



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT

JUNE 1998

REINSPECTION REPORT

MAY 1999

Industrial Training (Skegness) Ltd

SUMMARY

Industrial Training (Skegness) Ltd, in Lincolnshire, provides training programmes in engineering and hairdressing. At the time of the first inspection the training in each occupational area was satisfactory. The company had an effective equal opportunities framework. The training centre's accommodation was well designed and provided access for those with mobility difficulties. Support for trainees with additional learning needs was good. The quality assurance system was informal, and there was no evaluation of the programme or analysis of trainees' achievements. Management of training was unsatisfactory. Industrial Training was reinspected nine months after the original report was published. Considerable improvements have been made to the management of training. Management-information systems give managers and staff accurate and timely information. Staff are given accurate feedback on their performance. Policies and procedures to ensure consistency have been further developed.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	3
Hair & beauty	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Management of training	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective equal opportunities framework
- ◆ effective use of management information to measure performance
- ◆ good support for trainees with additional learning needs
- ◆ strong links between staff development and the needs of the organisation
- ◆ good internal communications
- ◆ comprehensive induction process

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ lack of awareness of trainees' progress and achievement
- ◆ poor trainee reviews
- ◆ poor trainee records

INTRODUCTION

1. Industrial Training (Skegness) Ltd, formed in 1975, is a small privately owned company which operates within a 35-mile radius of Skegness in Lincolnshire. It originally offered training in various vocational areas and moved to its current premises in 1984. The hairdressing training unit was added in 1991, and beauty therapy was developed in 1995. In 1997, the working name was altered to the Skegness College of Vocational Training. Some of its work is funded through contracts with Lincolnshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), and other work is either privately funded or funded through the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). There are currently 44 trainees, which is slightly more than there were at the time of first inspection. Trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 to 3, through modern apprenticeships, national traineeships and other youth training programmes. Industrial Training also has a contract with the Employment Service to supply New Deal training through the full-time education and training strand in hairdressing. New Deal programmes are provided for adults over the age of 25.

2. Skegness is a popular seaside resort on the east coast. The major industries are leisure and tourism, but others include motor vehicle, hairdressing and retail. Unemployment in Skegness is 4.6 per cent, compared with the Lincolnshire average of 3.7 per cent. Employment in the town is highly subject to seasonal fluctuation. Public transport is poor in this predominantly rural area. Transport issues often govern which college trainees attend, as well as the timings of courses. Skegness has few people from minority ethnic groups, amounting to less than 1 per cent of the population.

3. The proportion of students staying in education in Lincolnshire after the age of 16 is 68.1 per cent, which is slightly higher than the East Midlands average of 65.2 per cent. In 1998, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 42.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. Seven per cent of school leavers in Lincolnshire take places on government-funded training schemes. Industrial Training competes for trainees with two grammar schools, four high schools, local colleges and other training providers in the area.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Industrial Training completed its first self-assessment report one month before inspection. All staff were involved in the process of compiling evidence for the report, from which the manager prepared the final document. This report failed to recognise some strengths in the engineering programme and weaknesses in the hairdressing programme. The grades awarded by inspectors for the generic aspects, with the exception of quality assurance, were lower than those recorded in the self-assessment report. An action plan, which followed inspection, was used to address the strengths and weaknesses identified by self-assessment and inspection. The second self-assessment report and action plan were more realistic and the strengths and weaknesses were accurate.

5. For the first inspection, a team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at Industrial Training during June 1998. Engineering and hairdressing programmes, including the customer service aspect, were inspected. Retail and administration programmes had been discontinued. Inspectors examined company and awarding body documents. They met staff from the company, employers, subcontracted training providers and trainees. Inspectors visited 11 workplaces in addition to the company's own site. They examined assessment records, trainees' work and portfolios and observed four instruction sessions.

6. Reinspection was carried out by a team of two inspectors for a total of four days in June 1999. They visited three employers, one subcontracted training provider and interviewed staff and trainees. They examined documents relating to trainees, management and quality assurance.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 3

7. There were 12 engineering trainees at the time of inspection, all employed: 10 motor vehicle trainees taking NVQs at levels 2 and 3 (through youth training, including modern apprenticeships), one welding trainee (about to complete NVQ level 3) and an electronics trainee who had just completed level 2. Trainees spend one day each week at local colleges, where they receive instruction in the practical and theoretical aspects of their work. They spend the rest of the time at work, where they are visited by staff from Industrial Training and assessors from the colleges. Inspectors judged the provision to be better than that proposed in the self-assessment.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-motivated trainees who take responsibility for their own learning

- ◆ good working relationships between employers and staff
- ◆ well-resourced off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor information to employers on trainees' training requirements
- ◆ employers not invited to planning meetings
- ◆ irregular visits by the subcontractor to trainees' workplaces

8. Trainees receive individual attention, where necessary, throughout their programme. College staff also guide trainees and ensure that any work which cannot be carried out in work placement is completed in college. Most placements are with well-established, reputable companies offering good training opportunities. Work placements have reasonable levels of equipment and experienced staff.

