



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JULY 1998

REINSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 1999

# Manchester Training

## SUMMARY

Manchester Training offers good training in retailing and customer service. It is careful to assure equality of opportunity for all of its trainees and the support offered to trainees is satisfactory. Management structures in the company are sound. At the time of the first inspection, training in business administration was poorly planned. There were also considerable weaknesses in the training offered in engineering. Quality assurance systems focused on monitoring recorded procedures, rather than seeking to improve standards of training and assessment. Manchester Training was reinspected 16 months after the original inspection took place. Significant improvements had been made within engineering. All assessment now takes place in well-equipped workplaces and there is a flexible programme of off-the-job training which is designed to meet trainees' needs. The company has developed detailed procedures to ensure that the standard of assessment practice is carefully monitored. In business administration, however, little progress has been made to address the weaknesses that this monitoring has identified. Training and assessment in business administration is still poor. Quality assurance focuses on ensuring that staff comply with written procedures and externally set targets. There is still insufficient emphasis upon reviewing activity as part of a process of continuous improvement.

**As a result of the reinspection of Manchester Training, the original published report text for those areas which have been reinspected, has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings introduction have also been amended to reflect the findings of 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
Engineering	5
Business administration	4
Retailing & customer service	2

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Engineering	3
Business administration	4

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear and well-documented allocation of management responsibilities
- ◆ comprehensive staff appraisal and development system



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- ◆ strong commitment to equality of opportunity
- ◆ good fork-truck training
- ◆ good-quality work placements

**KEY WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ poor training and assessment in business administration
- ◆ poor NVQ achievement in motor vehicle and business administration
- ◆ insufficient focus on continuous improvement

## INTRODUCTION

1. Manchester Training provides a range of training services to the road haulage and warehousing industries, in Greater Manchester. The company was established in 1968 to pool the resources of several road transport companies. The initial group membership of 120 companies has declined. The organisation's main objective is still to provide training for the road haulage industry. In 1995, the company won a national training award. In 1998, one of the company's adult trainees won a trainee-of-the-year award from the local training and enterprise council (TEC). Manchester Training became a limited company in September 1999.

2. The company holds contracts for youth and adult training with Rochdale and Oldham TECs. It has youth training contracts with Manchester TEC and Bolton and Bury TEC. At the time of the original inspection, there was also a residual contract for youth training with ELTEC. At the time of the first inspection, there were 228 youth trainees and 16 adult trainees. Twenty-four motor-vehicle trainees were on modern apprenticeships. There are now 316 youth trainees and 16 adult trainees. Twenty-three trainees are modern apprentices, 114 are national trainees and 179 trainees are on other government-funded youth training programmes. Four of the adult trainees are on New Deal programmes. Trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 in distribution and warehousing operations, fork-truck operations, vehicle-parts distribution and supply, customer service, vehicle mechanical and electronic systems, vehicle body fitting & repair and administration. Some trainees on both the youth and adult programmes also achieve a fork-truck operators' certificate during training.

3. In addition to its TEC-funded work, Manchester Training provides commercial training for local companies and resettlement training under a Ministry of Defence contract. It provides facilities for vehicle inspectorate training. Manchester Training does not subcontract any of its training or assessment.

4. Unemployment across the TEC areas covered by Manchester Training ranges from 2.7 per cent in Bury to 6.9 per cent in Manchester, compared with the national average of 3.8 per cent. Within the Greater Manchester region, youth unemployment (16 to 19 years) stands at 8.1 per cent. Employment opportunities in the sectors covered by Manchester Training are good. Minority ethnic groups make up 4.6 per cent of Manchester's population.

