



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MARCH 1999

REINSPECTION JUNE 2000

Kingston Maurward College
(formerly published as
Kingston Maurward Training)

SUMMARY

Kingston Maurward College, formally known as Kingston Maurward Training, offers satisfactory training in a wide range of land-based subjects. The college offers good physical resources for off-the-job training. Strong support is given to those who need additional help with their studies. Quality assurance systems at the college are good, but it is slow to implement any changes needed to improve training. At the time of the first inspection, there was little understanding of equal opportunities, either within the company or at the college. The college did not adequately co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. Staff training has since been given and staff's awareness of equal opportunities has improved. However, the college has not sufficiently promoted the importance of equal opportunities to employers. Management of training was ineffective, and there was inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. The management of work-based training is now well integrated with the main functions of the college. The college has been restructured to increase the prominence of work-based training. There is more assessment in the workplace and better co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

As a result of the reinspection of Kingston Maurward College, the original published report text for equal opportunities and management of training has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings.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 report, which have not been subject to full reinspection, have been left in their original form.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Agriculture	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
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Quality assurance	3

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Management of training	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ rigorous health and safety training
- ◆ good progress reviews of trainees
- ◆ good administrative procedures
- ◆ good integration of work-based training with other college activities



KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of understanding of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at the college
- ◆ lack of reinforcement of equal opportunities issues with trainees



INTRODUCTION

1. At the time of the first inspection, Kingston Maurward Training (KMT) was a separate unit of Kingston Maurward College. It was established in 1992 to administer government-funded training schemes, which the college had been providing since the early 1980s. Since then, however, the work-based training section has been fully integrated into the college, and the provider's name has been changed to Kingston Maurward College. Kingston Maurward College, established in 1949, is a college for land-based training, situated close to the town of Dorchester in Dorset. Its gardens are listed on the English Heritage register of gardens. They comprise 35 acres of classical 18th century parkland and lawns, which are open to the public. There is a large commercial farm with dairy, sheep and pig enterprises. A large indoor riding school has just been completed. The college derives 46 per cent of its income from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). KMT has a contract with Dorset Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and this provides 7.6 per cent of the college's income. At the time of the first inspection, there were 131 trainees, of whom 37 were modern apprentices under a direct employer contract. These contracts are managed by KMT on behalf of the trainees' employer. There are now 106 trainees, of whom 15 are modern apprentices, 45 are national trainees and 46 are on other youth training programmes. There are 26 trainees on a direct employer contract, of whom 25 are modern apprentices and one is a national trainee. There are also 17 New Deal clients, 13 being on the environment task force option and four on the full-time education and training option. The company offers training in a wide range of land-based subjects: agriculture, amenity horticulture, agricultural engineering, forestry, animal care, equine studies and veterinary nursing. KMT also offers a sport and recreation programme on which there are three trainees under the direct employer contract. There are five full-time members of staff directly involved in the management of work-based training, and three who work on a part-time basis and who carry out reviews in the workplace.

2. Dorset is a largely prosperous county, and the average unemployment rate stands at 3.8 per cent. There are no pockets of high unemployment in Dorset, but in some districts there are higher proportions of unemployed people than the national average of 5.2 per cent. In Boscombe Down near Bournemouth, unemployment is over 11 per cent, and at Melcombe Regis (Weymouth and Portland) it is 12 per cent. The rate of unemployment among those leaving school has fallen significantly, from 6 per cent in 1992 to 2.6 per cent in 1997. Over 80 per cent of 16 year olds remain in full-time education. In 1997, 6 per cent of school leavers and 9.1 per cent of 17 year olds went into work-based training. In 1998, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 55.2 per cent, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. In 1999, these figures were 53.5 and 47.9 per cent respectively. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Dorset is very low, at 0.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. The company produced its first self-assessment report for the Training Standards Council by updating an earlier version, which was produced in November 1997. Some staff were consulted at that time, although there was less consultation in preparing the revised report. A number of strengths identified by the company were no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with KMT's findings in the occupational area, trainee support and quality assurance. Further weaknesses were identified in the areas of equal opportunities and management of training, where lower grades were awarded by inspectors. An action plan was produced following inspection, which also contained the actions required following a Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspection some six weeks earlier. A special report was produced for reinspection indicating the progress made on implementing the action plan.

4. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 14 days at KMT during March 1999. They met 82 trainees, 15 employers, KMT's staff, and college staff involved with work-based training. Inspectors examined company and awarding-body's documents, and trainees' portfolios. They also observed 10 sessions of training and eight reviews.

5. A team of two inspectors spent a total of four days at Kingston Maurward College during June 2000. They interviewed four trainees and four workplace supervisors. They met with 15 members of staff. They examined a wide range of documents. This included minutes of staff meetings, training contracts and a portfolio of evidence showing the progress made in equal opportunities and management of training.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Agriculture

Grade 3

7. Most off-the-job training is subcontracted to the college. Training in veterinary nursing is subcontracted to a veterinary practice, while service engineering is subcontracted to a training alliance of two further education colleges based in Devon. Depending on the programme, off-the-job training is organised on a day-release or block-release basis. The number of days devoted to off-the-job training also varies according to the qualification. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They identified some additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given in the company's self-assessment report. The college offers training in the following qualifications:

NVQ title	Level	Number of trainees
Agriculture (livestock and extensive crop production)	Levels 2 and 3	58, including 21 direct employer
Caring for animals	Level 2	9
Veterinary nursing	Levels 2 and 3	18
Amenity horticulture	Levels 1, 2 and 3	17, including 9 direct employer
Service engineering (agricultural)	Levels 2 and 3	10, including 4 direct employer
Horse care	Level 2	3
Forestry and Woodland	Levels 2 and 3	3

GOOD PRACTICE

A part-time college tutor has developed excellent instructions to guide employers in training for modern apprenticeships. These clearly detail the financial implications and the duties which employers must fulfil.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good teaching of occupational subjects in off-the-job training
- ◆ good training opportunities provided through direct employer contracts
- ◆ good physical resources for off-the-job training
- ◆ rigorous health and safety training across all areas
- ◆ high achievement rate among trainees in veterinary nursing

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ over-emphasis on college-based assessment
- ◆ lack of understanding of NVQ requirements by college staff
- ◆ assessments not always competency-based

8. The standard of demonstrations and other training sessions conducted at the college is high. Trainees respect the college staff and the services provided. College staff's high level of occupational competency means that they are able to organise good practical activities and give examples from their experience in the industry. Direct employer contracts encourage employers to take a more active part in training and, because of their financial involvement, employers are also active in the assessment process. In addition, they ensure that trainees attend off-the-job training. This has had a significant impact on trainees' achievement levels. Employers provide good on-the-job training opportunities. Veterinary nursing trainees have an achievement rate of 90 per cent in the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons examinations. This figure is significantly higher than the national average of 50 per cent. Achievements are clearly recorded. Most agriculture trainees achieve two different NVQs, for example, livestock and extensive crop production.

9. Many of the physical resources used for off-the-job training are good, particularly the horticulture, forestry and equine facilities. Classrooms, and other accommodation, are well appointed, well maintained and provide a pleasant working environment for trainees. Although adequate, some of the engineering resources are becoming outdated. The thorough health and safety training given

during induction is continued throughout the programmes. This instils a high level of awareness in trainees, which is particularly important in such a high-risk occupational area.

10. There is a great reliance on college-based assessment for achievement of NVQs, but it is not always carried out in a realistic working environment. Much of the off-the-job training is delivered in a traditional academic manner. It does not always take into account work-based evidence and assessment, or the knowledge requirements for the elements of the NVQ. Off-the-job assessment is based on grading and, in some cases, percentage marks instead of commenting on trainees' competency. KMT does not offer true 'roll-on roll-off' programmes; most of the off-the-job training is delivered within an academic timetable. The schemes of work are not modular. Some trainees find that the work they do at college has little or nothing to do with the on-the-job work they are undertaking. This limits the opportunity for trainees to start a programme at any time other than September. Any trainee joining after this date is treated as a late starter and has to put in extra effort and personal time to catch up.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

