



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT APRIL 2000

Great Yarmouth College

SUMMARY

Great Yarmouth College offers training in eight occupational areas and the full time education and training option of New Deal in a wide range of vocational and academic subjects. Programmes in engineering and hair and beauty are good. There are high levels of achievement in engineering production and maintenance and regular on-the-job training and assessment in hairdressing. Construction programmes are satisfactory and are flexible to meet trainees' and employers' needs. In hospitality satisfactory training is provided in good-quality work placements but with little workplace assessment. Health, care and public service programmes provide satisfactory training with flexible workplace assessment, but employers are not sufficiently well informed about the progress of trainees. Business administration training is less than satisfactory with poor assessment planning, little work-based assessment and slow progress of trainees. There is good awareness of equal opportunities issues among staff and trainees but little monitoring of equality in the workplace. Trainees receive a good induction and ongoing pastoral support but some reviews lack clear target-setting. There is good internal and external communication but some weak management of the training and assessment process. Quality assurance is satisfactory. There is an effective audit process for some procedures but internal verification is not co-ordinated across all programmes.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	2
Business administration	4
Hospitality	3
Hair & beauty	2
Health, care & public services	3

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good pastoral care of trainees and New Deal clients
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ wide range of good-quality work placements
- ◆ effective induction procedures
- ◆ positive approach to widening participation through community projects
- ◆ well-recorded policies and procedures
- ◆ high achievement rates for New Deal clients



KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak management of training and assessment
- ◆ missed opportunities to capture work-based assessment evidence
- ◆ slow progress of some trainees hampered by the academic year
- ◆ late implementation of key skills in most areas
- ◆ limited scope of quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ lack of operational plans

INTRODUCTION

1. Great Yarmouth College is a general further education college serving the town of Great Yarmouth, east and north Norfolk and north Suffolk. In addition to this local catchment area the college attracts students and clients from a wider geographical area, including those based in the southern North Sea offshore industries. In addition to the main campus, some training takes place in other accommodation, including Cromer High School in north Norfolk. There are also learning shops in Great Yarmouth and Cromer. The college is currently developing a number of outreach centres to serve north Norfolk and the rural areas of Suffolk. The college's main funding source is the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), and in the current academic year it aims to recruit 1,400 full-time and 3,500 part-time students. At the time of inspection, 147 trainees were in government-funded work-based training funded through a contract with Norfolk and Waveney Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). There are 13 trainees on programmes in construction, 38 in engineering, 27 in business administration, 11 in hospitality, 48 in hair and beauty and 10 in health, care and public services. There are also a small number of New Deal clients training in visual and performing arts, and a handful of trainees in retailing, but these were not inspected as they each had fewer than 10 clients or trainees. There are 64 New Deal clients aged 18 to 24 on the full-time education and training option following a range of academic and vocational programmes. This work is included where clients are in the occupational areas alongside TEC-funded learners. The college's New Deal work was inspected as part of the Norfolk New Deal Unit of Delivery in October 1999.

2. The borough of Great Yarmouth is situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty, including the Broads national park. It has a population of 90,000. The town is a holiday destination and a port providing a base for offshore energy-based industries. In addition, electronics, engineering and food-processing industries are based in the town, made up of small to medium-sized businesses. The ability of Great Yarmouth to attract new businesses is hampered by poor infrastructure and road access. Unemployment is 14 per cent which is twice the average for the eastern region and greater than the national average for April of 3.8 per cent. The town also contains wards which have the highest deprivation statistics within the eastern region.

3. The proportion of minority ethnic groups in Norfolk and Waveney is approximately 1 per cent. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers with five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 44.6 per cent compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In the same year, 68.7 per cent of school leavers entered full-time education, 7 per cent entered employment and 5 per cent entered work-based training. The remainder was unemployed or their whereabouts unknown.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. The self-assessment report was produced as part of the college's established cycle of self-assessment. It was prepared by the employment-based learning team, based on the report produced for the FEFC inspection. Teaching and service teams prepared draft sections of the report during 1998-99 which were updated prior to completion in February 2000. Although the report covers all occupational and generic areas the judgements made do not always link closely with the quality statements in *Raising the Standard*. Grading was initially undertaken within teams, but this was subsequently moderated by senior managers. Comprehensive action plans were produced for each area indicating timescales, responsibility, monitoring stages and success indicators. Inspectors agreed with self-assessment grades in five areas. The other five inspection grades are one grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

5. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 32 days at Great Yarmouth College during April 2000. The inspection was conducted jointly with the FEFC. Six occupational areas were inspected. Inspectors visited 34 work placements and examined the colleges' training resources. Interviews took place with 71 trainees and 27 workplace supervisors. Inspectors also conducted 44 interviews with college staff including programme team leaders, workplace monitors, trainers, assessors and managers. A wide range of documents was reviewed including trainees' files, NVQ evidence portfolios, records of meetings, procedure manuals, correspondence and internal and external verifier reports. There were some opportunities to observe training, assessment and reviews of trainee progress. TSC and FEFC inspectors shared inspection evidence and findings.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering		1				1
Hospitality		1				1
Hair & beauty		4				4
Health, care & public services		1				1
Total	0	7	0	0	0	7

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

6. The college has six modern apprentices, five national trainees, two adults following the work-based learning programme, and 11 New Deal clients in this occupational area. Trainees are working towards NVQs at levels 1 to 3 in brickwork, wood occupations, painting and decorating and electrical installation. There is also an option to obtain an NVQ at level 1 in building craft operations. There are six full-time trainers and one part time. Staff hold both occupational and NVQ assessor qualifications. Training is provided at the college on both a day-release and full-time basis. Assessment is carried out on-site and off the job by college staff. This section of the self-assessment report was prepared by the construction team and collated by the team leader. Inspectors agree with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report and with the self-assessment grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good use made of external projects
- ◆ highly flexible training programmes meet trainees and employers' needs
- ◆ good individual coaching provided
- ◆ highly motivated trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of formal planning of workplace training
- ◆ insufficient workplace assessment in some areas
- ◆ some poor assessment practice

POOR PRACTICE

Written tests are sometimes bound together and presented to trainees in a booklet, giving candidates prior access to questions. This practice does not meet awarding body requirements.