5. In the Greater Manchester area, over 55 per cent of school leavers progress into full-time education. The number of school leavers who continue in full-time education is increasing, while the number of young people participating in government-funded training programmes is decreasing. In 1998, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Manchester was 30.2 per cent compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. Manchester Training produced its first self-assessment report in May 1998, with the support of Bolton and Bury TEC. The company's management team compiled the report, with staff contributing information on the occupational sectors. Some of the judgements made by the company about the management of training, quality assurance and training in the retailing sector were found to be accurate. Inspectors found additional strengths in the support given by the company to its trainees and the ways in which it assures equality of opportunity. Significant weaknesses were found in business administration and motor-vehicle training which had not been identified in the company's self-assessment report. A new self-assessment report and a summary report were submitted for the reinspection process. An action plan prepared following the first inspection was used to address the weaknesses identified in both the self-assessment and inspection. The second self-assessment report described the re-organisation that had followed the first inspection and gave a detailed picture of the changes that had been made within the company. This self-assessment provided a more realistic picture of Manchester Training's strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in this report. They identified additional weaknesses in business administration, where the company had made slow progress in addressing the weaknesses identified during the first inspection.

7. During the first inspection, five inspectors spent a total of 20 days at Manchester Training during July 1998. During this time, they interviewed staff and management from the company. They spoke to trainees in the company's training centre and at work. They interviewed employers and the trainees' managers. They observed formal training sessions in the training centre, as well as coaching, monitoring and assessment sessions in the workplace. Trainees' files and portfolios, employers' files, documentation and evidence from external assessments and reviews were examined. All the occupational sectors covered by the company were inspected, with the exception of management, in which there was only one trainee.

8. Reinspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors over a total of 12 days. They interviewed 29 trainees, 11 staff from Manchester Training and 12 employers. They examined documents relating to trainees including portfolios, assessment records and quality assurance documents. Inspectors observed one off-the-job training session.

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering (motor vehicle)

**Grade 3**

9. Manchester Training has 92 trainees working towards NVQs in motor vehicle. There are 18 modern apprentices, 23 national trainees and 51 trainees on other government-funded youth training programmes. Trainees work in two main trade areas: vehicle mechanics and body repair. Sixty-five trainees are working towards NVQs in vehicle mechanical and electronic systems at level 2, with a further 13 trainees at level 3. Eleven trainees are working towards body repair NVQs at level 2 with a further three trainees at level 3. Forty-one of the trainees are employed, with a further 51 placed with motor trade employers throughout the three TEC areas of Bury, Oldham and Rochdale. Work placements are vetted prior to trainees starting training. The company's marketing team reviews placements to ensure that they will offer trainees suitable work environments and allow them to complete their NVQs. Employers range from small privately owned garages to large franchised dealerships. Trainees attend training sessions on a day- or block-release basis at the premises of Manchester Training. Practical training takes place in the workplace. Assessment takes place primarily in the workplace and can be supplemented by assessment in the training centre. The following weaknesses were identified at the first inspection:

- ◆ assessment not carried out to lead body and motor-vehicle industry standards
- ◆ external verifiers' requirements not addressed
- ◆ inadequate tools and equipment at the training centre
- ◆ key skills not integrated with vocational training
- ◆ lack of continuity with trainers and assessors
- ◆ lack of support for portfolio development
- ◆ no qualified bodywork trainer
- ◆ over-reliance of assessment by witness testimony
- ◆ poor health and safety practices at the training centre
- ◆ poor NVQ achievement rate
- ◆ poorly structured off-the-job training
- ◆ programmes requirements not met by training workshop vehicles and units

10. An action plan and its recent self-assessment report outlined the measures which Manchester Training is taking to address these weaknesses. The new self-assessment report accurately identified two strengths and one weakness in this area. Inspectors identified further strengths and weaknesses as well as major improvements in motor vehicle training since the first inspection, and awarded the same grade as that given by Manchester Training.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good rapport among trainees, work-based supervisors and trainers
- ◆ trainees placed with well-equipped motor vehicle companies
- ◆ widespread workplace assessment
- ◆ flexible programme of training and assessment

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor NVQ achievement rates
- ◆ reviews lack clear targets
- ◆ key skills training not fully established

11. Significant improvements have been made since the first inspection, and the company has invested in new staff and equipment. A head of department of motor vehicle engineering has been appointed and the majority of weaknesses found at the last inspection have been eliminated. There is a good rapport among the trainees, training staff and work-based supervisors. They work well as a team and are keen to make improvements and rectify the weaknesses identified. Trainees value the quality of the tuition and support that they receive from the trainers and assessors.

