for seven trainees and the remaining six are assessed by ETS. At the time of the first inspection, key skills were taught and assessed by the subcontractor. ETS intends to take over this aspect of the programme but has not done so yet. The work placement at the leisure centre which was part of the sport and recreation training on the first inspection is no longer used. ETS continues to support the Enfield 'football in the community' scheme and has recently started another football coaching scheme in partnership with a local football club.

The following weaknesses were identified during the first inspection:

- ◆ poor co-ordination of the training programme
- ◆ infrequent assessment
- ◆ ineffective reviews of trainees
- ◆ lack of work-based observations
- ◆ limited awareness of the training programme among trainees

16. An action plan was devised following the first inspection to address these weaknesses. ETS produced a self-assessment report which indicated that the action plan had been successfully implemented and re-graded the training at grade 3. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given by the organisation.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ extra support provided to all trainees
- ◆ additional opportunities for work placements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of the training programme
- ◆ infrequent assessment of trainees
- ◆ poor achievement
- ◆ lack of integration of key skills

17. Trainees now have an adequate awareness of the training programme. ETS provides extra pastoral support and encouragement to trainees, which extend beyond their training programme. For example, a work placement was relocated and ETS helped to ensure that it was a smooth transition for trainees. To help trainees to gain further experience and assessment opportunities, ETS has set up additional work placement opportunities in local leisure centres. However, trainees have not taken full advantage of these opportunities. No trainee has left the programme over the course of the last contractual year.

18. There has been little improvement in the co-ordination of the training programme since the first inspection. A number of changes have been put into place but these have not been monitored closely enough to ensure that they are effective. For example, a new assessor was employed by the subcontractor to assist with assessments and to support a newly qualified assessor. ETS had hoped that this would result in more assessments of trainees' work, but this has not been the case and it was some time before it became aware that a lack of assessment remained a problem. ETS does not rigorously monitor its subcontractor. Although the subcontractor sets targets for completion of NVQs, some trainees' attendance at the work placements, and at training and assessment sessions, is poor.

19. Trainees are not assessed frequently and are not fully aware of the assessment process. There are too few experienced assessors and there is still a lack of work-based observation. One assessor has qualified since the last inspection and another is currently undergoing training. There has been little support for assessors and they have been left to interpret the standards alone. Trainees' progress has been hampered and, since the first inspection, no trainees have achieved an NVQ. In some cases, trainees are on an inappropriate NVQ or NVQ level. For example, those who complete a sport, recreation and allied occupations NVQ at level 2, specialising in coaching, teaching and instructing, move on to a level 3 specialising in operations and development. Some trainees do not work at the required level in their work placements to collect appropriate evidence. It is difficult to track trainees' progress as they are not set individual targets which meet their needs. Reviews are now adequate. Some trainees with specific assessment requirements have not been adequately catered for. ETS's staff visit trainees regularly to monitor their progress. However, trainers are not occupationally experienced so are unable to offer assessment guidance.

20. Key skills are not integrated into the NVQ programme. They are completed separately through assignments. Some trainees have completion dates for their NVQ with completion of key skills being up to a year later. ETS is currently carrying out some development work to find a way of integrating key skills with the sport and recreation NVQs.

Hair & beauty

Grade 3

21. There are 62 trainees in hairdressing training, of whom two work towards NVQ at level 1, 53 level 2 and seven level 3. Twelve trainees are on modern apprenticeship programmes and 27 on other youth training qualifications. Trainees attend one day's off-the-job training each week, with the other four days working in a hairdressing salon. Salons are varied and offer a range of experiences and different client groups. On-the-job training is structured and includes practical sessions, during which trainees practise on models, under supervision. Use is also made of naturally occurring training opportunities in the salon. Some level 3 trainees have their own lists of clients in the salons and continue to build on these as they

progress through the qualification. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Facilities are adequate, and trainees are able to gather evidence from a broad range of activities. Assessment in the workplace is very limited. Key skills have only recently been introduced to the training programme. Retention rates have shown a steady improvement over the last three years, with 100 per cent retention in 1998. Achievement for 1996-97 is 58 per cent. The company identified strengths which were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice, and the grade awarded is lower than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ committed and well-qualified staff
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ excellent working relationship among trainees, tutors and supervisors
- ◆ well-structured on-the-job training
- ◆ frequent and regular access to tutors

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of challenging goals and targets
- ◆ limited work-based assessment
- ◆ insufficient tracking of trainees' progress
- ◆ poor assessment planning