7. The college makes effective use of external projects. Young people on the New Deal have the opportunity to build their own homes and gain a qualification as part of the process. Trainees learn and are assessed in a real working environment. A project manager runs the site, and monitors the programme to maximise the opportunities for training and assessment. The Exmouth Road project is designed to encourage women to enter the construction industry. Staff in the painting and decorating department have been particularly successful in recruiting women and the proportion of female New Deal clients has increased to 30 per cent. Trainees value the project work highly. Training programmes are very flexible. Trainees may attend, part or full time, depending on individual and employers' needs. This allows trainees, who otherwise would have been unable to achieve a qualification, to do so. Trainees are also able to undertake additional qualifications, where required by employers. Local employers in the roofing industry have difficulty in finding suitable training for their employees. Staff have adapted part of the wood occupations

qualification to make it relevant for roofing employees. One trainee working in a home improvement store is working towards an additional qualification in customer care, to improve employment prospects.

8. A wide range of specialist additional coaching is readily available to all trainees. A significant number of trainees make use of this facility and consider that their progress has improved as a direct result of the help given. Trainees who may otherwise have left the programme now feel able to complete their qualification. Staff are committed to their work and quickly establish effective working relationships with their trainees. Most trainees are well motivated and have a positive attitude towards training. College resources are satisfactory and the quality of off-the-job training is good. Off-the-job training sessions are planned to meet individual needs and are enhanced by the use of individual learning packages. Trainers use their sound industrial experience to link NVQ standards to the workplace. Practical skills are developed at an early stage. There are computers within the department, which trainees use to produce evidence for both their NVQ and key skills qualifications. Trainers have developed key skills assignments which are directly related to the occupational area. These assignments help trainees to see the relevance of key skills to their chosen occupation. Trainees' achievement rate for NVQs in 1999 is 74 per cent. Seventy-five per cent of trainees complete their training programme.

9. There is no formal planning of training in the workplace. Employers are generally unaware of the work trainees do in college and are unable to take an active part in the training programme. Staff have produced information packs for employers, in an attempt to rectify this problem. Workplace assessment is only done in areas where staffing levels allow it to occur. The procedure for workplace assessment is not formalised throughout the department. There are occasions where the approach to assessment results in missed opportunities for trainees to gather work-based evidence of competence. Trainees are encouraged to bring assessment evidence from the workplace, but this is not always used when making assessment decisions. There is no systematic approach to the verification of assessment procedures. Some assessment decisions by newly qualified assessors are not internally verified. Some portfolios are of a poor quality and lack evidence of assessment planning and practical assessment records. The assessment of written tests is not internally verified and, in one area, administration of these tests is poor.

Engineering

Grade 2

10. There are 38 TEC-funded trainees in engineering working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Of these, nine are on the national traineeship programmes and are working towards NVQs at level 2 in motor vehicle maintenance. There are 25 modern apprentices following engineering production and maintenance programmes and four national trainees on the engineering foundation programme. There are also 12 New Deal clients on various full-time engineering programmes. Trainees and

clients are based with 25 different employers. Trainees in engineering work towards general engineering foundation at level 2 and then engineering maintenance or production at level 3. One trainee is working towards an NVQ at level 4. Trainees spend one day each week at college, training alongside full-time students. Assessment takes place both at college and in the workplace and is carried out by college tutors. The self-assessment report contains useful information but does not distinguish between the motor vehicle and engineering programmes. Inspectors agreed with the strengths claimed and identified additional strengths not mentioned in the report. They also agreed with one weakness and identified a further weakness. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strong links between college tutors and employers
- ◆ some good work-based assessment
- ◆ tutors' responsive and flexible approach
- ◆ good achievement rates for NVQs in engineering production and maintenance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow achievement of NVQs in motor vehicle
- ◆ no work-based assessment for some trainees

11. College staff have good relevant industrial experience. They have effective and regular contact with employers. Staff develop a good appreciation of the opportunities for training and assessment in the workplace and involve employers in the planning process. College staff regularly visit the workplace to review progress and monitor workplace activities. Employers are kept well informed and are involved in training, reviews and assessment in the modern apprenticeship programme in engineering.

12. In motor vehicle there has been a considerable effort made to establish the national traineeship as a work-based programme. Employers are now being involved much more in the training. Assessment is taking place at work and evidence of competence generated at work is being used as part of the assessment process. This and other improvements to the programme have resulted in trainees' progress, satisfaction and motivation improving considerably. Although at the time of the inspection no trainees had fully achieved their individual learning programme, progress records indicate that interim achievement targets are being met for most of the trainees.

13. Staff have a flexible approach to trainees' needs. In both on- and off-the-job training, trainees' requests for help are promptly and fully met. Staff are highly responsive to trainees' questions and extra visits to the workplace are made when required. Trainees and employers value the help given by college staff. Trainees are well motivated and view their programmes positively. A placement-monitoring

officer also visits trainees once a quarter to review trainees' general progress, monitor the work placement and liaise with employers. Employers are well informed about the training programme, their role in it and the progress trainees are making. Trainees understand what is required of them, and the progress they are making towards agreed targets.