12. The training advisors visit employers regularly. Trainees are placed with well-equipped retail motor-vehicle companies which provide the full range of work and evidence required for the NVQ. Most are major companies or franchises of larger businesses. Trainees are in a position to work on modern vehicles and also to use state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment and tools. They also have the opportunity to attend manufacturers' courses and be involved in up-to-date vehicle testing. Assessment is now carried out primarily in the workplace, taking advantage of the excellent workplace resources that are available. Some assessments are carried out at short notice, at the request of the trainee, to which the motor vehicle assessors are more than willing to respond. Although some investment has been made in the centre workshops, the workshops are only used for consolidation of background knowledge and those assessments which cannot be covered in the workplace. The use of witness testimony has been reduced considerably and replaced by work-based assessment wherever possible. Since workshops have been updated, they have adequate resources and working practices are now satisfactory.

13. With the additional staff support there is now more time to address the problem of support for portfolio building. A fully qualified bodywork trainer has been appointed. Off-the-job training is carried out as required at the centre. The training assessor, the trainee and work-based supervisor work together to decide what training will best suit the needs of the trainee and the type of work that is due to be covered on the job in the near future. Based on this information, a selection is made from a list of pre-planned training sessions which cover all the systems found on motor vehicles. Trainees are able to select either a one-day session or a block of training. Training sessions are held in a classroom which is suitable for small

groups. The topics that have been taught are communicated to the employer and the training assessor and a note is made in the trainee's NVQ tracking sheet. Confirmation tests take place at the end of each training day. Trainees are able to re-book the same training if required or are able to select another session from the training menu.

14. Achievement rates for NVQs are still poor. Thirty-seven per cent of those trainees who left their programme in 1998-99 successfully completed their NVQs, which is the same proportion as at the time of the first inspection. The company is tackling this problem in a range of ways, such as increasing the level of individual support for trainees and the improved vetting of placements to ensure their suitability.

15. During the frequent reviews, trainees are asked about the type of work they are doing, the type of evidence they are collecting and about pastoral issues. However, targets for the next review are of a general nature and state only that the trainee should continue working towards their qualification. They do not specifically state the type of work that is to be done, the type of evidence to be collected or the type of assessment opportunities that are to be considered.

16. A key skills' strategy has been implemented since the first inspection. This has involved two members of staff achieving the key skills practitioners award, the training of assessors, introductory sessions for trainees, and informing employers through the use of key skills booklets. However, this activity is recent and not all trainees have attended the introductory sessions. Employers have received the booklets but most still do not have a good understanding of key skills. Some trainees have started to build up key skills evidence but this does not happen as a matter of course. Help is being sought from an information technology consultant in order to integrate key skills into motor vehicle training. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this action.

## **Business administration**

## **Grade 4**

17. Business administration is a relatively new area for Manchester Training and 1998-99 was only the third year in which it has been offered. There are now 45 trainees, an increase of 31 since the first inspection. One trainee is a modern apprentice, 22 are national trainees and a further 22 trainees are on other government-funded training programmes. Trainees are employed across a wide range of businesses including garages, solicitors' offices, wholesalers, small manufacturing and large national companies. Training and assessment are carried out entirely on employers' premises. There are frequent visits by an appropriately qualified assessor from the company. During the first inspection, inspectors identified the following weaknesses:

- ◆ no planned workplace assessment
- ◆ limited training in theory, for NVQ



- ◆ assessment of theory not linked to workplace practice
- ◆ slow rate of achievement