11. The college has an equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is distributed to trainees. The policy is now reviewed annually and approved by the governors of the college. The college monitors trainees and staff using a questionnaire. It now has a complaints and harassment procedure. An equal opportunities committee reports to the academic board, and manages equal opportunities issues in the college. Dorset has a low proportion of people from minority ethnic groups. Trades in the agricultural occupational sector have a traditional gender bias with, for example, more men taking up agricultural engineering and more women taking up veterinary nursing. These trades traditionally have low uptakes by minority ethnic groups.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no promotion of equal opportunities in marketing literature
- ◆ no staff training in equal opportunities
- ◆ toleration of discriminatory language and behaviour
- ◆ no monitoring of company's performance in relation to equal opportunities

12. The action plan included a range of strategies to remedy these weaknesses and to develop the awareness of equal opportunities issues across the college. Target dates were set for the implementation of 14 action points. Eleven of these have been put back by an average of six months, five of which had not been achieved at

the time of inspection.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective county-wide travel arrangements for trainees
- ◆ good staff development to raise awareness of equal opportunities
- ◆ effective college-wide implementation of equal opportunities action planning

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient coverage of equal opportunities issues with trainees
- ◆ poor understanding by employers of equal opportunities

13. An extensive coach network is used to assist with trainees' travel arrangements, as well as a shuttle service from the rail station and subsidised public transport. The college has arranged transport for over 20 years, and the college has obtained additional funding from Dorset TEC in order to support this initiative. Many trainees take advantage of the travel scheme, indicating that it fills a need and encourages their attendance.

14. An equal opportunities co-ordinator has been appointed since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is responsible for raising awareness of equal opportunities and monitoring and co-ordinating the policy. The co-ordinator is chair of an equal opportunities working group which monitors and promotes equal opportunities. The working group, which includes a member of the governing body, plans to produce an annual self-assessment report on equality of opportunity across the college. Each area of the organisation is required to identify issues such as language and access relating to equal opportunities. The group has produced an action plan indicating how the issues will be addressed, who is responsible and target timescales for completion. Staff's awareness of equal opportunities is now good and they no longer tolerate discriminatory language or behaviour. A staff-development programme run by an external tutor has been implemented which covers equal opportunity issues. This training has been given to 75 per cent of the staff in the organisation and to members of the governing body, with the remaining staff and governors to be trained by the end of July 2000. Evaluation of this training indicates positive feedback from the majority of staff and a requirement for further training. A new staff newsletter has been introduced which includes regular items relating to equal opportunities.

15. Kingston Maurward College has an equal opportunity policy which was reviewed and approved by governors in November 1999. The policy is discussed with all new staff during induction and is displayed in prominent positions around the college. It is reviewed annually. However, some trainees are not aware of the policy and cannot recall it being discussed at induction. Their understanding of the area is poor, and they have only a superficial knowledge of these issues. They are also unclear about the grievance and complaints procedures.

16. Some employers have little recollection of equal opportunities issues being

discussed when placements are set up. Employers are unaware of their responsibilities to trainees in this area. For example, one employer expresses the view that because the occupational area is traditionally male dominated discriminatory behaviour is to be expected. The college does not monitor the equal opportunities practices of employers. A system of observation of off-the-job training has been set up as part of the college's overall self-assessment process. Equal opportunities issues are now identified and recorded as part of this process. Over half of all classroom observations include a reference about how equality of opportunity is maintained in training sessions, whether the language used is appropriate, and so on.

17. The college's training department monitors equal opportunities by giving questionnaires to trainees in the workplace. Data are held on trainees' age, gender and disabilities, but these data are not effectively evaluated or used to make management decisions. New marketing literature makes reference to equal opportunities, and prominent statements are included in advertising carried in the local press. However, stereotypical images still exist in the college's promotional material. It has begun a programme of reviewing and adapting the literature, but not all marketing material has been addressed. Access to the college in some areas is difficult for those with mobility difficulties. Access to the learning centre is by a back door at the end of a gravel path. A survey by a wheelchair user has recently been undertaken to identify any access problems which prospective visitors may face.