22. Staff are eager to deliver a good-quality training programme and continuously develop and enhance the training provision. Recent improvements to the programme have included developing key skills assignments and incorporating revised NVQ standards in the programme. Training is taken seriously in the salons, and support is strong, with frequent individual training and supervision. In some salons, trainees have access to training from hair product manufacturers' technical staff, as well as artistic and promotional activities. Employers value and speak highly of off-the-job training. Tutors have developed excellent working relationships with salon employers. Any problems are dealt with promptly and effectively. However, this goodwill has resulted in a more focused approach to neither salon training nor assessment in the workplace. The standard of work produced by trainees is satisfactory. ETS's trainees won the college annual hairdressing competition which local employers judge. Trainees are well supported by tutors. As well as visiting them every 12 weeks to review progress, tutors are available each week during off-the-job training sessions.

23. All trainees are set the same timescale to achieve their qualification, irrespective of previous experience or qualifications. However, some trainees do achieve in a shorter time, but this is largely due to the motivation of the trainee, rather than stretching goals and targets or the monitoring of trainees' progress. The

tracking system lacks detail, and some trainees have repeated the same work several times, leaving them frustrated. Inadequate workplace assessment has also slowed trainees' progress through limited opportunities to gain evidence towards their qualifications. Trainees are encouraged to request assessment, but if a trainee fails to ask, this is neither noted through the monitoring nor the review process. Assessments are not planned, and completion of some elements is slow. Several second-year trainees had achieved only one or two units, with the majority being completed in year two.

Foundation for work

Grade 2

24. ETS offers prevocational training to a range of trainees aged 16 to 18 with special learning needs. Since the last inspection, ETS has terminated the subcontract arrangement with a local training provider. From the beginning of this contract year, the programme has been delivered in-house by ETS at its new training centre in Edmonton. Most trainees are referred to ETS from the careers service. Initial assessment and endorsement of any additional learning needs takes place at ETS's training centre during the interview and induction process. The training programme lasts for 10 weeks on average, but trainees are allowed to continue until they complete their qualifications. The programme is focused on information technology NVQs at level 1 and wordpower and numberpower at entry level. However, trainees are able to work towards additional qualifications when appropriate. There are a total of 17 trainees on the foundation for work programme. Twelve trainees are working towards wordpower and numberpower at entry level. Of these, four also receive English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training and the remaining eight receive key skills training at level 1 and information technology at NVQ level 1. One trainee is also taking the latter and key skills at level 2. There are five ESOL trainees, three of whom attend additional off-site ESOL sessions. Additional support for numeracy and literacy is also provided. Trainees can join the programme at any time.

The following weaknesses were identified during the first inspection:

- ◆ learning plans are not tailored to meet individual trainees' needs
- ◆ no structured training plans for literacy or numeracy
- ◆ narrow range of assessment methods
- ◆ ineffective recording of trainees' progress
- ◆ inadequate resources and accommodation

25. An action plan was devised following the inspection to address these weaknesses. The company produced a self-assessment report for the reinspection, which indicated that the action plan had been implemented, so the training was re-graded at grade 2. Inspectors agreed with this grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured training plans
- ◆ effective integration of key skills into NVQ work
- ◆ good learning resources
- ◆ additional qualifications encouraged
- ◆ good retention and achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ limited opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ lack of focus on the world of work in ESOL programme
- ◆ no use of computer-aided learning to develop basic skills

GOOD PRACTICE

Key skills are effectively integrated into the information technology NVQ at levels 1 and 2. Assessments used for the key skills unit of working with others are used as evidence for the information technology NVQ where appropriate. Similarly, working with spreadsheets for the information technology NVQ is cross-referenced to accredit part of the key skills unit of application of number. This approach benefits the trainees, who are able to see the relevance of key skills and their application in work-based training.

26. There are well-structured training plans for all elements of the programme. These provide a framework from which the trainers devise more individualised training to meet the needs of trainees. For example, a trainee, who had recently joined the ESOL programme and had little experience of the English language, worked on an individualised programme for part of the session, then joined the group to listen to its discussion. The first three weeks of the basic skills programme is used to assess the trainees' individual needs and design an effective learning plan. Training is lively and trainees participate in it with enthusiasm. Informal feedback is obtained from the trainees on the effectiveness of the training sessions. Trainees' formal evaluation at the end of the course shows that all trainees rate these sessions as very good or excellent. There is now adequate recording of trainees' progress.

