



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT APRIL 2000

# Chesterfield College

## SUMMARY

Chesterfield College offers outstanding training in hair and beauty. Training in construction, engineering and business administration is satisfactory. Resources for all off-the-job training and the experience and qualifications of teaching staff are good. Apart from in hair and beauty, there is very little on-the-job assessment of trainees' competence. Trainees' understanding and awareness of equal opportunities issues are not regularly and continually reinforced. However, the policy and procedures for assuring equality of opportunity are good. Trainee support facilities are effective within college, but there is no systematic initial assessment for employed trainees. College policies and procedures ensure that a sound platform exists for the management of training. However, these policies and procedures are not all used to best effect. There is good understanding and awareness throughout the college of the need to maintain effective quality assurance systems backed up by comprehensive procedures for measuring improvement. Key work-based training procedures are not fully recorded within the quality assurance system.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	3
Business administration	3
Hair & beauty	1

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ well-integrated self-assessment, quality assurance and strategic planning systems
- ◆ comprehensive policies and procedures
- ◆ extensive range of excellent college facilities available to all trainees
- ◆ strong internal promotion of equality of opportunity

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little work-based assessment
- ◆ unplanned on-the-job training
- ◆ limited reinforcement of equal opportunities to trainees and employers
- ◆ late introduction of key skills in some areas
- ◆ no inclusion of key work-based training processes in quality assurance system

## INTRODUCTION

1. Chesterfield College is a large general further education college serving Chesterfield and North Derbyshire, a population of some 300,000 people. It was formed in 1984, as a result of the merger of Chesterfield College of Technology and the Chesterfield College of Art and Design. The college is based on two sites: the main site is a short distance from Chesterfield town centre and the other is a mile away at Tapton. Most of the college's training occurs at the main site, with access courses and much of the higher education at the Tapton Campus. The college has extensive liaison with most schools in the area. Chesterfield College has good bus links with the outlying areas and is also situated within walking distance of the railway station. The college provides an extensive network of free transport.

2. Chesterfield College employs 419 permanent members of academic and support staff. The college's training schemes unit is responsible for the management of government-funded work-based training programmes. The college has work-based training contracts with North Derbyshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). A team of six staff supports the work of the unit. Staff carry out administrative duties, financial claims and workplace reviews. It is the duty of staff from the appropriate academic schools within the college to conduct off-the-job training and assessment.

3. Most of the college's work is funded through the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Around 6 per cent of the college's students are on higher education courses, some of which are organised in partnership with a local university. There are 193 trainees in government-funded work-based training. Of these trainees, 100 are modern apprentices, 26 are national trainees and 67 are on other work-based training programmes for young people. All are employed. The college is a member of the consortium implementing New Deal in North Derbyshire. Currently, 23 clients are on the full-time education and training option of the New Deal. They attend college on a full-time basis. One client is on the subsidised employment option of the New Deal. The college also offers training within the New Deal Gateway. There are currently no trainees on the Gateway programme.

4. Work-based training is available in a range of construction trades, engineering, manufacturing, business administration, hospitality, and hair and beauty. Trainee numbers were very small in some occupational sectors, and on this basis hospitality and manufacturing programmes were excluded from the scope of the inspection.

5. Unemployment in the borough of Chesterfield has fallen over recent years. At 6.5 per cent, it is higher than both the regional average of 4.1 per cent and the national average of 3.8 per cent. A number of wards in the borough have significantly higher levels of unemployment, peaking at 11.2 per cent in Rother and 10.9 per cent in the Markham ward. Minority ethnic representation in the community is 1.3 per cent of the local population. In 1999, the percentage of



school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Derbyshire was 49.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. The college started its annual review of provision over five years ago in preparation for its first FEFC inspection in August 1995. The first self-assessment report to include the quality framework of the Training Standards Council (TSC) was submitted to the North Derbyshire TEC in October 1998. A second was submitted in October 1999. It was updated to accommodate some minor changes (particularly to the action plan) in April 2000, prior to inspection by the TSC. The self-assessment process involved input from staff at all levels and across all academic schools within the college. Feedback on the quality and arrangements for training was also sought from some trainees and employers. The college was inspected by the TSC at the same time as by the FEFC.

7. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 22 days at the college in April 2000. Inspectors visited 30 employers, and interviewed 74 trainees and 29 workplace supervisors. Inspectors also interviewed 47 of the college's teaching, management and support staff. A broad range of documents was examined, including 31 national vocational qualification (NVQ) portfolios and 56 trainees' files. Inspectors also reviewed assessment records, trainees' review documents and external verifiers' reports. Inspectors also observed 10 trainees' reviews, four assessments and nine instruction sessions.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction		2				2
Engineering		1	2			3
Business administration		1				1
Hair & beauty	2	1				3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Construction

### Grade 3

8. There are 60 trainees and clients undertaking construction training. Twenty-four are receiving training in plumbing, 16 in carpentry and joinery, nine in electrical installation, seven in brickwork and two in painting, decorating and sign-writing. Twenty-eight of the trainees are modern apprentices and 30 are on other work-based training programmes for young people known locally as 'young options', where they work towards NVQs at level 2. There are two New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option following a course in bricklaying. Off-the-job training for all trainees takes place at the college one day each week. Most trainees are employed in small companies undertaking domestic

building maintenance or subcontract work on housing development sites. The majority of employers recruit their own trainees and use the college for the training and assessment elements of the trainees' qualification. A member of the college's training schemes unit monitors trainees' pastoral and occupational progress by visiting trainees in the workplace every 12 weeks. Visits to the workplace by occupationally competent assessors from the college have recently been initiated.

9. The self-assessment report cited eleven strengths, many of which were found by inspectors to represent no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths to those given in the college's self-assessment report. Inspectors also identified weaknesses not found through self-assessment. The grade is lower than that given in the college's self-assessment report.