Trainee support

Grade 2

18. Support for trainees is offered by a team of different staff in a variety of ways which helps them to achieve their full potential. All trainees attend an interview before starting their programme, where they undergo an initial assessment for basic skills and take vocational aptitude tests. These comprise short activities with animals or machinery, which help trainees to choose the correct programme for their needs. This is followed by a comprehensive induction programme, which may include further assessment for learning support. Health and safety training is also an important feature of the induction process. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weakness in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade as that given by the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good induction programmes
- ◆ meaningful review processes
- ◆ high level of one-to-one learning support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak formal tracking of trainee support
- ◆ some long delays in implementing identified support for trainees

19. KMT has a well-developed induction and initial assessment process. For trainees identified as requiring learning support, there is a well-developed programme to facilitate the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. As training progresses, regular reviews take place to monitor trainees' progress and tailor the work-based activities to meet their individual needs. The on-the-job activities agreed with the trainee and the employer at the previous meeting are reviewed and revised. Further tasks are identified for accomplishment before the next review. These reviews are well structured and address pastoral and vocational issues. Trainees and employers receive a copy of the review. Trainees play an active part in this process. There is a good rapport between the training co-ordinators and the trainees. Pastoral care and technical advice and support are provided by the training co-ordinators on a one-to-one basis during off-the-job training and at the work placements. This has a beneficial impact on trainees' ability to cope with their work, and also contributes to the development of their skill, confidence and self-esteem.

20. Record-keeping and tracking of trainees' performance are insufficient. The learning support tutors rely heavily on their individual recollection of meetings and discussions with trainees. This lack of records presents difficulties when a trainer is not available for a trainee at a particular time. KMT is developing a comprehensive recording system. There have been some long delays in implementing learning support requirements which were initially identified for trainees at induction. The effect of the delay has been to slow down some trainees' progress, and has had a negative impact on their self-confidence.

Management of training

Grade 3

21. The college is now undergoing major reform. A new principal was appointed in the summer of 1999 and a new mission statement and management policies have been developed. A quality development manager and equal opportunities co-ordinator have also been appointed. In April 2000, the college was re-accredited with the Investors in People Standard. The majority of the off-the-job training takes place at the college. A small proportion is subcontracted to other external training organisations. The work-based training is managed by a workplace training team leader who reports directly to the academic director. The college itself is subcontracted by all the employers who have direct employer contracts with Dorset TEC. Since the first inspection, the college has been given a contract by Dorset TEC to provide foundation training. One foundation level trainee is on the programme, which can accommodate up to 25 trainees. There has also been an increase in the number of New Deal clients.

At the first inspection, the following main weaknesses were identified:

- ◆ confusion caused by a subcontractor's ownership of the company
- ◆ inadequate integration between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ unco-ordinated approach to training, assessment and portfolio-building

22. Since the first inspection, the college's senior management team and academic board have set up new 'quality committees'. Progress against the action plan is submitted to the academic planning and standards committee and, bimonthly, to the governors' policy and resources committee. Progress has been made on implementing the action plan and an update on the progress of the action plan was produced for the reinspection.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good integration of work-based training with other college activities
- ◆ good communications between work-based training staff and rest of college's staff
- ◆ good programme team reviews

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow communication of off-the-job training details to employers
- ◆ unrealistic timescales in action plans
- ◆ poor monitoring of staff development

23. The college is now starting to critically evaluate its work and to plan for continuous improvement. The need to raise the profile of work-based training throughout the organisation has been recognised by the new principal. Since April 2000, the work-based training team leader has been made a member of the academic board and the curriculum-management meetings. This has significantly raised the profile of work-based training throughout the college. The work-based training team leader reports directly to the academic director who has a good understanding of the requirements of work-based training. More assessment visits are made to the workplace by off-the-job trainers. A fortnightly newsletter has been introduced and a regular contribution is made by the work-based training team. These changes are recent and their effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated.