14. In the modern apprenticeship engineering production and maintenance programmes and the national traineeship motor vehicle programmes there is effective work-based assessment. A variety of assessment methods are used, including direct observation and witness statements. College staff effectively review and plan training and assessment with trainees and employers. Trainees on the engineering foundation programme are currently assessed in college. There is no assessment in the workplace for these trainees, nor are there plans to do so.

15. The achievement rate for modern apprentices is higher than the TEC average. Ten trainees have achieved the full framework out of 12 leavers over the past three years. Of the current modern apprentices, 22 out of 24 trainees have achieved an NVQ at level 2 and one trainee has progressed to a level 4 programme. There have been no national traineeship engineering completions yet as the programme is relatively new.

Business administration

Grade 4

16. Twenty-seven trainees are following work-based training programmes in business administration. Thirteen are modern apprentices, 12 are national trainees and two are on the other work-based training programme for young people. The modern apprentices and the other trainees are working towards NVQs in administration at levels 2 and 3. The national trainees are working towards NVQs at level 2 in administration. Three of the modern apprentices are employed by the college. The rest of the modern apprentices, national trainees and other trainees work in a variety of placements. These include a solicitor's office, a doctor's surgery, a travel agency and a shipping company. All trainees are employed. Modern apprentices and youth trainees attend the college for training one day each week and have the opportunity to undertake additional qualifications in word-processing, spreadsheets, database, shorthand and NVQs in customer care. There is one qualified staff member for the business administration programmes who is also responsible for administering the programmes, in addition to carrying out training and assessment. Eighty-five per cent of national trainees and between 50 and 90 per cent of modern apprentices remain on the programme. Seventy per cent of national trainees achieve NVQs at level 2, with between 30 and 50 per cent of modern apprentices achieving on average. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses contained in the self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a grade lower than that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good-quality workplace learning
- ◆ trainees' effective management of evidence gathering
- ◆ additional qualifications undertaken

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little or no work-based assessment
- ◆ poor assessment planning
- ◆ slow progress by some trainees
- ◆ failure to fully integrate key skills into the NVQ programme

17. Work placements provide effective learning opportunities. The placements have good accommodation and resources for trainees. All have modern work areas with access to up-to-date equipment and are supervised by supportive employers and supervisors. Supervisors frequently extend the range of tasks done by trainees to enable them to generate assessment evidence for the NVQ. Work-based supervisors are involved in the three-monthly review process and are given the opportunity to comment on the training programme. However, the written reports of reviews are often brief and lack detail. The gathering of evidence towards achievement of the NVQ is managed by the trainees, supported by the assessor. The assessor holds group training sessions to help trainees understand the content and language of NVQs. Trainees are well motivated and have an in-depth understanding of the evidence requirements. All trainees are given the opportunity to work towards additional qualifications related to their NVQ, which enhance their work skills and career prospects. These include a basic certificate in information technology, NVQs in information and business technology at levels 2 and 3, and text processing at all stages. Many trainees are taking several additional qualifications.

18. Most trainees are not assessed in the workplace. There are missed opportunities for the collection of valid assessment evidence generated at work. Often, simulated activities are set up in college where trainees are regularly performing the same tasks at work. For example, there are trainees working in a solicitor's office and in a doctor's surgery, whose jobs involve collating and manipulating confidential information on a computer system. The employer will not allow information to be removed from the premises or for copies of evidence to be taken into college. There are many other examples of missed assessment at work covering task opportunities such as communication, dealing with customers and information and data management. Trainees are taking considerably longer than necessary to gather evidence of competence and the completion of the NVQ is being delayed.

19. The staffing resources allocated for the assessment of the business administration NVQ are insufficient. The assessor has extensive additional responsibilities within the college, which includes assessing on other programmes,

teaching and course administration. Assessments are not adequately planned and there is little ongoing assessment. There is no recording of assessment planning and few records of post-assessment feedback and action-planning. The college has a clear assessment policy which specifies that NVQ assessments will be carried out in accordance with the training and development lead body's standards. This is not being done. Most assessments take place off the job and are mainly focused on evidence gathered by the trainees. There is not enough observation of trainees in the workplace for assessment purposes.

20. The progress of many of the trainees in achieving the NVQs is slow. One trainee has taken two years to achieve three units of an NVQ in business administration at level 2. Many of the trainees have been on the programme for more than six months with little progress made. There are no opportunities for assessment or review during the college's holiday periods, including the long summer break. Workplace supervisors have received no formal induction by the college and are not formally advised of their role in supporting the trainee. There are no information packs provided for employers. Supervisors are aware that they have a responsibility to trainees as a line manager and as a workplace supervisor for the achievement of the NVQ programme, but have developed this understanding through informal contact only. Many express an interest in becoming qualified as NVQ assessors, but the college has done nothing to foster this interest.

21. Key skills have been only recently introduced into many of the programmes. Although there is general awareness of the requirements for key skills, trainees see them as an additional element to be achieved outside the NVQ programme. Initial key skills assessment is being carried out at the onset of the programme and the results recorded in trainees' files. However, the assessment of key skills is not an integral part of the programme and is administered as a separate qualification. This is of particular significance in the business administration NVQ because trainees' everyday tasks provide many opportunities to gather key skills evidence. Opportunities for trainees to record key skills achievements through their workplace activities and NVQ assessments are missed.