27. The handouts, worksheets and assignments used in most elements of the programme reflect the world of work. There is also a strong focus on the importance of health and safety in the workplace and the individual's responsibilities for this. The exception to this is the ESOL element, where there is a lack of focus on the world of work. Trainees gain a sound knowledge and understanding of the building blocks of the English language. However, this development is not put into the context of the working environment and its language.

28. There are few opportunities for work-based assessments to take place, as trainees do not undertake an external work placement while on the foundation for work programme. They are involved in two days of in-house work experience. The tasks they carry out on these two days are assessed and used as evidence for the NVQ and key skills. In addition, trainees are assessed on real work undertaken for ETS (e.g. administration work). A minimum of two pieces of live evidence is assessed. However, trainees do not have the opportunity to use their newly acquired skills in a real working environment.

29. In general, trainees have a good knowledge of their programme and are aware of planned targets and the timescale for completion. This is particularly true for those working towards information technology and key skills awards. The resources at ETS's new training centre are good and enhance the young people's training experience. Trainees have access to a state of the art computer network with laser printer and the latest computer software packages. No use is made of computer-aided learning to help trainees who need to develop their basic skills. Although basic skills resources are good, the opportunity to offer different learning strategies to trainees by using computer-aided learning is missed. Handouts and worksheets are well designed and produced. All staff involved in training and assessing trainees are occupationally experienced and are already suitably qualified or are working towards appropriate qualifications.

30. Trainees take additional qualifications when appropriate. For example, some trainees move from NVQ level 1 in information technology to level 2 during the programme. Two-thirds of the current trainees are working towards key skills level 1, having gained entry level wordpower and numberpower. Being able to progress beyond the level agreed in their individual training plans boosts trainees' confidence, as well as offering transferable skills for the workplace. The retention and achievement rates on the foundation for work programme are good. Of the 14 trainees who started previous to the current 17 trainees, 13 completed the programme, while one left early to take up employment. The trainees achieved 39 qualifications between them. These included seven wordpower and numberpower qualifications at entry level, seven information technology NVQs at level 1 and eight at level 2. Four trainees gained five units of key skills at level 1 and six units at level 2. Of the 13 trainees who completed the programme, seven returned to full-time education and training; three are undertaking part-time training towards business administration NVQs at level 2 and are applying for jobs; one secured a job in computing; one is continuing with ESOL and one is taking a break for personal reasons.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 1

31. ETS draws its equal opportunities policy from Enfield Borough Council. ETS takes its commitment to equality issues very seriously; this is reflected by the diversity of the trainees recruited and the members of its own staff. A comprehensive equal opportunities policy is issued to all staff who are fully aware of the related procedures. Contractual documents used by ETS, when placing trainees with employers, require employers to confirm their commitment to equality issues. ETS trainees' profile is 51 per cent male and 49 per cent female, closely matching the north London and London employment profile. Twenty-five per cent of trainees are from minority ethnic groups, exceeding the local community average

by 5 per cent. Nine per cent of trainees have disabilities. The company's self-assessment report did not identify all the strengths in this area, and inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ all-encompassing equal opportunities policy
- ◆ exceptionally high commitment by management and staff to equality of opportunity
- ◆ high proportion of trainees from minority ethnic groups
- ◆ informative and participate equal opportunities induction for trainees
- ◆ comprehensive range of support facilities
- ◆ good staff development programme for equality issues
- ◆ excellent access to equal opportunity resources

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ limited evaluation of trainees' data

GOOD PRACTICE

ETS, in conjunction with Enfield Borough Council, set up a clerical training scheme aimed at increasing recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic groups within the council's administration services. The scheme has been highly successful in terms of jobs gained and qualifications achieved. Achievement rates for the last three years show 70 per cent success.

32. The equal opportunities policy embraces areas covered by legislation, but also extends the policy to cover ageism, immigration, social and economic discrimination, HIV and all other disadvantaged or under-represented groups. The policy is monitored and reviewed, with extensive consultation carried out to ensure its effectiveness. ETS also includes equality of opportunity in its annual service centre development plan and monitors performance against this plan at monthly staff meetings. The company has a well-written grievance procedure. There is an equal opportunities officer in Enfield Council and ETS, acting as a reference point for staff and trainees. Equality of opportunity is a major feature at staff and trainees' induction. Innovative awareness-raising exercises ensure that participants develop an understanding of the complex emotions which surround equal opportunity issues. In a highly supportive environment, trainees' assumptions and beliefs are challenged to expand their knowledge of the real issues, through simple exercises and skilful questioning by ETS's staff. The Borough of Enfield has a high population figure of those from minority ethnic groups, and the number of trainees on ETS programmes mirrors this proportion. When representation is lower, for example, on modern apprenticeship programmes, this has been identified and action taken to address the matter through a subcommittee.