18. Manchester Training's action plan and its subsequent self-assessment report suggested measures to improve the quality of training and assessment. Inspectors identified several weaknesses which had not been identified in the self-assessment report and awarded a lower grade than that given by Manchester Training.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good working relationships among assessor, trainees and their employers
- ◆ good-quality work placements

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poorly co-ordinated workplace learning
- ◆ poor action-planning
- ◆ insufficient assessment opportunities and methods
- ◆ poor-quality portfolios
- ◆ poor achievement rates

19. Since the first inspection, Manchester Training has made a number of changes to the operation of its business administration programmes. In addition to the normal recruitment of school leavers who have been referred by the careers service, a marketing team now visits prospective employers to recruit people who are already in employment. This has increased the number and type of businesses that trainees are working in. Employers and their employees who are interested in training are visited in the workplace. The marketing team works with the employer to determine the suitability of an employee's job role to meet NVQ requirements. Work placements are of a high standard and provide trainees with a range of opportunities. Trainees are visited frequently. There are good working relationships among staff, trainees and employers.

20. A specially designed document is used to determine the suitability of job roles to the NVQ. Employers carry out all the training, the majority of which is accomplished on the job. There is little or no co-ordination of the learning process by Manchester Training. If gaps in the job role are identified, the employer is asked to cover the gap in the work experience of the trainee, usually through a temporary move to another department or giving the trainee additional work. The assessor provides coaching when identified, but Manchester Training does not systematically provide theory training for the NVQ.

21. Review forms have been designed to record and monitor trainees' progress, to outline targets for trainees and are used as a tool for gathering feedback from

trainees and workplace supervisors. Assessors use these documents each time they see trainees for both review and assessment visits. The form is large and contains 28 boxes covering a range of information including attendance, accidents, progress, NVQ units achieved, support identified, agreed future action, company comments/feedback, candidates' comment/feedback and signatures of assessor, trainee, employer and internal verifier. Most of the information is brief and does not help trainees to plan their future action. For example, a section about the NVQ units trainees are working towards is completed by the assessor on every visit and simply lists every compulsory unit in the NVQ, plus one optional unit. The 'agreed future action' box contains vague targets. An external verifiers' report dated November 1999 also made the point that action-planning is not sufficiently detailed. The company has arranged for more detailed information to be provided to trainees by using an additional document, which will show those tasks which assessors and trainees have agreed will be done by the next visit.

22. The assessor is responsible for all 45 business administration trainees and also works with customer service trainees. Although the company appointed an additional assessor in October 1999 to reduce the workload, the first assessor took retirement in November 1999. Manchester Training's assessors visit trainees every four to five weeks to carry out assessments or reviews. However, opportunities for assessment, particularly on those aspects of the NVQ which occur infrequently at work, are missed. Workplace supervisors' knowledge of the NVQ is insufficient to enable them to contribute fully to assessment. There is also a narrow range of assessment methods. Most assessments are based on collecting evidence of workplace tasks. There are few examples of witness statements or observed assessments. Trainees' portfolios are poorly maintained. Evidence is gathered in a folder, but trainees do not know how to organise their work. The assessor identifies, cross-references and files the evidence in the portfolios for both level 2 and level 3 trainees.

23. Since the company introduced business administration programmes three and a half years ago, only 11 trainees have achieved an NVQ at level 2 and none have completed at level 3. Out of 94 trainees who started their NVQs, 49 have left the programme and, of these, 38 did not achieve an NVQ. Trainees make slow progress through their qualifications. Several trainees have not completed any units of their NVQs in the past 12 months.

