



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 2000

Tile Hill College

SUMMARY

Tile Hill College and its subcontractors provide good work-based and off-the job training in engineering. Trainees benefit from a wide range of industry-standard engineering equipment. Training in health, care and public services is less than satisfactory. There are some weaknesses in assessment. Although trainees' retention and achievement rates are improving, they are not yet satisfactory. The college's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Support resources are good and the support given to trainees is adequate. Although Tile Hill College has made many improvements to the management of work-based training, trainees' progress reviews do not result in adequately planned actions and targets. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Internal auditing, self-assessment and action planning are used effectively to maintain and improve the quality of work-based training, but there is insufficient use of data to monitor training.

GRADES

| OCCUPATIONAL AREAS | GRADE |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Engineering | 2 |
| Health, care & public services | 4 |

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of industry-standard resources in engineering
- ◆ effective re-structuring of off-the-job training in childcare
- ◆ strong promotion of equality of opportunity to prospective trainees
- ◆ good support for trainees by the training services division
- ◆ good college resources to support trainees
- ◆ effective re-structuring of the management of work-based training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow implementation of workplace assessments
- ◆ little integration of key skills
- ◆ low retention and achievement rates in care
- ◆ poor assessment practices in care
- ◆ weak reviews of trainees' progress and action planning
- ◆ inadequate tracking procedures
- ◆ some poor internal communication
- ◆ weak internal verification in care

INTRODUCTION

1. Tile Hill College was established in 1969 as a general further education college. Its main site at Tile Hill, a suburb of Coventry four miles from the city centre, serves the area on the west side of the city and the centres of population which lie between Coventry and Birmingham. The centre of Birmingham is 15 miles away. The college's other sites include specialist facilities for business training and a workshop for engineering, and outreach centres in the north of Coventry. In 1998-99, there were 8,750 students at the college. Of these, 1,228 were full time. The college employs 473 teaching and administrative staff. It offers a broad curriculum, with courses in engineering, performing arts, health, education, social work, business studies and information technology.

2. The college has contracts to provide work-based training with Birmingham and Solihull Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and with Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTE) which took the co-ordinating role for the inspection. At the time of the inspection, there were 251 TEC-funded trainees on work-based training, and 16 New Deal clients funded by the Employment Service. There were 150 modern apprentices, 45 national trainees and 56 trainees on other training programmes. The college provides work-based training for 185 trainees in engineering and for 28 trainees in health, care and public services. There are 38 trainees in other occupational areas, the numbers in each of which were too small to inspect. The college is a national centre for the training of engineers working in the passenger-carrying vehicle sector. The work-based and New Deal training are managed by a small administrative training services division based on the main college site. It was established in May 1998. The college's vice-principal has overall responsibility for its work. The division consists of a full-time manager and a team of five other staff who provide and co-ordinate administrative support for the training. Off-the-job training takes place in the college's eight schools. Heads of schools are responsible for the quality of the training and assessment. Some of the training is subcontracted to two other further education colleges, one in Coventry and the other in Birmingham.

3. The rate of unemployment in Coventry in 1999 was 4.7 per cent. This was similar to that of the West Midlands region as a whole, but higher than the national average of 4.4 per cent. Coventry has a long history of motor vehicle engineering and manufacturing. Seventeen per cent of the employees in Coventry and Warwickshire work in manufacturing. One in five of the manufacturing jobs is in vehicle assembly. The Tile Hill area of Coventry benefits from its proximity to the buoyant economies of Solihull and Birmingham. The proportion of the population of Coventry from minority ethnic communities is 6 per cent. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers in Coventry achieving five or more general certificates of secondary



education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 39.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Tile Hill College produced its second self-assessment report for work-based training in July 1999. It was updated in November 1999 in preparation for the inspection. The manager of the training services division, the vice-principal responsible for work-based training, and the college's senior manager responsible for quality assurance produced the report. It is highly detailed and well presented. Heads of the college's teaching schools produced the occupational area sections of the report. They consulted all relevant staff in the schools. The staff of the training services division contributed to the evaluation of the generic aspects of training. Employers, trainees and subcontractors did not contribute to the report. Senior managers of the college freely admit to serious problems in the organisation of work-based training in the past, and the report acknowledges that unsatisfactory training still exists in one occupational area. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the report were carefully considered and the evidence for them is clearly stated. The update indicates good progress against action points in the self-assessment report. The SAR claimed strengths which were no more than normal practice.

5. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 14 days with Tile Hill College during January 2000. The team worked jointly with Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspectors, sharing information and findings. Generic aspects and engineering were inspected jointly, but health, care and public services was not inspected by the FEFC. Forty-one work-based trainees were interviewed by Training Standards Council (TSC) inspectors. Seventeen employers were visited, and 17 workplace supervisors were interviewed. Twenty-four staff of the college and its subcontractors were interviewed. Inspectors examined trainees' portfolios, assessment and review records, college policies and procedures and a range of other records. They observed off-the-job work-based training sessions and an assessment the grades for which are recorded in the following table.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

| | GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 | GRADE 5 | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Engineering | | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Health, care & public services | | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 2

6. Tile Hill College has 185 trainees on work-based training programmes in engineering. Most of these are on the passenger-carrying vehicle training programme which has 121 trainees who are employed by organisations in all parts of the country. The trainees attend the college for blocks of about five or six weeks on a residential basis for off-the-job training. They are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 in maintaining and repairing passenger-carrying vehicles. The programmes are accredited by the national body for passenger transport vehicles.

7. Eleven locally based trainees on a light vehicle engineering training programme attend the college one day each week to work towards NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3. One of these trainees is a New Deal client. A further 33 trainees are employed by a major local car manufacturer. Tile Hill College has a contract for their training in engineering, but subcontracts the off-the-job elements to two other further education colleges. The remaining 20 trainees are on other engineering programmes.

8. Off-the-job training at the colleges includes theoretical and practical sessions. Trainees receive on-the-job training in the workplace, where they are assessed by a trainer from Tile Hill College. Trainees also work towards craft and technician qualifications, as well as numberpower and wordpower qualifications where appropriate. The self-assessment report identifies strengths and weaknesses and gives grades for each of the three aspects and for the different engineering programmes. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses identified, and with the overall grade for engineering which the college provided during the inspection.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of industry-standard resources
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ wide range of additional training opportunities taken by trainees
- ◆ well-planned on-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient workshop space for passenger-carrying vehicle engineering
- ◆ delays in workplace assessments

GOOD PRACTICE

Employers of trainees on the passenger-carrying vehicle engineering programme are very involved in the off-the-job training. Senior managers of the employers meet every term at the college. Before the meeting, they talk as a group to all the trainees to gather their views. The managers bring the trainees' views, as well as their own, into the meeting with the college staff.

9. The standard of off-the-job training is high. The light vehicle workshops at Tile Hill college are good. There is an ample supply of current motor vehicles. The vehicle body repair workshop is well resourced. It includes all the equipment found in a commercial repair workshop. Trainees work on real customers' vehicles during their practical off-the-job training as well as in the workplace. Foundation engineering training at the subcontractors is good. Training sessions are well designed with helpful supporting materials for both training and assessment. The resources for off-the-job training in passenger-carrying vehicle engineering are good. However, the workshop is located in temporary accommodation with insufficient space.

10. Trainees are able to supplement their NVQ training with a wide range of additional qualifications. These are usually craft or technician certificates appropriate to the occupational area which enhance trainees' knowledge and understanding. Guest speakers from industry are invited to discuss developments in the sector.

11. On-the-job training is well planned in the larger companies. A plan is produced at the beginning of each year setting out the areas of the company in which trainees work. They spend a fixed time in each area to give them the maximum experience. Towards the end of their training they specialise in particular areas. Staff have been slow to respond to changes in the awarding body requirements for the passenger-carrying vehicle qualifications. Workplace assessments have been delayed and some trainees in the second year of their programme have not yet been assessed. Action has been taken to increase the rate of assessment, and two new staff have been appointed. The achievement rate within the target period for trainees on the passenger-carrying vehicle training programme has been low. However, most trainees are continuing their training with the intention of achieving the qualification.

Health, care & public services

Grade 4

12. There are 28 trainees in health, care and public services. Nineteen are training in childcare, and nine in care for the elderly. Most are modern apprentices or national trainees. There are two New Deal clients. Trainees work towards NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3. Twenty-two trainees are employed and the rest are on work placements in schools, day nurseries, and residential homes. Trainees either attend college one day a week or one evening a week, or have individual tutorials with college staff. New Deal trainees attend a nursery nursing training programme in a college outreach centre. The childcare and care for the elderly programmes have recently been re-organised and new staff have been appointed. Trainees now receive off-the-job training together with students on full-time further education

courses. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment grade, but identified different strengths and weaknesses.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ some good on-the-job training
- ◆ effective improvements to off-the-job training in childcare
- ◆ flexible off-the-job training and assessment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak links between on- and off-the job training
- ◆ lack of integration of key skills
- ◆ poor practice in assessment
- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates

13. Some employers provide good on-the-job training with structured induction programmes and close supervision. Trainees work with qualified and experienced members of staff, many of whom provide good role models. Employers bring in specialist speakers to cover topics such as dementia. Some employers provide trainees with textbooks and other resources. Trainees are placed in different settings to widen their experience, and their responsibilities are increased as they gain confidence and competence.