#### STRENGTHS

- ◆ good awareness by employers of NVQs
- ◆ good links between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ good understanding by trainees of NVQ process
- ◆ high standard of training at college
- ◆ well-planned training for New Deal clients

#### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little assessment by observation in the workplace
- ◆ missed opportunities for key skills assessment
- ◆ poor retention rates for modern apprentices
- ◆ some slow progress in plumbing

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*This is an example of how employers provide a wide range of training and assessment opportunities for their trainees. Many plan work specifically with the needs of trainees in mind. One installs and refurbishes portacabins. This employer arranges for trainees to undertake a variety of tasks to ensure that they acquire the skills needed to demonstrate their competence at assessment.*

10. There are good links between on- and off-the-job training. Lecturers now visit the workplace to discuss tasks undertaken at college and the way they relate to the day-to-day duties of trainees at work. Employers value the visits by staff and as a result are able to direct workplace activities towards the qualification requirements.

11. Trainees have a good understanding of the NVQ process. They have an acute awareness of which units and elements they need to undertake to complete the qualification. This understanding is reinforced by trainees undertaking assessments of their peers and self-assessment of their work against NVQ standards. Monitoring of trainees' progress in practical training sessions is displayed on notice boards in the training workshops. More detailed records are kept by trainees and staff in course files and portfolios. This involvement has enabled some trainees to present evidence from the workplace and actively to seek out opportunities for assessment.

12. There is good training in the college. Training sessions are well planned and relate directly to the NVQ standards. Lecturers are well qualified and most have recent occupational experience. An initiative in which staff have been linked to a

named employer in order to visit the employer, has allowed occupational updating for lecturers as well as providing them with an opportunity to promote the college. Lecturers use their industrial experience in order to enliven training sessions. Practical teaching sessions are well resourced with plentiful material to support training and assessment exercises.

13. Training for New Deal clients is well planned in construction crafts. Clients join full-time classes for an average of 15 hours and then additional hours are made up in practical classes or projects. Clients also work towards key skills qualifications and use the college's resource-based learning centre to supplement their developing practical with acquisition of theoretical knowledge. Supervision in the workshops is always available and the resource-based learning centre is open outside usual college hours.

14. There is very little assessment by observation in the workplace. The college has recently initiated visits to employers by occupationally experienced members of staff, but this has been mainly to investigate the range of tasks carried out by trainees and the way these link to their college work. Trainees benefit from good employment and there are many opportunities for assessment and accreditation. However, these opportunities are not exploited fully and trainees have to repeat many of the tasks at college for assessment purposes.

#### **POOR PRACTICE**

*This is an example of how some trainees' portfolios of evidence do not adequately reflect their experiences in the workplace. A trainee working on the estate of a large stately home is involved in the fabrication and installation of specialist, ornate carpentry features. The trainee has also helped to build miniature puppet theatres. Details of these tasks are not recorded in his portfolio of evidence for assessment.*

15. There are many missed opportunities for key skills assessment. Key skills are taught in the college but, in many cases, separately from the occupational tasks trainees undertake. Trainees do not appreciate the value of key skills and are not always aware that they relate to everyday tasks at work. Employers used by the college are mainly smaller companies, with trainees involving themselves in all aspects of the business. Communication skills, such as dealing with customers, suppliers and subcontractors are exercised daily by many trainees, yet these go largely unrecognised by college assessors. Trainees often then gain accreditation in key skills competencies in the simulated environment of the college.

16. There are some poor retention rates for modern apprentices in construction. In the last three years, 42 per cent of trainees left before completing the award. Thirty-six per cent of trainees have left with no qualification. This retention figure is improving, but is still below the national average for work-based training in construction.

17. Progress towards completion of the modern apprenticeship in plumbing has been slow. Currently the college programme for the award takes four years and one term to complete on a day-release basis. Employers have been contacted to ask if trainees can be released for a further evening at college to increase the amount of off-the-job training. There is more use of evidence from the workplace and trainees are now progressing at a faster pace.

## **Engineering**

## **Grade 3**

18. There are 80 engineering trainees, including 49 modern apprentices, two

national trainees and 26 on other training programmes for young people. There are three full-time New Deal clients. Eighty trainees are undertaking NVQs, 52 are taking key skills units and 52 are undertaking other qualifications. Ninety-six per cent of trainees are employed in 54 work placements. Engineering training takes place in two schools of technology. One school focuses on automobile and electrical engineering, the other on construction and mechanical engineering. The two schools were created when the college restructured in 1996. The management structure of each school comprises a head, deputy head and four programme coordinators. The heads of school report to the college's director of curriculum. The combined schools employ 28 staff, all occupationally qualified. There are also three employer liaison assistants from the training schemes unit who provide advice, guidance and pastoral support to trainees at the workplace every 12 weeks. The employer liaison assistants are not occupationally qualified. College assessors visit trainees in the workplace less frequently.

19. In electrical and electronic engineering, there are six full-time training staff and one is part time. Two staff are qualified internal verifiers and one is working towards the qualification. Six trainers hold trainer/assessor qualifications and one is working towards the award. In automobile engineering, there are eight staff, five of whom are full time and three part time. Five have trainer/assessor qualifications, three are qualified internal verifiers, one is an external verifier and another is qualified to accredit prior learning. In mechanical and manufacturing engineering, there are six full-time staff, six part-time staff and one freelance trainer. Nine hold trainer/assessor qualifications. Six are internal verifiers. Three staff have no training qualifications.

20. Practical training and assessment are carried out both at college and, in some programme areas, in the workplace. Trainees attend college to attain the background knowledge and skills.