9. Employers are not provided with any information on the requirements of the trainees' programmes or any explanation of the NVQ structure. This prevents staff from being able to respond, with confidence, to questions raised by trainees. Employers are not invited to either the provider's staff meetings or college meetings to discuss training programmes. Trainees are assessed in the workplace at irregular intervals. Industrial Training has not established clear guidelines detailing the assessment requirements. All work placements are equipped to deliver training up to NVQ level 2, but some lack the resources to deliver training to level 3. Trainees frequently have problems with accumulating work-based evidence for this level. The colleges seek to remedy this situation by arranging off-the-job training and assessment, where necessary.

Hair & beauty

Grade 3

10. The hairdressing programme has 13 trainees following modern apprenticeships, five on national traineeships and four youth training trainees under the 'fast forward' brand name. Twenty-one trainees are employed. Off-the-job training is delivered by Industrial Training. All trainees attend the centre one day each week for practical and theory classes. Twenty-five per cent of trainees also attend in the evening for manicure and ear-piercing classes. Trainees' progress is reviewed every 12 weeks in their workplace by Industrial Training staff. Success rates have been slowly improving over the last three years and are now high, with 90 per cent of trainees achieving a qualification.

11. Industrial Training offers all hairdressing trainees the opportunity to achieve the customer service NVQ. Currently, there are 10 trainees completing level 2 and two trainees completing level 3. During 1996-97, all trainees on the customer service programme achieved NVQ level 2. Inspectors identified other weaknesses than those indicated in the self-assessment report and awarded a lower grade than that given by

the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good support for trainees by employers
- ◆ well-resourced training centres especially for information technology skills
- ◆ well-motivated trainees
- ◆ positive working relationships between trainees and tutors
- ◆ good achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor understanding by employers and trainees of the training programmes
- ◆ lack of co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ ineffective training and assessment plans
- ◆ lack of awareness of trainees' progress and achievement
- ◆ failure to set realistic progression targets
- ◆ poor placement-matching for customer service qualification at level 3

12. Trainees receive good support from tutors and employers. Trainees generally are well motivated and attend sessions regularly. Tutors ensure that trainees who have to miss classes are given the opportunity to cover the work or attend other classes. Staff at the training centre are well qualified and occupationally experienced. The range of tools, equipment and products available in the training centre is appropriate, and there is access to clients through the public salon. Employers offer good-quality placements. Key skills are assessed significantly for modern apprentices in their third year. There is little awareness of key skills among other trainees and employers.

13. Trainees attend customer service sessions at the centre as part of their hairdressing day-release programme. They use the computer room to provide assessment evidence which is not obtainable from their usual work activities. Projects and assignments designed for the trainees are linked to the hairdressing environment. Trainees working towards NVQ level 3 are working in a leisure centre. One of them is not working in a supervisory capacity which is a necessary condition for gaining evidence at this level.

14. Employers and trainees are confused about the different training programmes. Some do not know which type of programme they are on. Training and assessment plans do not help trainees to understand what they need to do next; they do not inform employers how they can best contribute to the trainees' progress. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is lacking, relying on trainees telling employers what they are doing at the training centre. The recording of achievement is poor. Trainees do not know where they are in the programme or what they have achieved. In some theory sessions, tutors plan the activities well, so that all the trainees are engaged and interested. In others, tutors are less confident on some technical details and fail to bring all trainees into the discussion. Tutors give

constructive feedback to trainees after assessment.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

15. Industrial Training has a clear equal opportunities policy which is reviewed regularly. Equal opportunities issues are addressed at all staff meetings. Marketing literature is regularly monitored for bias and has recently been reviewed and revised. The company underestimated its strengths in this aspect in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-designed accommodation allowing access for those with physical disabilities
- ◆ detailed action plan and rigorous review
- ◆ basic skills support available to all trainees who need it

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no evaluation of recruitment statistics

16. An effective equal opportunities framework has been developed by staff. The clear policy statement is communicated to all staff and trainees at induction. Industrial Training's staff are involved in external marketing to schools and the general public through local careers exhibitions, presentations and at county events, where displays are presented to promote the programmes and job skills. Individual staff are also active in local working groups developing strategies to ensure access to training for all potential trainees.

17. Equal opportunities data are collected at entry to the programmes. This information is not analysed or used to inform improvements.