24. The offices of the work-based training team were relocated in December 1999. From an isolated farmhouse on the edge of the campus they have moved to a central location. This has contributed to improved communications between work-based training staff and the rest of the college's staff. Trainees now drop into the work-based training centre to discuss issues and concerns with staff. There is improved guidance being given on portfolio building. Trainees' progress is closely monitored through effective programme team reviews. The work-based team leader is now able to monitor the timetable for off-the-job training to ensure that there is no unnecessary disruption to trainees and employers. An innovative system

of colour coding is now used to monitor trainees' reviews and achievements. The workplace monitoring visitors use this when setting dates and targets with trainees. At the end of each academic term the programme team discusses the progress of each individual trainee. It uses the targets that have been set and achieved for each trainee towards the NVQ, key skills, and mandatory requirements of the modern apprenticeship or national traineeship framework to clearly identify progress. The information is then used to make any changes in the training in order to achieve the targets. The academic director ensures that good practice identified in one subject area is shared, through the curriculum team meeting, with other subject areas.

25. There is a lack of awareness among employers of what happens during off-the-job training sessions. Only 25 per cent of the employers involved receive details on these sessions. The college has plans to improve this situation. In some subject areas notification has been delayed by the late submission of the timetable to the work-based training team by curriculum staff. Employers are therefore unable to provide complementary training in the workplace. The action plan produced after the first inspection included a number of timescales to enable the college to achieve the actions identified. Some of these proved to be unrealistic. Of the 62 actions identified in the action plan, 54 were due to be completed by December 1999, but only 14 had been achieved. By May 2000, 44 actions had been completed. Although an internal auditor monitors achievement dates, there is no evaluation of the effectiveness of the work towards fulfilling the action plan. The college has a plan for staff development, which correlates with the strategic plan of the college. The staff appraisal system identifies individual staff development needs. However, there is no overall plan to clearly identify individual staff development requirements and it is difficult to monitor how many people require specific training. The college has no way of checking that the staff training taking place improves the quality of its work.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

26. The company has a quality assurance procedure manual which is structured to ensure compliance with the TEC contract and sets out the process for dealing with trainees in work placements. The TEC uses the process of self-assessment based on inspection of work-based training as its means of managing quality assurance. KMT first produced a self-assessment report in November 1997. The TEC carried out a quality assurance process check in July 1998 and identified the company's strengths and weaknesses. The self-assessment report for the Training Standards Council inspection was not based on *Raising the Standard*, but on the old documentation for inspection of government-funded training. Few changes were made to the original document. The self-assessment report contained no detail on trainee numbers, no introduction to each area, no staffing structure and no local community information. Trends in trainees' achievement were not identified, nor how on- and off-the-job training is delivered. Some staff and subcontractors were consulted in the production of the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with

the strengths and weakness identified by the company and awarded the same grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-documented quality assurance procedures
- ◆ well-planned and implemented audit procedures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak implementation of action plans by main subcontractor
- ◆ internal verification not based on work-based training

27. The quality assurance procedures manual is well laid out and easy to follow, and is used by all staff associated with KMT. The company has an internal auditor who carries out a well-programmed internal audit over the whole of the year. Any points of non-compliance with the TEC contract are noted on a non-compliance form. The action required, and date for completion, are agreed with the person responsible. The internal auditor monitors the action plan produced. Where action is required by KMT's staff, this is implemented according to the agreed timescale. Staff are able to request changes and updates in the quality assurance procedures at any time of the year. This enables any changes required by the TEC or other bodies to be immediately implemented. The quality assurance manual does not address the process for ensuring the quality of training. Although the main subcontractor carries out observation of teaching staff, no TEC-funded programmes have been observed.

28. Any non-compliance identified by the auditor and requiring action by the main subcontractor is not acted upon immediately. Some required action is falling behind the identified timescale and, in some cases, there is no identified timescale. A major requirement identified by the audit process is for KMT to have copies of the reports from external verifiers. Although this now happens, it has taken some time to implement the process. College tutors are required to have regular, formal meetings with KMT to discuss trainees' progress, but these meetings are still not taking place regularly. Although internal verification takes place, the process is based on the requirements of the full-time courses at the college. There is little observation of assessors or portfolio verification.