21. The proportion of trainees following other training programmes for young people leaving with NVQs has improved from 30 per cent in 1997-98 to 50 per cent in 1999-2000. The achievement rate for modern apprentices in 1999-2000 was 46 per cent. This compares with the average for North Derbyshire TEC of 51 per cent for modern apprentices and 30 per cent for national trainees in 1999 and the national average for modern apprentices in engineering of approximately 35 per cent. Retention rates on the modern apprentices' programme have risen from none remaining in their programmes in 1996-97 to 93 per cent in 1999-2000. On other training programmes in the same time frame, the retention rate rose from none completing their programmes to 75 per cent. On the national traineeship programme, the retention rate fell from 75 per cent in 1998-99 to 5 per cent in 1999-2000.

22. The self-assessment report was created in October 1999. Each skill area was given a separate section created by each school, which contained strengths, weaknesses and an evidence base, along with a progress review from the previous action plan. The report identified many strengths which inspectors found to represent no more than normal practice. Inspectors found that some weaknesses were not identified by the college. The report did not comprehensively follow the



framework set out in *Raising the Standard*. The self-assessment report awarded a grade of 3 for automobile and a grade 2 for the other programme areas. Inspectors found that, overall, there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses.

#### **GOOD PRACTICE**

*There have been some notable achievements by automobile trainees. One trainee progressed from an NVQ at level 2 to a higher national certificate in motor vehicle management and in 1998 became the local TEC's modern apprentice of the year and a young mechanic of the year. One trainee who completed a national certificate in motor vehicle engineering now represents the UK in the 'skillsbuild Olympics'.*

#### **STRENGTHS**

- ◆ effective recording of trainees' progress in college
- ◆ excellent understanding by trainees of the NVQ process
- ◆ excellent progression routes
- ◆ good resources for electronics trainees

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ poor integration of on- and off-the-job training and assessment
- ◆ inadequate integration of key skills with mechanical engineering training
- ◆ some gaps in work-based assessment in motor vehicle

#### **POOR PRACTICE**

*This is an example of poor practice with regard to the workplace review process. A development profile document is completed by the visiting trainer. A copy goes to the trainee, another to the trainee's file and the third to the employer. The documents used are superficial. Many contain bland statements and targets which do not give sufficient detail about the progress of the trainee. Some reviews contain only one line of text. The profile does not contain a section for key skills.*

23. Trainees' progress is recorded effectively, starting with a unit assessment plan. In mechanical engineering, a weekly action plan is completed. This feeds into the class record of work and provides an overview of trainees' progress. Motor vehicle engineering has comprehensive assessment schedules detailing opportunities for the development of key skills.

24. Team meetings are held monthly between staff to set agenda items relating to quality assurance, internal verification and assessment. The college's internal verification system is comprehensive. The system includes analysis of assessors' training needs and an internal verification schedule.

25. All trainees understand the NVQ system, know what is expected of them, and know how they will complete their qualifications. Their roles and responsibilities are clear and they are well supported by workplace supervisors. This speeds the trainees' progress, as they are motivated by their supervisor and lecturers to gather evidence to achieve the qualification, and readily seek assistance from the workplace supervisor.

26. Employers and the college's staff encourage trainees to progress. This progression ranges from trainees taking additional individual units in engineering drawing and computer-aided design to, in one case, a trainee who progressed from a full-time national diploma in electronics to a part-time national certificate, once employment was found for this trainee. The trainee now attends college on a higher national certificate programme. The college offers a wide range of programmes which are open to all. All motor vehicle trainees undertake computer-based health and safety assessment. At the end of the assessment, the system prints an individual certificate.

27. Resources in the college are good. The workshop layout is well planned and there is a wide range of equipment. The amount and quality of equipment has improved recently. Resources in most workplaces are also good, and enable the trainee to gain the experience required for their qualifications. Some teaching rooms require refurbishment, which was identified in the self-assessment. The college has recently invested in an electronics laboratory which all trainees are encouraged to access. This contains industrial-standard computers, electronic modules and programmable logic controllers, along with modular pneumatic kits.

28. The integration of on- and off-the-job training and assessment is poor. Co-ordination only occurs through trainees discussing their college work with their workplace supervisors and is unplanned. There is no overarching strategy or plan for integration in either engineering school. Trainees consider the training at college and experience at work as separate entities.

29. Training in key skills has not yet been fully integrated into the training programmes. Trainees miss opportunities to gather evidence of their key skills, as there are gaps in work-based assessment visits. In the three lessons observed, key skills development was not brought to the trainees' attention. In mechanical engineering, training and assessment in key skills does not begin until level 3, leading to missed opportunities for development. Level 2 trainees have heard of key skills, but do not fully understand them. In motor vehicle, key skills were recently introduced at level 1 and they are tracked at level 2 on the assessment schedule, but are not cross-referenced into trainees' portfolios until the end of the programme rather than on a continual basis.

30. The college has experienced difficulty in appointing a full-time work-based assessor in motor vehicle engineering. This was identified in the self-assessment report. The situation has been partly alleviated by the recent recruitment of part-time staff. This has left some gaps in work-based assessment. The separate engineering schools vary in some aspects of work-based assessment practice. In fabrication and welding, work-based assessment has been taking place for some time. In motor vehicle engineering, it is a recent initiative. The lack of work-based assessment was identified in the self-assessment report and the part-time assessor was appointed in December 1999. Of the trainees in motor vehicle engineering who began their programme in September 1999, some have had no work-based assessment and one has had only one assessment since the start date. Infrequent workplace visits by college staff are leading to missed opportunities for work-based assessment and evidence gathering. In mechanical engineering, there has been work-based assessment. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines indicate that 95 per cent of assessment evidence should be gathered from the workplace. In 1996-97, one motor vehicle external verifier would not accept replicated or simulated work as evidence. This has led to some poor achievement rates in motor vehicle engineering. Some employers are not given essential information on the qualification and training programme. Shortage of information has been regarding the college calendar, trainees' timetables and qualification standards. Employers have recently been issued with an employers' guide which is a recent initiative. The guide has yet to make an impact on the

quality of training and insufficient time has passed for its use to be assessed.