Hospitality

Grade 3

22. The hospitality and catering training facilities are located in two areas of the college. There is a restaurant which is open to the public for lunches for five days and two evenings each week, and two other food outlets serving food and drink to college staff and students. These facilities are recognised as realistic work environments by the awarding body. There are 11 trainees in total, consisting of three modern apprentices and eight national trainees. There are also two New Deal clients. All modern apprentices and national trainees are employed in hotels and restaurants in east and north Norfolk. Modern apprentices are working towards an NVQ at level 3 in food preparation and cooking. The national trainees and the New Deal client are working towards an NVQ at level 2 in food preparation and cooking

or food and drink service. Training is given both on and off the job. All assessment is carried out by college staff on college premises. There are four full-time lecturers in food preparation and cooking, and one full-time lecturer in food and drink service who carry out the training and assessment. The programmes began less than two years ago, and so far, one trainee has achieved an NVQ at level 2 in food preparation and cooking. No other trainees have achieved a qualification. Five trainees have left the programme since it began. Three entered into employment in hospitality and one progressed into further education. Inspectors agreed with one strength claimed in the self-assessment report and identified two further strengths. Inspectors agreed with two weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified a further two weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ good off-the-job training sessions
- ◆ additional NVQ units undertaken
- ◆ well-organised NVQ evidence portfolios

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unplanned workplace training
- ◆ little workplace assessment
- ◆ some poor resources for off-the-job training
- ◆ late teaching of key skills

GOOD PRACTICE

NVQ food preparation and cooking standards are cross-referenced to a series of colour coded menus in the college's restaurant. Menus with photographs and recipes are placed in colour-coded files matching the colour of chopping boards used for the foods. An NVQ tracking sheet is included for each dish enabling trainees to keep track of assessments to their portfolio.

23. The work placements are of good quality providing trainees with the opportunity to cover many of the tasks necessary to complete their chosen course. The equipment and facilities in the work placements are up to date and give trainees a broad range of experience. College staff carry out thorough reviews of employers' premises including all health and safety checks to meet the requirements of the TEC contract. Workplace training is unplanned and opportunistic. On- and off-the-job training is not co-ordinated and many trainees have difficulty in linking the two aspects of their programme. A workplace monitor visits trainees regularly at their placement. The visits include a meeting with the trainer and a review with the trainee. Action-planning during reviews is too general and target-setting is not rigorous. Little assessment is carried out on the job even though trainees are regularly performing tasks which relate directly to the awards that they are following. This results in some trainees making slow progress. Employers are not given sufficient information about the NVQ process and how they can be involved in the assessment process. Several workplace trainers are qualified assessors but have not been encouraged by the college to carry out assessments. Not enough use is made of witness testimony as a source of assessment evidence.

24. Most off-the-job training takes place in one of the college's facilities. The accommodation and equipment in these areas are satisfactory. The quality of the training sessions is good. College lecturers involved in the training are occupationally qualified, have relevant industrial experience, and hold NVQ assessor and verifier awards. Sessions are well planned and taught competently. Good relationships exist between the trainees and college staff. Trainees understand their programmes well. The induction includes a thorough explanation of the NVQ process and terminology. Trainees' portfolios are well organised and contain sufficient good-quality evidence which is carefully recorded. Assessments are not formally planned to take account of trainees' experiences on the job. Too much reliance is placed on a cycle of day-release training and follow-on assessment. Trainees who miss a week are unsure of whether or not they are due for assessment. Trainees' progress is slowed by the cycle in operation as many of them repeat training that has already been received in the workplace. Occasionally, when trainees require specialised skills training, it is given in accommodation of a poor standard. In this area some of the equipment is old and outdated.

25. The college offers a wide range of units of competence within the NVQ programmes. Trainees must gain three units for the award, but most trainees are working towards four units and one trainee, five. The units are chosen by discussion between the trainee, trainer, employer and workplace monitor. Trainees and employers value the extra units offered, and acknowledge that it enhances career prospects.

26. Arrangements have recently been made for trainees to attend key skills training sessions, but none has attended so far. Trainees are missing opportunities to gather evidence of competence in key skills alongside the NVQ units.

Hair & beauty

Grade 2

27. There are 48 trainees and six New Deal clients on hair and beauty programmes. Forty-four are working towards NVQs at level 2 and 10 at level 3. There are 11 modern apprentices, 36 national trainees, one on another youth training programme and six New Deal clients. They attend off-the-job training sessions for one half day each week and the rest of their time is spent in salon placements. Some trainees apply to join the programmes directly. Others are referred to the college through careers conventions, schools, the careers service or their employers. Some trainees have transferred from the college's prevocational programme or the full-time course. Recruitment and selection are carried out by a member of the hairdressing team. An initial assessment of key skills is undertaken. Trainees are matched to salon vacancies, and an individual training plan is agreed on. All trainees are employed. The programme is managed and taught by a team of three tutor/assessors, one of whom is also the placement monitoring officer. The placement monitoring officer visits the trainees in their salon placements to carry out progress reviews. The self-assessment report was accurate in identifying a high

proportion of work-based assessment, good links between on- and off-the-job training and good retention and achievement rates as strengths. Some additional strengths and weaknesses were also identified by inspectors, who agreed with the self-assessment grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned on-the-job training sessions
- ◆ good use made of work-based assessment
- ◆ well-presented portfolios of evidence
- ◆ good links created between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ good trainees' retention and NVQ achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some employers unaware of trainees' programmes
- ◆ key skills not fully integrated into vocational training for level 3 trainees

GOOD PRACTICE

Modern apprentices who are working towards NVQs at level 3 are actively involved in the training and assessment of level 2 trainees. Where appropriate, apprentices work towards the NVQ assessor award. This develops supervisory skills, provides key skills evidence and promotes the culture of work-based assessment.