## **Retailing & customer service**

## **Grade 2**

24. Manchester Training had 116 trainees in these occupations at the time of inspection, 80 per cent of whom were employed. Ninety-one trainees are working towards NVQ levels 2 and 3 in distribution and warehousing operations; 13 towards NVQ level 2 in fork-truck operations; nine towards NVQ level 2 in vehicle-parts distribution; three towards NVQ level 2 in customer service. Sixteen adult trainees are working towards their fork-truck operators' certificate, with the opportunity to progress to an NVQ programme. All distribution and

warehousing trainees are offered the opportunity to gain fork-truck qualifications. Before enrolment on fork-truck programmes, all trainees have an induction programme which includes both written and practical selection tests. Trainees are also offered free driving lessons to increase their employability. Inspectors agreed with the judgements and grade in the self-assessment report for this area.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ qualifications additional to the NVQ programme
- ◆ good fork-truck training
- ◆ well-qualified and experienced staff
- ◆ free driving lessons to improve employability

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor understanding of NVQs among workplace supervisors
- ◆ poorly planned workplace training
- ◆ poor retention rates on warehousing programmes

25. Facilities for fork-truck training are good. A wide variety of trucks is utilised. Good practical resources complement training in the classroom. Trainees are aware of the importance of health and safety and they study first aid. Health and safety is regularly monitored in the workplace to ensure compliance. Trainees on fork-truck programmes receive individual tuition and progress to the use of multifunctional attachments. They gain practical experience in a local warehouse under the close supervision of trainers.

26. For most trainees on warehousing, parts distribution and customer service programmes, training in the workplace is poorly planned. Workplace supervisors are unaware of the requirements of NVQs, and opportunities for assessment at work are missed. There is a high drop-out rate among trainees on distribution and warehousing programmes, currently standing at 42 per cent. Little explanation of the cause has been found by the company. Action has been taken to address this problem in warehousing, through improved initial selection procedures and incentives, such as bonus payments. As a result, retention has improved by 75 per cent on last year's figure.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

### Grade 2

27. Manchester Training has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. Staff, trainees and employers are committed to it. Marketing material is revised regularly, taking care that it is not discriminatory and that it complies with the most recent legislation. Trainee selection procedures guarantee equality of opportunity regardless of gender, age, ethnicity and disability. The company's self-assessment report recognised strengths and weaknesses which were confirmed during inspection. Additional strengths identified by inspectors led them to award a higher grade than had been proposed by the company.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive equal opportunities policy
- ◆ appropriate policies among employers are a condition of acceptance as a placement provider
- ◆ under-represented groups targeted for training
- ◆ regular review and evaluation of marketing materials and recruitment practices
- ◆ effective complaints procedure

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ inadequate facilities for trainees with physical disabilities
- ◆ no review of equal opportunities among company staff
- ◆ lack of staff development relating to equal opportunities
- ◆ no defined policy on smoking within company premises

28. The company has a comprehensive and effective equal opportunities framework. Staff and trainees are respected and are protected against all forms of harassment. The company selects work placements carefully and will use only those employers which are committed to the implementation of its equal opportunity policies. Employers have to demonstrate, in their contracts, that they are fully aware of the commitment to equality of opportunity shown by Manchester Training. Trainees receive information and instructions, which relate to equal opportunities, during induction. Participation among trainees from ethnic minorities is higher than their representation in the local community. Managers have established good working relationships with local schools and community groups. They participate actively in careers and community events and offer work experience to young people from local schools. Brochures have an introduction in English and two other languages. They are carefully scrutinised for bias.

29. Facilities in and around the company's training premises are not accessible to wheelchair users. There are no ramps at entrances or at fire exits. There are no modified lavatories, and access to teaching rooms is difficult. No review has been made of access to workplaces or classrooms. Staff survey questionnaires, covering equal opportunity issues, are not included with the staff appraisal programme. Staff do not have an opportunity to express their opinions on equality of opportunity. Managers keep staff informed of equal opportunity legislation, but there is a lack of staff development to expand their awareness. The company has no policy on smoking on its premises, disregarding both the welfare of non-smokers and safety regulations.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 3**