### **Business administration**

### **Grade 3**

31. Chesterfield College has 11 modern apprentices, eight national trainees, six trainees on other work-based programmes for young people and six New Deal clients undertaking training in business administration, making 31 in total. There are three modern apprentices and the eight national trainees following NVQs in administration at levels 2 or 3. Eight modern apprentices and two New Deal clients are undertaking NVQs in accounting at level 2 or 3. All the trainees on other work-based programmes for young people are following the advanced general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in business. The remaining four New Deal clients are following full-time education and training programmes in information technology. The administration NVQs are organised by the college's school of learning support, office administration and catering. The GNVQ in business, the accounting NVQs and the information technology programmes are organised by the school of computing and business studies.

32. The programmes operate at the college's Infirmary Road and Tapton House sites. They both offer well-resourced, comfortable accommodation. All trainees are given the opportunity to follow supplementary qualifications in customer service, computer literacy and word processing. All the modern apprentices, national trainees and youth trainees are employed by local private-sector organisations. They attend the college for off-the-job training on a day-release or evening basis and are assessed through a combination of work-based observations and college-based assignments. New Deal clients attend the college on a full-time basis for a period up to 52 weeks and are assessed predominantly through college-based assignments. They are provided with a block period of work experience.

33. The self-assessment report for business administration was produced in two sections. The first covered the work undertaken in the school of computing and business studies, for which a grade 3 was given. The second covered the relevant areas of the school of learning support, office administration and catering for which a grade 2 was given. An overall grade 2 was given for the occupational area as a whole. A number of strengths in the college's self-assessment were seen as no more than normal practice by inspectors. The inspectors identified strengths and weaknesses not shown in the college's self-assessment report and awarded a lower grade than that given in the report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ excellent accommodation and equipment for information technology
- ◆ effective monitoring of trainees' progress
- ◆ thorough action planning for administration trainees

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ slow development of key skills in accounting

- ◆ little work-based assessment in accounting
- ◆ poor achievement rates

34. There are excellent information technology resources at Chesterfield College. Considerable refurbishment of the computer facilities has taken place over the last few months. The networks at each site have been substantially updated and additional work stations installed. Trainees' access to information technology equipment and industrial-standard software is good. Training accommodation at both sites is well maintained and offers an attractive and welcoming environment. Staff involved in training are appropriately qualified, with over 80 per cent holding degrees and over 85 per cent having recognised teaching qualifications. All those involved in the assessment and internal verification process hold the appropriate assessor/verifier awards. The college has an active policy of providing industrial updating for its staff and, in the last year, 60 per cent of those involved in the business administration programmes have benefited from this.

35. Trainees' progress is effectively monitored. Work-placement visits consist of quarterly pastoral reviews undertaken by staff from the training support unit and quarterly NVQ progress reviews carried out by vocational trainers. In total, this exceeds the contractual requirement laid down by the local TEC. Regular reviews also take place within the college. As a result, trainees' progress is thoroughly monitored in terms both of their qualification and of their personal development. Trainees' on-going achievements are then used to update their individual training plans.

36. There is thorough action planning for administration trainees. Clear, achievable NVQ and key skills targets are set for trainees on a regular, ongoing basis. This is undertaken through the workplace reviews and weekly portfolio-building sessions within the college. All targets are clearly recorded in trainees' portfolios. Trainees and their work-based supervisors have a clear picture of what evidence is required prior to each assessment. Opportunities for carrying out assessments in the workplace are taken wherever possible.

37. Key skills for modern apprentices and national trainees are integrated into the main NVQ training and are effectively cross-referenced from NVQ units to key skills requirements. Any shortfalls in the evidence are covered by a number of stand-alone key skills assignments. The gathering and recording of key skills evidence on the accounting modern apprenticeship, however, do not take place until an advanced stage of the programme. Two trainees entered the second year of their training before any key skills assessment was undertaken. No systematic initial assessment of key skills or occupational competence takes place when the trainees enter their programme. Academic achievement is used as the major benchmark for determining the trainees' entry level.

38. Trainees following NVQs in administration are regularly assessed in their workplace and opportunities for observing work activity are actively sought by the college staff. Work-based observations in accounting have, however been

introduced only in the last two months. As a result, all trainees have relied heavily upon college-based evidence to progress through their qualifications. One trainee, for example, is processing payroll in the workplace on a weekly basis. This activity has not been observed despite payroll forming a full unit of the NVQ. Some work products are presented for assessment but this constitutes a small proportion of the total evidence in the trainees' portfolios. The portfolios are variable in quality and presentation but are adequately assessed and internally verified. Trainees' feedback following individual training sessions indicates that the off-the-job training sessions are of variable quality.

39. In the period from 1997-98 to 1999-2000, 19 trainees left the modern apprenticeship, national traineeship and other work-based training programmes for young people. Of these, nine achieved full NVQs and 10 failed to achieve any unit accreditation. No trainees completed their full modern apprenticeship or national traineeship framework in the same period. In the period from 1998-99 to 1999-2000, 22 New Deal clients left their full-time education and training option. Of these, four achieved their qualification goals.