28. Trainees attend the college for training for half a day each week. Some full-day sessions are also provided, as necessary. Both the level 2 and 3 programmes are well planned. Employers and trainees receive a copy of a week-by-week schedule to enable them to co-ordinate the salon training with the college programme. The college programmes are mainly theory-based, with some additional practical work. They also include regular NVQ portfolio-building guidance, assignment work and written tests. For those on the national traineeship programmes, key skills training sessions in information technology are provided. They are taught by a hairdressing tutor, with specialist information technology technician support. The learning is closely linked to the hairdressing industry. Sessions in application of number are also provided. The key skills training is shortly to be extended to those on the modern apprenticeship programme. Systems to help trainees to identify and cross-reference key skills evidence from their NVQ assessment portfolios are being developed. For example, client consultation sheets are commonly used in the workplace and have been identified as valid evidence for the key skills unit in communication.

29. The college salon is large, bright and well fitted and stocked with a good range of commercial products. It provides a realistic working environment. Trainees receive specialist practical training from time to time. For example, cutting demonstrations are provided by visiting professional hairdressers and manufacturers' certificated training courses in colouring and perming are offered. Opportunities are provided for trainees to practice new skills during these workshops and there are follow-up practical sessions, supervised by college tutors. Off-the-job practical workshops are mixed sessions attended by both trainees and full-time students regardless of level, and team teaching is a strong feature of the programme. The placement monitoring officer is also a tutor/assessor and internal verifier and liaises closely with the team to ensure coherence between the on- and off-the-job training. Trainees have frequent contact with all the team members and are aware of their different roles.

30. On-the-job training is provided by employers or supervisors. Good-quality salon placements provide practical training opportunities ranging from working on clients to individual or small group demonstration and coaching sessions. Trainees value this experience and it helps them to develop skills to a commercial standard. Employers assume responsibility for work-based training and assessment but some have little awareness of key skills or an understanding of national traineeship and modern apprenticeship programmes. The college has a well-established system of assessor training and internal verification support for the work-based assessors. It insists that all salons with which it contracts have a work-based assessor and a commitment to providing practical training. Work-based assessors regularly discuss training and assessment needs with the trainees and the placement monitor in order to co-ordinate college and workplace training.

31. The placement monitoring officer, who is also an internal verifier, formally monitors the quality of workplace training and assessment every three months. Work-based assessors' performance is monitored at least annually, or more frequently in the case of new assessors, and written feedback is given. Trainees' evidence portfolios are internally verified as part of this procedure. A schedule for internal verification has recently been introduced which includes monitoring of both college and work-based assessors' performance and portfolio verification, based on sampling of units across all trainees. It is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. An employers' networking group has been established with twice-yearly meetings which are well attended. It encourages consistency of assessments and provides the opportunity to share issues and ideas. There are close links with employers outside the regular review process to discuss trainees' progress but this is often informal and unrecorded.

32. The off-the-job training plan given to employers suggests a schedule for the assessment of individual NVQ units. Trainees begin working on client models in their salons early in their programmes and are assessed as soon as they are commercially competent. Trainees have a clear understanding of the assessment process and of their role and responsibility in it. Assessment is on demand and trainees generally set the pace and make steady progress. During off-the-job training they are encouraged to identify opportunities for assessment. Trainees regularly review their progress with their personal tutor in college who monitors their achievement, in both practical and theoretical aspects of the programme. Action plans are agreed on, updated and new assessment targets set. This information is transferred to a computer database which is used to monitor individual trainees' progress. Although trainees sign and agree on an individual training plan during induction and retain a copy for reference in their portfolios, target dates are not systematically updated as units are achieved.

33. Trainees' portfolios of evidence are well organised and contain well-presented, handwritten as well as word-processed and photographic evidence of practical work. Trainees take pride in them and are keen to ensure that their assessment records are kept up to date. Target achievement dates are set at a standard 24 months for NVQ level 2 and a further 18 months for level 3. Trainees take

approximately 20 months to achieve level 2 and a further 10 months for level 3. The percentage of trainees completing their programmes and achieving qualifications is high. During the first year of the New Deal, all clients have remained on programme. During 1998-99, 33 per cent of work-based trainees left without achieving their qualifications. During 1999-2000 only 14 per cent of trainees left without achieving their qualifications. During the past two years, 75 per cent of modern apprentices have completed their programme. This is the first year of recruitment for national trainees.

Health, care & public services

Grade 3

34. Training in health, care and public services has been provided since summer 1999. Trainees are working in care for the elderly and with people who have learning difficulties. All trainees are women. The college uses a range of work placements including residential and nursing care for the elderly, home care agencies, learning difficulties care homes, local authority and privately owned care homes. There are 10 trainees on the programmes. Nine are national trainees working towards NVQs at level 2 in direct care and one is a modern apprentice working towards an NVQ at level 3 in care. There are also four New Deal clients following full-time courses in care and working towards a variety of qualifications. All trainees follow the shift pattern of the workplace, normally excluding night duty. However, one trainee has undertaken one night duty shift to widen her experience and works one night each week. Applicants are interviewed by college staff and placement providers. Trainees undertake an induction programme in the workplace. Off-the-job training takes place on one morning each week. The placement monitoring officer visits trainees in the workplace, completes placement monitoring forms and undertakes regular review of trainees' progress. Trainees are able to complete additional qualifications to complement the NVQs. These include basic food hygiene, health and safety and emergency first aid. The self-assessment report identified responsive assessment and access to a wide range of placements as strengths. Inspectors agreed with these and identified additional strengths and weaknesses. The inspection grade is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured NVQ evidence portfolios
- ◆ flexible and creative assessment opportunities
- ◆ access to a wide range of work placements
- ◆ well-organised off-the-job training sessions

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor knowledge by employers of the training programmes
- ◆ ineffective system for monitoring the quality of work placements
- ◆ inappropriate accommodation for off-the-job training
- ◆ missed opportunities to gather evidence for workplace assessment
- ◆ late introduction of key skills

35. Trainees' portfolios contain comprehensive and well-written evidence which shows competence of depth, breadth and creativity. While following the guidelines given by the assessor the portfolios reflect individual trainees' experiences. Unit by unit assessment and accreditation takes place and trainees are provided with clear feedback from assessors. The outcome and actions from assessments are not communicated to some employers. The inclusion of training at certificate levels for health and safety, emergency first aid, food hygiene and lifting and handling clients enhances the trainees' career profile and job prospects. There is a strong awareness among trainees of the progress they have made towards their targets and goals.