30. The company's training managers carry out recruitment. Initial assessment is by interview and through formal basic skills testing for numeracy and mechanical comprehension. All trainees complete the tests, but acceptance for training rests primarily on the interview. The company works with local careers services which give appropriate guidance and selection. Trainees are given a prompt induction to the workplace and to the requirements for NVQs. Once training begins, trainees receive regular visits in the workplace from their assessors. A designated assessor also acts as the primary contact for pastoral care. Training managers are readily available to trainees, if required. The company works hard to encourage placement employers to keep young people in their jobs at the end of training. A placement officer helps adult trainees on fork-truck courses to find work. Inspectors found that the company, in its self-assessment report, had undervalued the quality of the support which it provides. The grade awarded was higher than that proposed by the company.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ assessors work unsociable hours to assess trainees on night shifts
- ◆ good support for those trainees with additional learning needs
- ◆ more frequent monitoring visits than are contractually required
- ◆ strong pastoral care for trainees, both at work and in the training centre

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ basic skills test is outdated, and results are not used
- ◆ support for those with additional training needs is not routinely assessed
- ◆ initial assessment does not inform individual training plans
- ◆ trainees' records not updated with additional support received

31. Staff give a high priority to trainee support. The company does not cater for trainees with learning difficulties, and so, where possible, it refers them to other providers with more appropriate facilities. However, when trainees with learning difficulties are accepted, they receive strong support. Induction is thorough and is carried out either individually or in small groups. Assessors visit workplaces during night shifts, if necessary. Trainees are collected from the station to save their travel costs.

32. Considerable effort is made to place trainees in jobs as early as possible. Where a work placement proves unsuitable, another is quickly sought. Trainees who leave are tracked, so that they may continue their NVQs with their new employers. Adult trainees reaching the end of their programmes without getting a job receive help from a placement service for up to 16 weeks. Trainees who wish to do further training are carefully advised to help them to choose.

33. Initial trainee assessments are outdated. The results are generally disregarded by staff, who rely mainly on information gathered at interview. In some instances, the tests do not relate to the NVQ programme for which the trainee has applied. Neither the tests nor the interview outcomes inform trainees' individual learning plans. Additional support needs are not analysed as a matter of routine and, where they emerge during training, they are not addressed systematically. Staff are not specifically qualified to give additional support. Training records do not document the support given to trainees, so that it is difficult for the company to evaluate its performance in this area of its work accurately.

## **Management of training**

## **Grade 3**

34. Management and staffing structures are clearly defined. The company employs 42 staff, all of whom have detailed job descriptions. Regular appraisal is used to identify staff development needs and meet both individual and organisational requirements. Staff are grouped into teams related to the operational activities of the company. During 1997-98, the company's targets for adult training were achieved, but contracts were fulfilled for only 78 per cent of youth trainees. Inspectors identified weaknesses not recognised by the company and awarded a grade lower than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

### ***STRENGTHS***

- ◆ clear staffing and management structures
- ◆ regular appraisal linked to staff development
- ◆ well-structured business plan

- ◆ regular performance monitoring against business targets
- ◆ clear targets for staff teams and individuals

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ some poor communication among teams
- ◆ some poor monitoring of team and individual action-plans
- ◆ failure to monitor training and assessment outcomes across NVQ programmes
- ◆ failure by managers to ensure that action-plans are acted on
- ◆ assessors sometimes unaware of trainees' placements

35. Manchester Training has clearly defined policies and procedures. They are regularly reviewed. Management information is collected in relation to business performance. The resulting plans are communicated clearly to staff, who are fully involved in any necessary remedial action. Information relating to external assessment is reviewed, but, in some areas, there is little follow-up by managers to ensure that issues are resolved. The team structures help individuals to focus their attention on areas directly relevant to their work and to share good practice. There are shortcomings in communication among groups of staff. There is a lack of informal networking. Assessors sometimes do not know where trainees' work placements are, causing difficulty in providing both assessment and pastoral care. Internal verifiers rely solely on formal meetings with assessors to pass on developments in assessment practice. Manchester Training has a good relationship with employers. Staff work to ensure that the company is promoted effectively and that there is regular liaison with schools and the careers service.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Grade 3**