## **Hair & beauty**

## **Grade 1**

40. There are 30 trainees and New Deal clients following hairdressing programmes of training. Twenty-six are working towards NVQs at level 2 and four at level 3. There are 12 modern apprentices, 16 national trainees and one trainee on another youth training programme. All trainees are employed. There is one New Deal client on the full-time education and training option. All trainees attend off-the-job training once a week and the remainder of their time is spent in commercial hairdressing salons, where they receive on-the-job training. Trainees can apply to join the training programmes directly, through careers conventions, the careers service or are referred by employers. Some trainees have transferred from the college's pre-vocational NVQ level 1 training programme and others from the college's full-time course. This usually occurs when the young person gains employment. Recruitment and selection are carried out by initial interview with a member of the college's hairdressing staff. An individual action plan is agreed with the trainee at this point. On joining the training programme, trainees participate in a one-day induction session. Hairdressing training is managed and taught by a team comprising a programme co-ordinator, two tutor/assessors and a peripatetic NVQ assessor who assesses both in college and regularly in the trainees' workplaces. Assistants from the college's training schemes unit also visit trainees in their salons to carry out progress reviews. Trainees are encouraged to enter local and national hairdressing competitions and their success is celebrated.

41. The college's self-assessment report for hairdressing was accurate in most respects. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that in the college's self-assessment report.

### ***STRENGTHS***

- ◆ flexible entry and training arrangements

- ◆ good-quality training resources at college
- ◆ frequent monitoring of trainees' progress
- ◆ rigorous internal verification
- ◆ good retention and achievement rates

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ little accreditation of trainees' prior learning
- ◆ some employers unaware of training frameworks

42. The hairdressing training programme encourages trainees to join at any time during the year. Employers are able to negotiate college attendance patterns for their trainees which do not conflict with the demands of commercial practice. Employers and trainees value the flexibility offered by the college. It contributes directly to the good relations between the college and employers. A college assessor is available to assess trainees in the evenings either at work or in college.

43. There are two college hairdressing salons equipped to a good standard. They are well supported by technical staff. The salons offer trainees a good-quality realistic working environment. There is a good supply of models. All trainees have frequent access to specialist training. Workshops are given by visiting professional hairdressers and there are certificated training courses offered by product manufacturers. To update their experience and skills, training staff also participate in the workshops.

44. Trainees' progress towards their qualification aim is monitored frequently both in college and at work. A progress chart showing achievements is prominently displayed at college. Both tutors and trainees can easily see individual progress to date and note what has yet to be achieved. Individual tutorial sessions provide the opportunity for trainees and tutors to discuss progress, set future action targets and plan assessment to occur either at college or at work, dependent upon what is considered to be the best opportunity to achieve accreditation. Twice each year, employers are sent a report and action plan regarding the progress of their trainee.

45. There is a rigorous system of internal verification at the college. This includes the monitoring of assessors' performance, continuous and final verification of trainees' assessments and sampling of unit assessment and accreditation arrangements and records.

46. Arrangements for key skills training and assessment cover all aspects required by the modern apprenticeship and national traineeship frameworks. Key skills training is closely linked to occupational area learning. Trainees are familiar with cross-referencing key skills evidence requirements with competencies demonstrated in their hairdressing training programme. Where this cannot be achieved, tutors offer trainees the opportunity to gather key skills evidence for assessment through additional practical-based hairdressing activities. Trainees completing their key skills before the end of their occupational area programme

are encouraged to work towards a higher-level key skills qualification. Where trainees have demonstrated that they require additional learning support to progress towards key skills accreditation, this is not always taken up or monitored on a frequent basis to ensure participation.

47. Retention and achievement rates on the hairdressing programme are good. Of trainees starting training during 1996-97, 75 per cent completed the course and achieved their qualification aim. The figures for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 are respectively, 87 per cent and 80 per cent.

48. Many trainees have been employed in a part- or full-time capacity in hairdressing salons prior to joining a training programme. Their prior experience is recorded at application for entry to training. It is not a systematic practice for the college to accredit this prior learning and experience and speed trainees towards qualification achievement.

49. A number of employers are unaware of the training frameworks and key skills requirements. Others rely heavily on their trainees to keep them informed of the college's training programme and timetable. The college has attempted to address this by inviting employers to presentations and events at the college.

## **GENERIC AREAS**

### **Equal opportunities**

### **Grade 3**

50. Chesterfield College has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. There is also a harassment policy and a disability statement. The policy is approved by the college governors, and is reviewed by the academic board and the equal opportunities board every two years. A modified version of the college's policy has been developed especially for trainees on work-based training programmes. Equal opportunities are addressed in the college's strategic plan and highlighted in the college's mission statement. There is an equal opportunities development plan which sets out the college's strategic objectives and targets for the forthcoming year. The college has a grievance procedure, which is communicated to staff, employers and trainees. Minority ethnic groups constitute 2 per cent of the college's population, which is higher than their representation in the local area. The gender breakdown for all the college's students includes 52 per cent women. The gender breakdown of college staff is similar. Senior management consists of 61 per cent men.

51. The most recent self-assessment report produced in October 1999 identified several strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the college has introduced measures to rectify some of the weaknesses and these were recorded in an updated monitoring document. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses but they identified additional weaknesses and the grade awarded by the inspectors was lower than that given by the college in its self-assessment report.

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*A salon safety-day event is staged annually and aimed at hairdressing and beauty professionals. It focuses on the risk of products to the skin and control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) regulations, and includes risk assessment in a simulated salon environment. It encourages employers' involvement in risk assessment, involving specialists from the local health authority and environmental health departments.*

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*Chesterfield College has made employers aware of the recently introduced 'time off for study' legislation by including details within the recently introduced employer guidance pack.*

**STRENGTHS**

- ◆ comprehensive equal opportunities policy and supporting procedures
- ◆ strong internal promotion of equality of opportunity
- ◆ effective three-tier approach to managing equal opportunities
- ◆ easily accessible facilities for trainees with mobility difficulties
- ◆ marketing and learning materials carefully checked for bias

**WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ little awareness of equal opportunities by trainees
- ◆ poor gender balance in some occupational areas

52. The college's equal opportunities policy is comprehensive and covers all aspects of equal opportunities legislation. The policy contains separate statements addressing the college's commitment to the prevention of discrimination and harassment. A modified version of the policy has been developed specifically for work-based trainees. The policy and statement fully supports the college's mission statement.