14. Since September 1999, off-the-job training in childcare has been improved. The sessions are interesting, and trainees are keen to attend and take part. Staff have re-motivated trainees and encouraged group and individual work. The standard of trainees' work has improved. Childcare training sessions are held in well-equipped rooms, including a practice nursery. Key skills workshops are held in the learning resource centre in small groups with a key skills specialist.

15. The college provides off-the-job training at times to suit the trainees. There are whole-day and evening sessions, and individual coaching is provided in the workplace. Trainees can choose group or individual training as they prefer. Assessment is carried out at times which meet trainees' needs, including evenings and weekends. In addition to their NVQs, trainees can work towards certificates in first aid, lifting and handling, food hygiene and health and safety.

16. The links between on- and off-the-job training are weak. Employers are not given a plan of the off-the-job training and there are no records of what training takes place on-the-job. Some employers do not know which programme the trainee

is following. College staff do not make enough reference to the workplace in training sessions.

17. Assessment is poor. Childcare trainees answer written questions to test their knowledge. When programme requirements were changed nationally, staff did not respond quickly enough. As a result, trainees have had to answer additional questions to meet the new requirements. One childcare assessor does not leave copies of written feedback with trainees. Trainees are confused about what they have achieved and whether the assessment is successful. Some trainees have been on the care of the elderly programme for four to five months and have not been allocated an assessor or been observed at work. Assessments carried out in a care home by a workplace assessor are poorly recorded. Some staff are not yet qualified as assessors and all their work has to be countersigned. There are no qualified work-based assessors for care for the elderly. Assessors and verifiers on childcare programmes meet regularly, but those on the care of the elderly programmes do not.

18. Most key skills work is assessed separately from the vocational area. Opportunities for key skills assessment are missed when the trainees are assessed in the workplace. College tutors do not all fully understand key skills.

19. Both childcare and care programmes have poor retention and achievement rates. In 1997, 33 per cent of trainees left without completing their planned qualification, and no NVQs were obtained. In 1998, over half the trainees working towards the NVQ level 2 programme left without a qualification, and the overall achievement rate was 5 per cent. In 1999-2000, retention and achievement rates have improved, but at the time of the inspection it was too soon to tell whether they had reached a satisfactory level. Some care trainees who started on the programme in September 1999 had little in their portfolios at the time of the inspection to show that they were producing evidence for the NVQ.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

20. Tile Hill College has an equal opportunities policy which covers work-based training. The policy was last reviewed and updated in July 1999. Trainees are informed about equal opportunities at induction, and are given a booklet with information about their rights and responsibilities. Twenty-one per cent of the trainees are women and 5 per cent are from minority ethnic communities.

21. Statistical information is collected on trainees' background and analysed by the training services division. The division has developed an action plan to improve

equality of opportunity in work-based training. The college has an equal opportunities committee which meets every three months. The training services division is represented on the committee. The college has a complaints procedure which work-based trainees are entitled to use. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strong promotion of equality of opportunity in the recruitment of trainees
- ◆ effective implementation of equality of opportunity

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of awareness of equal opportunities by trainees and employers
- ◆ insufficient staff development in equal opportunities

22. The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive. The college promotes equal opportunities by reaching out to different communities in the Coventry area. Its outreach centres in the north of the city are located in minority ethnic communities. The main college site is accessible to those using wheelchairs. Families have been encouraged to come to the college. A family “Dyslexia Day” held on a Saturday attracted over 30 people, including parents with dyslexic children. The college has some new projects for disaffected and vulnerable groups to promote social inclusion which are relevant to work-based training.

23. The number of trainees from minority ethnic groups on work-based programmes exceeds their proportion of the local population. For example, eight of the 16 clients on the New Deal programme are from minority ethnic communities. The training services division offers an extended NVQ level 1 programme to enable trainees with special training needs to remain on the programme for up to two years rather than the usual period of one year. This allows trainees with learning difficulties a better opportunity to become ready for work. Good work placements are provided for trainees with learning difficulties. They have the opportunity to experience work and training in the same kinds of organisations as other trainees.

24. Some trainees have little understanding of equal opportunities. They are not aware of the college’s policy or of its relevance to their own training, experience and behaviour. Few recall discussing equal opportunities during their induction. Some employers have a college booklet, but are unaware that it contains the college’s equal opportunities policy. They have a low awareness of their responsibility for equal opportunities regarding other trainees.