36. The college has three occupationally qualified staff, two of whom act as NVQ assessors and verifiers and provide support for the third staff member who is working towards assessor awards. They have had training in health and safety. There are no work-based assessors which means there is a heavy reliance on college assessors visiting the workplace. Some employers would like to become qualified NVQ assessors. One is qualified but has not done any assessment for more than five years. The time allocated to the assessors is insufficient for them to do the job well. Monitoring of the quality of the assessment process takes place periodically through observation of assessment by the internal verifier.

37. Assessors are sensitive to the individual needs of trainees. They take prompt action when trainees' personal circumstances impact on their progress. Assessors sometimes conduct assessments during unsociable hours, such as evenings and weekends, where necessary. To help trainees with dyslexia, tape recorders are supplied so that they can record their evidence verbally to overcome their difficulties with writing.

38. Staff have informal contacts with a range of placement providers and use these links to generate additional placements. Although this helps to build a bank of care placements there is no formal process for evaluating the quality of work placements. Placements in use are monitored formally for health and safety only by workplace monitors, additionally, the appropriateness of the placement is monitored informally by visiting assessors. Some placement providers lack understanding of trainees' needs. Trainees are sometimes under the supervision of senior care staff with experience but no formal care qualifications. When trainees start a work placement, opportunities to introduce employers to the programme, to outline on-

the-job training requirements and to the role of the employer and placement supervisor are missed. This results in a lack of understanding of the needs of the trainees which affects their progress.

39. There is a high standard of off-the-job training. A wide variety of training methods are used and there are detailed session plans. Opportunities are taken to draw on trainees' practical knowledge and experience using an interactive trainee-centred learning style which is well received. Off-the-job training is undertaken in a temporary building which is old and of poor quality. It has extreme variations in temperature and is an uncomfortable environment in which to work. Key skills have been introduced at a late stage in the programme. This has led to many opportunities to gather assessment evidence being missed. It is too early to make judgements on trainees' achievement as the programme started only seven months ago. However, at the time of inspection, some trainees have completed two units towards the NVQ. Trainees are on target for completing their individual training plans. Since the start of the programme one trainee has withdrawn early for personal reasons.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

40. The college has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is given to all staff. Trainees also receive a copy as part of the induction process. A disability statement is provided to all trainees and is readily available to visitors through a display stand in the reception area. A large print version of the document is also produced. Five per cent of trainees and New Deal clients declare some kind of disability. Staff and trainees' handbooks provide details of the disciplinary and grievance procedures. Marketing material makes reference to the college's policy of welcoming all people in the local community into education and training. The self-assessment report identifies that equal opportunities awareness is promoted to staff and trainees through a steering group but that there is little monitoring of implementation of the equal opportunities policy in the workplace. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective strategy for widening participation in the community
- ◆ good promotion of equal opportunities awareness with staff and most trainees
- ◆ active approach encourages equal access to training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ revised strategy and action plans not fully established
- ◆ no rigorous monitoring or evaluation of equality in the workplace

41. There are effective strategies for widening participation in education and training by all sectors of the local community. Specific initiatives are used to encourage people from under-represented groups to access training. For example in construction, 30 per cent of trainees on the New Deal painting and decorating programme are women. This is as a direct result of the development of the Exmouth Road self-build project. Other initiatives such as the lone-parent scheme and the Ormiston Trust project have been used to increase the number of single parents able to access education and training. Training initiatives promoting equality of access are advertised widely in local and county press and in the job centre. The college prospectus does not contain an explicit equal opportunities statement but the introductory paragraphs make clear the commitment to widening participation and promoting equality of opportunity constructively. Trainees' data are collected to meet TEC requirements and used to support the development of widening participation initiatives. However, they are not regularly and routinely monitored as part of review and planning of training.

42. The director of human resources works closely with the equal opportunities steering group to monitor and review the equal opportunities policy. This group has wide representation across the college and includes the employment-based learning team leader. The policy was formally reviewed and updated in February 2000 and an action plan for implementation produced. It is comprehensive and makes specific reference to gender imbalances in the context of the college's provision. Managers have undergone training in equal opportunities legislation and some training has taken place with the employment-based learning team. Further training for college staff in equal opportunities and inclusive learning issues is planned for July 2000. This is designed to cover equality of opportunity in teaching and training, drawing on the experience of work-based training.

43. The equal opportunities policy is contained in trainees' handbooks and in staff induction materials. Many trainees have a good awareness of equal opportunities issues and how these affect them in the workplace. The revised policy has not yet been introduced to work-placement providers and the current process of awareness raising with employers fails to reinforce positive attitudes and values and their impact on individual trainees. Equal opportunities issues are not routinely checked or enforced during trainees' reviews and monitoring of employers' compliance with the equal opportunities policy is not systematically undertaken.