Trainee support

Grade 3

18. Industrial Training is a small organisation. All staff know the trainees well and work hard to ensure that they are given every opportunity to complete their qualification and find suitable work. Trainees are encouraged to seek additional qualifications, with arrangements made for them to do so. Inspectors awarded a slightly lower grade than that suggested in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good support for trainees with additional learning needs
- ◆ good pastoral support and guidance

- ◆ effective induction processes

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor initial assessment
- ◆ poor reviews of trainees' progress and achievement
- ◆ lack of formal action plans for trainees
- ◆ unsatisfactory documents

19. All trainees go through an induction programme on entry to the centre, helping them to settle quickly into their work. Trainees who miss the formal induction have it at a later date. Trainees attending other centres receive an induction there. Trainees are assessed on entry to the centre – those with additional learning needs receive help through programmes such as wordpower and numberpower. These programmes are delivered discretely, with confidentiality maintained. Programme targets are extended or adjusted to meet the needs of the individual trainee. This has fostered high levels of achievement for these trainees.

20. Pastoral support and guidance are given through one-to-one tutorials. Trainees' reviews do not include action-planning. Reviews are general to work performance and do not review progress towards the NVQ.

Management of training

Grade 2

21. Industrial Training is a small private training company employing four full-time and six part-time staff. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the training centre, as well as co-ordinating the training and support for trainees attending a local college for their theoretical training in engineering. Hairdressing training provided by Industrial Training at the centre is managed by a full-time co-ordinator. A full-time senior hairdressing tutor, plus three part-time tutors, are used to provide in-centre hairdressing and beauty therapy training and assessment and trainee support. A full-time administrator is employed to carry out general office duties, including the maintenance and updating of trainees' records and the preparation of TEC contract returns. Industrial Training has produced a set of documented procedures for staff recruitment and selection, staff appraisal and staff development.

22. The main weaknesses identified by the first inspection were:

- poor management-information systems
- no training contracts for subcontractors
- no evaluation of programme training and achievement

- unrealistic planning of trainees' progression

Considerable improvements have been made in line with the action plan. Industrial Training's second self-assessment report re-graded this aspect at grade 3. Inspectors identified further strengths and awarded a grade 2.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strong links between staff development and the needs of the business
- ◆ good internal communication
- ◆ effective use of management-information system to measure performance
- ◆ staff effectively deployed and clear about their roles

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some performance indicators not clearly defined for subcontractors

23. Staff appraisals are planned to take place every six months for full-time staff and every three months for managers. Staff development needs are recorded and collated to consider against the business plan. Priority is given to any staff development which is linked to business growth. Regular appraisals result in clear business targets at an appropriate level being set for all staff. There is a clearly defined staffing structure. All staff have a current job description. Staff are highly motivated and keen to improve. They are well deployed and very clear about their roles and responsibilities.

24. There is open communication between all staff, trainees, employers and subcontractors. Staff meetings take place on a weekly basis and everyone is encouraged to contribute. Meetings for part-time hairdressing staff are rotated each week to ensure that all staff can attend on a fortnightly basis. Company meetings take place each month and are attended by full-time staff. Performance against company profiles is a regular agenda item at all meetings. Regular supportive contact is maintained with employers to seek their views and support in the training process.

25. Management-information systems have been developed since the last inspection. Information is now collected against several essential performance indicators and reports of performance are discussed at management meetings. For example, marketing materials and activities have been reviewed to address the issue of a lack of male applicants to hairdressing programmes. The system is easy to use, and produces useful information. All full-time staff now have a good understanding of levels of performance and the impact on the business. Performance targets have been set for managers against some of the indicators set in the business plan. There are now contracts for all subcontracted providers. The contracts specify levels of performance and expected targets. Regular contact is maintained with college staff by telephone and visits. One report each term is required from all tutors. Monitoring

of the quality of training sessions is not planned or structured. There is no established formal contract performance review process. Agreements with employers have been implemented. They clearly identify employers' responsibilities to trainees.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

26. Industrial Training is recognised as an Investor in People and meets the requirements of its awarding body. It has a well-documented quality system, which contains policies and procedures. In practice, this system is applied informally. Information is gathered and exchanged verbally between staff and trainees. Record-keeping is poor. Inspectors confirmed most of the judgements made in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ improved trainee achievements
- ◆ targets shared by all staff
- ◆ good informal exchange of information

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of rigorous internal quality assurance system
- ◆ inconsistent application of systems and procedures
- ◆ poor trainee records
- ◆ weak monitoring of health and safety
- ◆ poor placement/employer contracts

27. Trainees' files contain many examples of incomplete or missing documents. Files are stored in different places, making it difficult for staff to have access to all the relevant documents at their meetings with trainees. Trainees' individual training plans are used solely for auditing purposes and are kept in a separate file. Individual training plans are not used and contain information which is outdated.

28. Neither trainees nor employers are asked to evaluate the programme or their contribution to it. Colleges ask trainees to complete questionnaires giving their views about their programmes. The monitoring by the company of health and safety requirements in the workplace is informal. Documents used are simply tick lists. Although they identify points for action, they do not record evidence of follow-up visits to ensure that actions have been taken. Review records do not show what has been checked or that Employer Liability Insurance renewal has taken place.