25. Staff in the training services division have received no training in equal opportunities. In the college as a whole, there has been a delay in providing staff with equal opportunities training. The need was identified in 1998 but no action has yet been taken. Nevertheless, staff are aware of the importance of equality of opportunity.

Trainee support

Grade 3

26. Trainees are referred for recruitment onto the passenger-carrying vehicle engineering programme by their employers. Most other trainees are referred to the college for work-based training by the careers service. They are invited to attend the college before starting their training to assess the suitability of the training on offer. All trainees take part in college inductions. Trainees who have identified learning difficulties have an additional induction programme. On this they have the opportunity to undertake first aid, health and safety and food hygiene certificates, and to begin to develop employability skills. All trainees complete a literacy and numeracy test. Trainees who require additional support in basic skills attend the college one day a week. Group training sessions in key skills are provided in the learning support centre as part of trainees' off-the-job training. A tutorial system provides help and advice on personal and social problems as well as training issues. College staff make regular visits to trainees in the workplace. The self-assessment report identified many strengths and few weaknesses. The strengths were mainly concerned with the college's pastoral support systems. Inspectors found that many of these were no more than normal practice. They identified a substantial weakness in the reviewing of trainees' progress which was not included in the self-assessment report, and awarded a lower grade than given in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good college support resources
- ◆ good initial assessment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak reviews of trainees' progress and action planning

27. Trainees are well supported by staff in the teaching schools and by staff of the training services division. Staff in the training services division provide good pastoral support to trainees who call in to their office. Trainees are confident about asking for help with a wide range of concerns. These include difficult personal issues such as domestic problems, childcare provision, homelessness and court appearances.

Staff are well aware of the individual needs of trainees. Trainees who experience difficulties in their workplace receive more frequent visits. The college's resources for student support are good, and they are available to trainees. The resources include accommodation, welfare, careers advice and guidance services. The college has a school of learning support in addition to the vocational schools. The staff of the school of learning support specialise in helping students, including work-based trainees, with learning difficulties or disabilities.

28. All trainees are given tests to measure their ability in literacy, numeracy and information technology on entry. If the initial assessment indicates that a trainee has difficulty in numeracy or literacy then support for basic skills is included in his or her individual training plan. Initial assessment is used to select the programme trainees will follow. For example, trainees are only selected for modern apprenticeships if they are capable of achieving the necessary key skill levels. Otherwise they are advised to join a national traineeship programme. Depending on their employer, trainees in engineering often take a mechanical aptitude test at the selection stage, as well as the basic and key skills tests. There is no written procedure for the accreditation of prior learning. However, in practice, appropriate credit is given to trainees on the passenger-carrying vehicle training programme, which accounts for most of the college's work-based trainees. Trainees who already have a light vehicle engineering qualification are not required to attend one or more blocks of off-the-job training, which repeat material they have already learned.

29. Trainees' action plans and reviews are not adequately completed. The records of progress review meetings contain insufficient information. Other than on passenger carrying vehicle programmes, targets are rarely set in action plans and timescales are not identified either for assessment or for completion of personal or vocational goals. The extent to which employers are involved in trainees' reviews varies widely, and some have not been involved at all. Some employers have little understanding about what the trainee is doing in off-the-job training and how this relates to training in the workplace.

Management of training

Grade 4

30. The manager of the training services division has been in post for 10 months after the departure of the two previous managers in rapid succession. Since the current manager's appointment, there have been many changes in the management of work-based training. The college has a staff appraisal system, and staff development is recorded. The college is accredited as meeting the Investors in People Standard. Inspectors identified more weaknesses than those given in the self-assessment report and awarded a lower grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective re-structuring of the management of work-based training
- ◆ good communication with employers and external organisations

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate tracking procedures
- ◆ some poor internal communications
- ◆ slow implementation of staff development
- ◆ insufficient work experience for New Deal clients

31. The recent re-structuring of work-based training has led to many improvements in its management. It has clarified roles and responsibilities. It has ensured that responsibility for training lies with the occupational specialists in the teaching schools. It has given effective administrative support to the schools by the authority given to the training services division. The staff in the division communicate with trainees, employers and tutors ensuring that reviews are carried out on time and that records are maintained.