Trainee support

Grade 2

44. The employment-based learning team based in the 'job shop' manages the provision of continued support to all trainees and New Deal clients. This includes initial interview, counselling and guidance, monitoring of work-based activities and general liaison between the college and employers. The unit is also the point of contact with external support agencies. All trainees take part in initial and key skills assessments. Progress reviews in the workplace occur every three months. These

reviews involve placement monitoring staff, the trainee and workplace supervisors. Support for New Deal clients is provided by the New Deal co-ordinator. Specialist careers guidance and job-search training is provided by the college. Inspectors agreed that access to additional support and links with outside agencies are strengths, as cited in the self-assessment report, and found additional strengths. One weakness identified in the self-assessment report had been rectified by the time of inspection and inspectors identified additional weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured initial interview
- ◆ well-planned induction programmes
- ◆ good links established with outside agencies
- ◆ open access to additional support
- ◆ good understanding of progression and career paths by trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of clear target-setting in some reviews
- ◆ little monitoring of the effectiveness of additional support

45. The 'job shop' team works in partnership with the occupational staff, to provide a comprehensive interview and induction process designed to establish the suitability of training programmes for applicants. All trainees are assessed for any additional support needs. Where the need for specialist learning support is identified, trainees are helped by 'job shop' staff, specialist staff within the college or support from external agencies. A key skills diagnostic profile is used to establish current skills levels and learning needs. Little use is made of this in some areas for key skills training and assessment. Vocational staff use the results from initial assessment to determine training plans and identify suitable work placements. Induction is given in three stages: a general induction to the college, a further induction to the occupational area and to the workplace. Induction to the workplace is followed by an initial monitoring visit by a placement monitoring officer, who is qualified in the assessment of health and safety in work placements. On completion of this process trainees receive an induction certificate.

46. The work-based learning team has established partnerships with a wide variety of external support agencies. On one external project, the college is working with a local charity to provide self-build homes for young people. Where staff are unable to offer support internally, referrals are made to suitable organisations. Confidential personal counselling and guidance is available from qualified counsellors within the college. The 'job shop' is available to all trainees who need advice and guidance. The personal tutors' handbook clearly states staff responsibilities and gives guidelines on supporting trainees' progression through college. Careers guidance is

provided by the college's careers unit in addition to that offered by the occupational tutors. Careers guidance is also included at induction and described in the students' handbook. New Deal clients receive support with university applications and good-quality job-search training. Most trainees have clear goals for progression and future employment.

47. Progress reviews are regular, but sometimes there is a failure to set clear targets. Objectives are not always based upon NVQ units or elements and, therefore, do not identify specific goals for achievement. The quality of workplace reviews varies. Where the review is carried out by an occupationally qualified placement-monitoring officer, there is strong target-setting. Other reviews are less satisfactory and merely record progress made. There is little formal monitoring of the effectiveness of additional support and its impact on trainees' achievement. No analysis is carried out to identify good or poor practice, which could be used to influence future planning. Many trainees are offered additional support with key skills. This is not taken up by all trainees and not systematically recorded and monitored in individual training plans. Where additional support needs are identified, but not taken up by trainees, there is no analysis of the reasons.

Management of training

Grade 3

48. Work-based training and New Deal provision are managed through the employment-based learning team which operates as one of 10 service teams within the college's overall management structure. A New Deal co-ordinator, currently reporting to the director of finance, and a full-time administrator induct and provide ongoing support for clients. They also undertake all administration for the programme. An acting team leader reporting to the director of curriculum is responsible for managing TEC-funded work-based training. The team leader, and one full- and two part-time monitoring officers undertake recruitment, selection and review of work-based trainees. There is currently a vacancy for a full-time monitoring officer. A full-time administrator provides support for work-based training and produces trainees' data from the management-information system. All training is co-ordinated by teaching teams within the college. Teaching teams provide all off-the-job training and are responsible for registration of trainees' assessment and verification. All work-based trainees are employed. The college has also achieved the Investors in People standard. Inspectors do not agree with most of the strengths claimed in the self-assessment report. They consider these to be no more than would be effected as normal practice or outside the scope of *Raising the Standard*. Inspectors agreed with two weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified two more. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high profile of work-based training and the New Deal
- ◆ good staffing procedures
- ◆ good internal and external communication
- ◆ well-integrated New Deal provision

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak management control of training and assessment
- ◆ lack of operational plans linking to college strategic plan
- ◆ inadequate staff resources to manage and provide work-based training
- ◆ inconsistent procedures for trainees' registration and certification

49. Following a period when the college withdrew from providing TEC-funded work-based training, provision has developed to its current level. The TEC contact has been increased for this contract year and enquiry levels for work-based training indicate a demand for training in additional occupational areas. Both TEC-funded and New Deal work are gaining an increasingly high profile within the college, alongside the FEFC-funded programmes. A 'job shop' has recently been opened which brings together the administrative bases for the two contracts. This is located in the main concourse area of the college near to reception, the travel shop and catering outlets. This prominent location enables trainees, clients, college tutors and employers to access staff and information easily and gives the work a high profile. Modern apprenticeship and national traineeship schemes are given equal prominence with full-time college-based courses in the college prospectus. They are described as full-time employment-based programmes and not as part-time courses linked to employment. New Deal work is well integrated into existing programmes and over 80 per cent of clients completing programmes achieve their intended outcomes. There is an overall college strategic plan which is updated annually. General targets are set for increases in income from TEC and other externally funded work. These are not translated into specific targets for work-based training and there is no operational plan.

50. There are well-written procedures for recruitment, induction and appraisal of staff. Clear job descriptions are drawn up for new or vacant posts. Recruitment and selection follow standard college procedures which ensure equality of opportunity for applicants. Data on age profile, gender, disability and ethnic background of applicants to all posts is routinely collected. Newly appointed staff are assigned a mentor and follow a standard induction programme. When a group of staff start at the same time a general induction is undertaken by the personnel department. This is followed by specific induction into the working team. New staff are given a comprehensive staff information manual which details policies and procedures and provides guidance on induction and internal communications. An induction checklist is completed and signed by the member of staff and the mentor. A post-induction

questionnaire is completed half way through the first year of appointment. Recently appointed monitoring officers were given clear guidance on their role and the requirements of the TEC contract. They undertook several review visits to the workplace mentored by the team leader before taking on their own caseload of trainees.