33. The equal opportunities policy is available in large print, Braille, on tape and in various languages. Access to sites is good, with ramps and lifts available. As well as induction, staff have access to training arranged for ETS's staff, through internal and external courses. Staff do not have to wait for referral by their line manager, but can apply directly for any equal opportunities training. Recent courses have included disability awareness, deaf awareness, antiharassment, recruitment &

selection and race & culture training. A quarterly newsletter is distributed to all staff. It features articles and information, as well as detailing conferences and meetings, both locally and nationally, which staff can attend. Publications are also highlighted, and staff can request copies or more details. The company carries out equality of opportunity in spirit and in action.

34. Statistical data are collected for starters and leavers, for both occupational groups and programme total, but these limited data have led to little evaluation of trends or bias, resulting in little action-planning. ETS has relied on contractual meetings and TEC evaluations to inform planning.

Trainee support

Grade 2

35. ETS is committed to supporting its trainees to help them to achieve their potential, providing opportunities for all, regardless of background. Each trainee has an interview and an induction before commencing training. Trainees undergo an initial assessment and are informed of the results. If any additional learning assistance is needed, it is discussed. All trainees receive visits from a training associate who offers pastoral support in the workplace. The strengths and weaknesses identified by ETS in the self-assessment report were confirmed by inspectors who awarded the same grade as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned, interactive induction programme
- ◆ additional support for trainees available from all staff
- ◆ extra guidance and support for trainees with learning difficulties and disabilities
- ◆ celebration of trainees' success
- ◆ supportive processes for trainees with personal problems and social difficulties

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inappropriate advice and guidance given to some trainees
- ◆ initial assessment is limited to basic skills testing
- ◆ individual learning plans do not follow trainees' progress

36. There is full commitment to trainee support from ETS's staff who go out of their way to support trainees. ETS provides individual induction programmes for trainees, liaising with parents and guardians where there are problems or when appropriate. There is additional support and guidance provided to trainees with learning difficulties and additional needs. This ensures that all trainees are given the

GOOD PRACTICE

ETS arranged for a trainee suffering from agoraphobia to be taken through the induction programme at home and at her local place of work, to enable her to join the training programme in an environment in which she could cope and carry out her work activities.

opportunity to participate and succeed in their training programmes. The induction programme is well planned and fully participative. The process encourages trainees to take ownership and responsibility for their learning and individual success. Trainees remember induction, even those who have been on the programme for a considerable length of time, as a worthwhile start to their training. Support for trainees is diverse, with the use of translation, interpreting and signing services, mini-coms and hearing loops. Practical adaptations to training programmes are also made for trainees with additional needs.

37. ETS celebrates trainees' success annually through a hairdressing competition. In the past, trainees have taken part in an international work placement programme in the Netherlands. Although every trainee has a basic skills test at the start of his/her training, no other initial assessment is made. Trainees' experiences and previous qualifications or skills are not taken into consideration and do not inform the training programme. Staff responsible for initial guidance are not occupationally experienced and sometimes lack in-depth knowledge of programme requirements. Some poor advice has resulted in trainees not being placed on the most appropriate training programme or level of qualification. Trainees' individual training plans are not written in a format which trainees understand. Awarding bodies' codes are used to identify units numerically, without stating the title of the unit. Plans neither follow trainees' progress nor are they updated regularly. Interim unit achievement and progression are not recorded.

Management of training**Grade 2**

38. The management structure has undergone significant change in the last few months. Key staff have left the company, but this situation has been well managed with any impact on trainees being kept to a minimum. ETS has employed external consultants to manage the transition period, during which the structure of the company has been revised. Staff have been consulted about the changes to the company's operations and its strategic development. New job descriptions have been negotiated and developed, and staff responsibilities are clearly defined. The company reviewed its strategic aims and developed a recruitment strategy to meet both its short- and long-term needs. In the long term, ETS plans to develop its own training programmes to provide a more responsive service to trainees, rather than act as managing agents. To this end, the new structure identifies the need to recruit training experts with appropriate occupational backgrounds. The company achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1995 and is currently being reassessed. Staff are already assessors or are working towards those qualifications. The company's self-assessment report did not recognise all the strengths identified by inspectors, and the grade awarded is higher than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strategic vision shared by all staff
- ◆ staff development linked to strategic and operational needs
- ◆ rôles are developed in consultation with staff
- ◆ decision-making is informed by management information
- ◆ good communication throughout the organisation