53. Promotion of equal opportunities is strong. All staff are aware of the equal opportunities policy. Through a combination of effective promotion and the work of the equal opportunities working groups, equal opportunities issues maintain a high profile throughout the college. Trainees and work-based employers all receive copies of the equal opportunities policy, although some do not understand its implications. The college has recently developed an employers' handbook which contains a copy of the equal opportunities policy statement, the modified training support unit's equal opportunities statement, the complaints procedure and guidance on some of the recent legislation relating to equal opportunities.

54. There is an effective three-tier approach to equal opportunities. Clear responsibilities for the promotion of equal opportunities in the college are specified in the policy. Overall responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the college principal. Three working groups covering curriculum, student support and staffing address equal opportunities issues and report to the college's equal opportunities board twice times a year. The equal opportunities board co-ordinates the work of these working groups and reports to the academic board yearly. The equal opportunities board reviews the policy every two years.

55. College facilities are easily accessible for trainees with mobility difficulties. Since 1995, the college has made significant improvements to increase access for those with disabilities. Various ramps have been constructed and new lifts fitted with voice synthesisers and Braille buttons have been installed. Provision has been made for emergency escape from upper floors for those with mobility difficulties. Many college stairways have been marked with white paint to assist the visually impaired and buttons have been inserted into stair handrails to flag the approach of a landing. In 1995, 18,195sq.m. (69 per cent) of the college was accessible to those



using wheelchairs. This figure has been increased by 6,374 sq.m., resulting in 89 per cent of the college being fully accessible to those using wheelchairs.

56. Employer liaison assistants use the college's equal opportunities policy statement to brief employers as part of the initial visit. Where employers do not have their own equal opportunities arrangements, employer liaison assistants supply a copy of the college's equal opportunities policy and explain the content relating to training. Where employers have their own arrangements, these are checked by the employer liaison assistants to ensure that they cover the same range of responsibilities outlined in the college's policy. Employers sign an equal opportunities agreement accepting responsibility. The college does not directly check that employers understand their responsibilities regarding equality of opportunity and some of the monitoring work done by employer liaison assistants is not well recorded. Several employers are unclear about the relevance of equal opportunities. There are instances of inappropriate language and some offensive materials in the workplace.

57. Induction for trainees briefly refers to the equal opportunities policy and trainees are issued with a students' handbook which contains a copy of the policy. The college does not promote discussion on the topic during induction or give examples of unfair treatment which the trainee may meet during their training. Trainees have little understanding of equal opportunities. Trainees are aware of the existence of the policy statement but are unclear about the wider aspects of equality of opportunity in the workplace.

58. Statistics on trainees and staff are gathered regularly. Gender, disability and ethnicity are all analysed for trends. Targets have been set to redress imbalances of traditional male and female roles in occupations. During the past three years, no women have joined work-based training programmes in engineering and construction and only one man has joined the hairdressing programme. The profile of college staff within these occupational areas does not provide role models to help break down attitudes towards stereotypical occupations. The college recruits trainees from employers where trainees have already been employed for some time. The college therefore has no control over the recruitment process but does not work with employers to inform them of ways to improve gender balance.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 3**

59. Chesterfield College works to ensure high standards of service and support for students and trainees. Overall responsibility for student support lies with the director of marketing and student services. Marketing and student services are interlinked to provide support for both full- and part-time students from pre-enrolment through to completion of their learning programme. The student services office is located centrally, adjacent to the main college entrance and reception. Part-time and work-based trainees are offered opportunities during lunchtime and early evening to have access to a pastoral tutor from student services. Additional learning support is offered to all students and is provided by academic staff located in each school and a group of experienced basic skills tutors

who are deployed centrally by the student support co-ordinator. The college gives a high priority to making students and trainees welcome. Liaison with 200 secondary schools in Derbyshire, Sheffield and Mansfield is co-ordinated effectively by a cross-college schools liaison service. Staff visit secondary schools to talk about the college and its courses. They attend parents' evenings, secondary school open evenings and careers conventions to provide potential students with information about the range of courses available throughout the college. Most trainees apply to the college having already secured a work placement or employment and, in some cases, have been working for several months or more.

60. The self-assessment report identified a large number of strengths and few weaknesses. Many of the strengths were statements extracted directly from *Raising the Standard* and were not agreed with by inspectors. Inspectors agreed with some of the statements, although additional strengths and weaknesses were identified. The grade awarded by inspectors is lower than that given by the college in its self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ excellent range of support services accessible to trainees
- ◆ comprehensive personal counselling service
- ◆ comprehensive information given to trainees and employers
- ◆ celebrations of trainees' successes

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor initial assessment for employed trainees
- ◆ ineffective monitoring of trainees' learning and pastoral support needs
- ◆ lack of detail and rigour in workplace reviews in most occupational areas

61. Trainees have access to an excellent range of support facilities. The college's student services unit provides comprehensive support to students and trainees in a wide variety of areas. These include learning support officers, specialist tutors, specialists in dyslexia support, note-takers for trainees with literacy problems, signing communicators and tutorials for those with hearing impairments. The college also provides a range of specialised equipment for those with hearing, sight or physical impairment. A comprehensive personal counselling service is available to all students and trainees. Three members of the college's staff are qualified counsellors. The counselling service is widely publicised to trainees. Appointments are available during the early evening and on Saturdays. Several work-based trainees have used this support and have been assisted with financial, harassment and welfare difficulties. For example, a young man outside college was persecuting one young trainee and the trainee was referred to the college's counsellor after the college authorities had carried out an investigation. He took advantage of this counselling opportunity and the matter was resolved.