51. There is good communication between managers, placement monitors and trainees. Constructive and open discussions take place during reviews and placement monitors respond promptly to help trainees manage their activities. Links with employers are generally good and most take an active part in the review process. Many good informal links and discussions take place between employment-based learning New Deal staff and tutors. Formal staff meetings are held weekly by the employment-based learning team and monthly meetings are held between the team and college tutors teaching work-based programmes. These meetings are minuted and items for action are identified. However, responsibility for action is not always clear, and action identified is not routinely followed up. Lines of responsibility within the new management structure have not yet been formally clarified.

52. Management control over the training and assessment process is weak. In some areas college staff and employers work together to provide effective training and assessment. In others there is a lack of co-ordination between on- and off-the job training. Requests to tutors to change or improve training and assessment are not always responded to promptly. In some areas, notably business administration and construction, there are not enough staff to undertake all aspects of the work effectively. Managers are slow to respond to requests by tutors for additional resources to provide programmes effectively. There are no formal service-level agreements between the employment-based learning team and the teaching teams who teach the programmes. Staff resources to administer the programme and to undertake trainees' reviews have been recognised by the TEC as insufficient. The TEC is supporting the college by funding an additional full-time monitoring officer.

53. Procedures for trainees' registration and certification are inconsistent. Some trainees are registered through the central examinations office for NVQs, key skills and additional qualifications. Some are registered directly by teaching teams for all or part of the framework qualifications. This leads to a lack of clarity over which qualifications trainees are actually registered for and, in some cases, leads to late registration for key skills. This contributes to the late implementation of key skills on some programmes and to managers, tutors and trainees being unaware of the registration status of trainees.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

54. The arrangements for quality assurance are recorded and cover a wide range of the college's activities. Quality assurance is led by a senior member of staff. The

overall system is detailed in the self-assessment report. For the training programmes, termly board meetings are held, to discuss programme development and this links to the annual self-assessment process. The personal tutors' procedures form part of an externally accredited quality assurance system. The college's main approach to quality improvement is through self-assessment. The validation of this approach is to compare evidence from college teams, students/trainees and external agencies including employers. This approach includes the use of questionnaires, performance data and qualitative information. Analysis includes comparisons with college-set targets and nationally set benchmarks for FEFC-funded courses. The college is involved in a pilot project with the TEC to develop a computer-based quality monitoring system for work-based training. The quality assurance team comprises two full-time members of staff, the quality assurance manager, and the quality assurance co-ordinator. Inspectors identified the college's written procedures and internal audit arrangements as strengths. Other strengths claimed in the self-assessment report are considered to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified strengths and weaknesses which the college had not identified and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-recorded policies for off-the-job training
- ◆ effective procedures for internal audit of trainees' reviews and files
- ◆ regular observation of training sessions

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poor internal verification practices
- ◆ quality assurance arrangements do not cover all elements of work-based training activities
- ◆ failure to analyse information on trainees' destinations and early leavers

55. A personal tutors' file is provided for all teaching staff. This contains policies and procedures to guide staff in carrying out their role in some aspects of training and the administration of training. For example, the way in which induction is carried out in college is clearly specified and tutorial procedures for initial assessment in college, registration, trainees' surveys and complaints are clearly recorded. The personal tutors' documents form part of the college's quality assurance arrangements. These are subject to internal and external audit. Trainees' files, including the reports of trainees' reviews, are covered by these arrangements. There have been some changes and improvements in response to feedback from audits.

56. The college-wide quality assurance arrangements include off-the-job lesson observation and peer observations. This covers all teaching areas and there is an annual cycle of activity and reporting which includes all college teaching staff.

Lesson observations are carried out by trained observers. Peer observations can cover practical workshop sessions as well as classroom teaching. Staff are provided with feedback and reports are published which inform staff of good practices. There is an internal college newsletter which also publicises new ideas and good practices. Management reports on teaching quality are discussed at academic board meetings and influence future planning.

57. College-wide quality assurance arrangements concentrate almost entirely on education and training that takes place on college premises. The procedures relate to an academic college year and the arrangements for courses that are provided in college. There is minimal reference in the procedures for work-based training and none for the arrangements for assuring quality of training in the workplace. For example, the personal tutors' file does not set out procedures for induction or assessment in the workplace. There are no arrangements for considering the quality of workplace training and assessment. The tutor's role in liaising with employers and conducting workplace visits and reviews is not covered. There is no clear focus for training programme reviews and evaluation. Current annual review guidelines and programme-development board agendas do not focus specifically on the quality of training. Trainees' surveys are focused on off-the-job training given in college. Employers' survey information relating to training programmes has recently been implemented but has not been systematically analysed. Management reporting or planning does not routinely cover training issues or lead to action planning for work-based training.

58. The current arrangements for internal verification are specific to each programme team area. There are inconsistencies in the way planning and sampling are carried out which leads to poor verification practice in some areas. In some areas, verification is carried out towards the end of the programme with little observation of practical assessment as part of the process. The way in which internal verification is managed in the college does not lead to good practices in assessment being identified and routinely shared between programme assessors. There is no internal verification co-ordinator with responsibility for monitoring internal verification across all training programmes.

59. The management-information system is used to collect and monitor data relating to trainees' starts and leavers. Information on the destination of leavers is collected, but currently, there is no analysis of the data or management reports produced. Forward planning, review and evaluation of programmes lack systematic use of employment and early leaver destination data.