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ management of on- and off-the-job training does not influence trainees' progress
- ◆ control of subcontractors lacks rigour

39. Staff share, understand and fully support the company's aims in providing a more responsive training service to trainees. Staff work together as a team to overcome the difficulties currently being faced by ETS as it implements changes to its operation. Staff development is identified through the staff appraisal system, and the company's current needs and its long-term objectives are the factors taken into account. Personal goals are also recognised and supported. Throughout the period of change, staff have been consulted about their rôle in the company, and job descriptions have been developed with staff. Regular staff meetings contribute to the effective lines of communication among all staff, including part-time members of the team and subcontractors. All staff participate in twice-yearly away-days, used to develop the team and their rôles. Operational targets are met regularly and performance is monitored. TEC targets and outcomes are reviewed monthly by managers.

40. ETS has good working relationships with employers, but exerts no influence over on-the-job training which is at the discretion of, and dependent on, employers. Opportunities are missed to further develop working relationships or manage training. The link between ETS and some subcontractors is weak. Although there are written agreements, these do not specify minimum service levels, detail training provision or specify how training is to be monitored. Contracts are not standardised and, in one case, do not make any reference to the quality or level of training expected. This lack of control and monitoring has resulted in training being poor and assessment irregular in two occupational areas.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

41. ETS has a good and long-standing quality assurance system and procedures which are regularly audited, including documented procedures, covering all areas of the training provision. There are regular meetings with staff to discuss quality issues. ETS subcontracts all training to colleges and other community-training groups. The views of trainees and employers are collected, evaluated and used to

inform training decisions. Early identification of problems has enabled the company to resolve issues raised by trainees at an early stage. The company has consistently improved the percentage of NVQ achievement since 1994. Internal verification is not standardised or consistent across all areas. The company employed external consultants during the self-assessment process to interview staff, trainees and major subcontractors. The company did not identify all its strengths in this area, and the grade awarded by inspectors is higher than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive quality assurance procedures
- ◆ regular audits of quality assurance system
- ◆ formal feedback from trainees and employers is regularly sought through surveys
- ◆ quality assurance procedures contribute to continuous improvement

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ quality standards for subcontractors are not set or monitored
- ◆ standard of internal verification varies across occupational areas

42. There is a dedication to quality and recognition of the importance of formal procedures which relate to all aspects of training. For example, there are quality procedures about initial assessment, interviews and induction. Procedures detail the learning resources and exercises to be used during each process. The quality assurance procedures are operational, annually updated, regularly audited and evaluated documents. There are regular audits by external consultants to identify any non-compliance with the quality assurance system. Recommendations are acted on to improve the quality of training. Quality assurance training is part of the company's staff development programme. A member of staff has been identified as the key contact with responsibility for quality.

43. Trainees are formally requested to evaluate their training after induction and at the end of training when they complete a leaver's questionnaire. There is also a mid-course evaluation, at college, for off-the-job training. Even where there are fewer than six trainees in an occupational area, feedback is sought directly from them. The company addresses issues promptly as they arise. Questionnaires completed by trainees and employers are systematically analysed and the results used to improve the quality of training.

44. There has been a range of measures to improve the quality of training across occupational areas. Extra support has been provided to information technology

trainees and prevocational trainees, improving attendance and rates of achievement. Retention rates have improved in all occupational areas. NVQ achievement rates have steadily improved over the last four years: in 1994-95 NVQ achievement was 25 per cent; in 1995-96, 59 per cent; in 1996-97, 81 per cent.

GOOD PRACTICE

Trainees with special learning needs highlighted problems in business administration. Following further investigation and negotiation with the subcontractor, ETS intervened and changed the assessment arrangements to benefit trainees.

45. Although quality assurance procedures are comprehensive, there are inconsistencies in the company's operation with subcontractors. Contracts are narrow in their approach and do not build in quality measures to monitor performance. Contracts with some subcontractors include details of expected levels of assessment and learning materials, where other contracts focus on health and safety issues and trainees' rights and responsibilities. There is no specific information or guidance on how to implement or measure quality or on the frequency of monitoring and reviewing of trainees' progress. A recent quality audit also highlights the need to update subcontracting arrangements.

46. Internal verification procedures are not consistently applied to all occupational areas. In business administration, internal verification is carried out to fit in with the college's academic year. Internal verification is not planned to focus on work-based trainees. There is no continuous sampling of assessment decisions in prevocational training or regular feedback to assessors. Internal verification in hairdressing, construction and leisure, sport and travel is satisfactory.