62. Comprehensive information is given to trainees and employers at the start of the training programme. Trainees attend a brief induction and are issued with a copy of the college's handbook. Induction covers most aspects of college life but lacks emphasis on the workplace. Little is done to check formally that an effective workplace induction has been carried out. The college has recently consolidated various pieces of information previously issued to employers into a single employers' guide. The guide contains various policies and procedures, details of employers and college's responsibilities and other aspects of the training. It is now issued to employers at the start of the training programme. Trainees' successes are celebrated in the local press and the widely distributed college newspaper. For example, good coverage was given of two work-based trainees who were finalists in the 1999 North Derbyshire Training TEC Awards.

63. Initial assessment is poor for work-based trainees. Trainees are not systematically assessed at the start of their training. Staff make decisions about individual training requirements without formally diagnosing trainees' needs and genuinely guiding trainees towards the most appropriate choice. Little consideration is given to basic skills requirements for those trainees beginning modern apprenticeship programmes. Formal accreditation of their prior achievements is rare. Additional learning support needs are not identified early and are only picked up by tutors when trainees are experiencing difficulties throughout their programme. Results of any initial assessment are not recorded in detail on the individual training plans, which merely record the expected NVQ outcome and make little reference to additional support requirements.

64. There is no effective mechanism for monitoring trainees' learning needs during their time in training. Issues identified by the employer liaison assistants during the programme are not followed through effectively to curriculum areas and, in some cases, delays are experienced in achieving a solution to the problems. There is no clear management responsibility to ensure that issues to do with work-based assessment are properly followed through. The documents available are not appropriate. A series of memoranda are used. A pastoral concern form is available within the college for specific issues related to trainees' welfare. There is no similar paperwork on which to record, advise action and report on details of issues relating to trainees' welfare in the workplace.

65. Workplace reviews lack detail and rigour in most occupational areas. Regular progress reviews occur between the trainers and the trainees in the college regarding the NVQ, and action planning is effective. Formal quarterly reviews carried out in the workplace by the employer liaison assistants are sometimes poorly recorded. There is a lack of systematic reporting from the curriculum areas to the employer liaison assistants to advise them on the current state of progress of each trainee, apart from three termly reports each year. It is, therefore, difficult for the employer liaison assistant to carry out in-depth reviews when there is little supporting evidence on which to base discussions. There are closer informal links between employer liaison assistants and staff from some occupational areas, and reviews carried out in the workplace for hairdressing and administration trainees are better informed than in other areas.

## Management of training

## Grade 2

66. The college has a mission statement, strategic plan and a set of key success factors. It has policies and procedures which cover all aspects of its work. All staff have appropriate job descriptions. They take part in a two-yearly staff review, appraisal and development scheme, which has a mid-cycle review. This scheme is closely linked to organisational aims, staff development priorities and individual training needs. The college has been awarded and re-accredited with the Investors in People Standard. Government-funded training is administered by the training services unit, which is part of the directorate of marketing and student services. The training schemes unit is line-managed by the head of the employer-liaison unit. The director of marketing and student services represents the unit on the college's senior management team. The training schemes unit was set up two years ago to administer work-based training. The training schemes unit has four full-time staff, a training schemes administrator, a training schemes clerical assistant, a New Deal administrator and four part-time employer-liaison assistants. The training schemes unit has day-to-day operational responsibility for trainees' welfare, pastoral issues and monitoring in the workplace, liaising with workplace providers, developing initial contracts with the trainee and employer at the start of the scheme, updating the trainee's individual training plan, and administering the TEC contracts. Training is given in five of the eight schools in the college, although only four curriculum areas were included in this inspection. These schools are responsible for all aspects of the training programme, and the management of the qualification process. The college schools and the training schemes unit are jointly responsible for trainees' progress reviews. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and some of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report. Despite identifying another weakness they awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

### GOOD PRACTICE

*The college operates a comprehensive system to record and process each time an employer is contacted by anyone in college. This is used both as a basis for marketing information and to record contact with the trainees while with the employer. These employer-contact sheets are completed by staff every time the company is visited, or contacted by telephone. A brief summary is made of the nature of the contact and its content.*

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear organisation structures
- ◆ inclusive strategic planning
- ◆ efficient deployment of human and physical resources
- ◆ thorough staff development system
- ◆ highly structured off-the-job training
- ◆ effective external links

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unplanned on-the-job training
- ◆ late strategic management decisions concerning work-based training and assessment

◆ inadequate management information systems

67. The organisational and centralised management structures of the college are well defined and have clear lines of responsibility. These structure and reporting relationships are well understood by staff. There is consistent implementation of an extensive range of college policies, which are regularly reviewed and updated either by the corporation or academic board. All staff at all levels in the organisation understand the well-defined staff roles and responsibilities. All have a positive sense of purpose. There are good communication structures across the college, with a variety of communication methods used. These range from regular scheduled and minuted meetings with action points to informal discussions to solve particular operational issues.

68. Strategic planning in the college is a mature process. The college has an annual strategic planning cycle. All staff teams make a 'bottom up' contribution to their school or support section's proposal for the planning process, using a critical self-assessment process. The senior management team takes these contributions into account as it produces the draft strategic plan for discussion by the college's academic board and final approval by the college's corporation.

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*Lesson observations and internal verifications of assessment lead to continuous improvement. A lesson observation where the trainer had difficulty in dealing with disruptive trainees led to a mentor being appointed and strategies developed to improve the trainer's performance. An internal verification of an assessment of a trainee with hearing impairment led to the school's arranging staff development activities to address the issues of dealing with hearing impaired trainees.*

69. Resource-review systems and a supporting financial and resource allocation model are used to deploy the college's physical and capital resources efficiently. Senior management uses this allocation system sensitively. Curricular areas have continued to receive financial support to complete trainees' training after the direct source of TEC funding has been exhausted. As the contracted trainee numbers grow, the senior management quickly responds to support this growth. The college has adopted a policy to appoint permanent fractional staff rather than temporary part-time staff, giving longer-term stability to the college's staffing. Recent refurbishment of teaching facilities and reallocation of staff posts from underused areas to expanding areas has benefited many curricular areas involved in work-based training. Examples include the refurbishment of the hairdressing salon, the installation of industrial-standard computing hardware and software for business administration trainees and a laboratory of programmable logic controllers for electronics trainees.