32. Employers are given comprehensive information outlining their responsibilities for health, safety and equal opportunities, grievance procedures and the training programme requirements. Subcontractors are well managed. They are visited each term. Action points are identified and target dates set for changes and improvements. The college arranges regular meetings with employers for the different occupational areas. These meetings provide an effective forum for discussion on a range of relevant issues relating to the training programme and the type of work and skills that employers want their trainees to gain and practise during the off-the-job training. Guest speakers are invited to some of these meetings where employers are given up-to-date information on national initiatives and changes to qualifications. The college has many productive and wide-ranging external partnerships with a range of organisations. The college represents further education on national care bodies. It is a member of a local minority ethnic alliance and is involved in Coventry's employment partnership.

33. The procedures for tracking trainees' progress are inadequate at all levels in the work-based training programmes. Trainees' progress is not tracked effectively in their portfolios. Reviews are poorly recorded, and the training plans are not updated. Although individual records of progress are maintained in the trainees' files there is no easily accessible overview of trainees' progress. Targets are frequently missed and trainees often do not achieve their NVQs within the specified time.

POOR PRACTICE

This is an example of non-compliance with a funding contract. One New Deal trainee has only 12 hours organised study each week. The contract requires a minimum of 30 hours a week.

34. There are not enough formal meetings of the work-based training manager and heads of teaching schools. Poor internal communications have left trainees unsure of what was happening on their programme. One trainee did not turn up at her work placement on the first day because information was not passed on by the teaching school to the training services division's staff. The current arrangements do not encourage the systematic sharing of good practice across all programmes. There are no procedures for new staff to be supported by those with successful experience. There are formal agreements with the subcontractors about what is to be provided, but none between the teaching schools and the training services division.

35. The college's staff development activities have not kept pace with needs. Some staff have been working towards NVQ assessor qualifications for a long time. This has delayed the more frequent availability of assessors, so trainees have been waiting for assessment. Staff have been given insufficient training in key skills. Staff have not received training to improve the quality of trainees' progress reviews. A number of requests for staff development have not been followed up within a reasonable time.

36. The management of the training of the small number of New Deal clients is not satisfactory. The college provides job-search training for most New Deal clients between terms and during the half-term breaks, but too few clients have had the opportunity for work experience.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

37. The training services division has written quality assurance procedures which define the management and training processes needed to ensure a satisfactory standard of training. Monthly audits check that key stages in training and support are being carried out by the teaching schools. The college collects and analyses data on student achievement and retention. Internal verification is the responsibility of the teaching schools. The standard of training is reviewed with the teaching schools involved in work-based training. Students' experience of the college is monitored through perception surveys, discussion groups and the use of comment cards. Work-based trainees are included within this. The self-assessment report identified strengths and weaknesses, including the weakness in internal verification. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified, and with the college's grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective internal audits of work-based training
- ◆ good use of action planning to manage improvements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient analysis and use of data on work-based training
- ◆ weak internal verification in care programmes

38. The college introduced the current written quality assurance procedures and the internal audit arrangements because it recognised that essential stages in work-based training, such as regular trainees' progress reviews, were being missed. The procedures and the audits provide an effective means for the college to check, through the training services division, that the teaching schools are doing what is required at the proper time.

39. The college began formal self-assessment in 1995-96, and the process is well established in the teaching schools. Regular self-assessment with action planning is the college's principal method of improving quality. Action plans are reviewed every six months. The records clearly show how regular self-assessment and resulting action plans are used to manage continuous improvement in the college. Separate self-assessment for work-based training is relatively new. The self-assessment process has been completed twice, and detailed action plans have led to improvements in work-based training. In addition, the teaching schools have held two termly programme review team meetings for college staff involved in work-based training. At these meetings issues are discussed, good practice is shared, and targets for action are agreed. It is too soon to judge the impact of the two meetings on the training. The college has a well-established lesson observation system, but the schools do not make systematic use of its findings.

POOR PRACTICE

This is an example of poor practice in internal verification. In an area of engineering there is only one internal verifier. He also assesses trainees' competence but has no one available to verify his assessments.

40. The college collects and records data on the retention and achievements of all its students and trainees, but has not analysed work-based trainees' data separately. Data are not available to show trends in the retention and achievement of work-based trainees. The college's systems for gathering feedback from students are extensive. The questions asked in surveys of student opinion cover the quality of the teaching and the learners' experience in lessons. However, the feedback from work-based trainees has only recently been separately analysed, and the results have not yet been used to make improvements. There is no system for obtaining feedback from care trainees about their on-the-job training. Feedback from engineering employers is obtained systematically through regular meetings. Targets for achievement and retention are set on engineering programmes.



41. The internal verification of work-based training is unsatisfactory on care programmes. There is no planned schedule for internal verification, and the assessments are not regularly verified. There is insufficient feedback on verification to assessors. There are too few qualified internal verifiers.