36. Manchester Training has well-recorded quality procedures. The company holds ISO 9001 and the Investors in People Standard. There is a full-time quality assurance co-ordinator responsible for monitoring compliance with quality standards. Since the first inspection, the quality assurance co-ordinator's role has been extended to include monitoring external verifiers' reports. The company has a team of internal verifiers who have responsibility for assuring the quality of the training and assessment. The company has appointed an NVQ co-ordinator to monitor internal verification and to work with staff to ensure that awarding body requirements are met. The company now has a procedure to seek the views of employers on the quality of training, but it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this. The main weaknesses identified by the first inspection were:

- ◆ no company strategy for internal verification
- ◆ no monitoring the effectiveness of internal verification
- ◆ quality of training monitored too infrequently in motor vehicle



- ◆ actions outstanding from external verifier's report
- ◆ evaluation data not used for quality improvement
- ◆ employers not consulted on the outcomes of training.

37. The first inspection team awarded quality assurance a grade 4. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the recent self-assessment report submitted for reinspection.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ well-recorded quality procedures encompassing training and assessment
- ◆ regular monitoring of quality assurance systems
- ◆ effective monitoring of training by internal verifiers in warehousing

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no monitoring of the quality of motor vehicle training
- ◆ no structured feedback sought from trainees or employers
- ◆ insufficient focus on continuous improvement

38. All staff are fully aware of the quality assurance procedures and have access to a detailed quality assurance manual. The company's quality assurance co-ordinator ensures that procedures are regularly updated and monitors their implementation. Since the first inspection, procedures have been developed to provide clear operating guidelines for both assessors and verifiers. An NVQ co-ordinator has been appointed to support the internal verifiers, to monitor their effectiveness and to ensure that external verifiers' requirements are promptly met.

39. Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of training and assessment lies with the internal verifiers. Following the first inspection, there has been a detailed review of internal verification methods and a company-wide strategy has been introduced. Assessment decisions are regularly sampled and reviewed. Internal verification is well planned and each assessor is observed conducting assessments in the workplace at least twice a year. Portfolio verification takes place regularly and all assessment decisions are now being verified. Clear written feedback is given to assessors. Internal verification has led to the identification of problems in the assessment methods of some assessors. These problems have been promptly addressed. Internal verifiers meet regularly with assessors to discuss trainees' progress and to address training and assessment issues. They maintain a computerised database to track NVQ unit achievement, which is routinely updated. During the first inspection, the monitoring of warehousing training by the internal verifier was effective, but engineering training was infrequently reviewed. Although the content of the engineering training programme is now checked, the quality of training delivered in the centre is not subject to any quality assurance monitoring.



40. Manchester Training has no formal mechanism for evaluating the quality of training with trainees or their employers, although the company is planning to introduce a commercial evaluation programme in line with TEC requirements. Trainees and employers' views on training and assessment are extracted informally from the review forms. There is an effective complaints' procedure which ensures that if any formal complaint is raised it is promptly addressed and corrective action taken. Statistical information collected for the TECs is not used to review the quality of training or to form the basis of regular plans against which trends can be monitored. The focus is on checking compliance with procedures and external contractual requirements, rather than on continuous improvement. Staff respond to problems as they arise and there is no evaluation of any progress made.

41. Following the first inspection, Manchester Training produced a detailed action plan which addressed all of the key issues raised. Its management team has monitored the implementation of the action plan and this has resulted in improvements in many areas. The self-assessment report prepared for the reinspection accurately identified most of the strengths and weaknesses, although the progress made in business administration was overestimated. The company identified many strengths which were no more than normal practice. This was particularly apparent where they were areas addressed in response to the first inspection which, while no longer weaknesses, could not be classed as strengths. A summary report was also prepared by Manchester Training which outlined fully the strategies the company had adopted to address the impact of TECs withdrawing their contracts from the company following the first inspection.