70. The college has a good staff review, appraisal and development scheme. This scheme was established in 1994 and involves all full-time and part-time permanent staff who have completed their probationary year. All probationary staff are involved in a three-stage appraisal conducted by their line manager. The staff review, appraisal and development scheme operates on a two-year cycle with an annual review. Staff receive appraisee and appraiser training before taking part in the scheme. The staff review, appraisal and development scheme takes account of the college's strategic development plan, school action plans and the needs of the individual. It is supported by extensive use of classroom observation of teaching staff by members of school management teams. These classroom observations play an important role in the appraisal and development of the individual scheme. The college has an effective mentoring system, which applies at all levels across the college. Newly appointed staff, newly promoted staff and re-deployed staff all

benefit from this scheme. Staff are allocated a colleague in the college to act as a mentor to support them in the first few months in post. The actual length of time depends on the individual and, in many cases, mentors continue to act as a long-term sounding board.

71. The college has implemented systems to ensure consistent planning, performing and monitoring of off-the-job training. Although there is strong central direction, the systems allow sufficient flexibility to take account of the variations in learning styles, the requirements of different occupational areas, and the requirements of practical-based teaching. Groups of staff have successfully adopted these systems across all the occupational areas of the college.

72. The college has a wide network of partnerships, which support the full range of its activities. In many of these partnerships, college staff take a leading role. Some of these partnerships benefit work-based training. The college works in partnership with three other local colleges to target women to join technology courses. The college has a clear objective to widen participation in its courses. In this area, the closure of coalmines in the North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire coalfields area has resulted in the college targeting unemployed men to take up learning opportunities. There is much evidence to demonstrate extensive industrial liaison and there are inter-agency committees in the college.

73. The college has not made the same investment in the overall management of on-the-job training as it has in off-the-job training, nor has it exploited its good links with employers to increase employers' involvement. Although there is some good practice in the college, the on-the-job training of many trainees is unplanned. For most trainees, there is no systematic reference of work-based tasks to the qualification. There are few cases where the college has influenced employers to rotate the duties of the trainees to develop evidence for key skills and the NVQ, and in particular integration of on-the-job and off-the-job training.

74. Workplace training does not figure significantly in the college's strategic plan, and no strategic targets or success factors are set for it. Many important decisions concerning the work-based elements of trainees' programmes, the acquisition of key skills and work-based assessment have only been made in recent months. It is unfortunate that some decisions made on the appointment of college-based NVQ assessors who assess in the workplace have not been fully implemented owing to poor response to advertisements. Other important elements, such as initial assessment, induction, the use of a wide range of evidence and the closer involvement of employers in the trainee's training and assessment still wait to be addressed.

75. Over the last year, the college has reviewed the operation of its management-information systems and computer-services operations. This review led to the creation of an information services division. The head of information services is responsible for the reorganisation of all college computer services. Considerable progress has been made to address the needs of all users and to give them ownership of the data. There has been slower progress in meeting the needs of work-based training users and in tackling the lack of performance indicators to

measure training progress and achievement in the workplace.

## Quality assurance

## Grade 2

76. The college's quality assurance policy and charter were updated and re-approved by the corporation in 1998. The curriculum director with responsibility for quality assurance reports directly to the principal on all matters affecting the operation of the quality assurance and self-assessment policies across all areas of Chesterfield College. The 'quality co-ordinator's' line manager is the curriculum director, who is responsible for quality assurance. The director is ultimately responsible for establishing, implementing and maintaining the management of quality assurance procedures in line with college policies. For curricular matters, the 'quality co-ordinator' liaises with deputy heads of school, who are responsible for managing quality assurance in their school. The quality co-ordinator also meets regularly with support staff managers who, in turn, manage quality assurance procedures within their section. The quality assurance arrangements operating within the college are well written in the college's quality assurance manual. The quality assurance manual is distributed across the college. Each member of staff is issued with a quality assurance handbook, which summarises the quality assurance manual. The distribution of the manual and handbook is the responsibility of the 'quality co-ordinator', who arranges regular reviews and up-dates. The college routinely meets the requirements of the TEC and conducts self-assessment against the quality frameworks of the FEFC and the TSC. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths, which were appropriate to the scope of the inspection, and the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified an additional significant weakness and awarded a lower grade than that given by the college.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ well-integrated self-assessment, quality assurance and strategic planning systems
- ◆ extensive programme of college-based training observations
- ◆ rigorous internal validation process
- ◆ systematic use of stakeholders' feedback to influence continuous improvement

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no inclusion of some key work-based training processes in the quality assurance system
- ◆ incomplete implementation of internal verification strategy
- ◆ some staff lack skills to analyse self-assessment data

77. The college has a strong and well-established commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement. It has allocated significant resources to

support the quality assurance framework. All college staff belong to a quality assurance team and these teams meet at least once a term. This system has produced end-of-year evaluation since 1993. The college has operated an annual cycle of self-assessment for three years. Each quality assurance team produces a self-assessment report once a year. The self-assessment is an integral part of the quality assurance system and both systems are integral to the strategic planning system.

78. The extensive programme of college-based training observations has been in operation since October 1997. All staff, irrespective of their type of contract with the college, are observed by their line managers. These observations lead to the continuous improvement of teaching and the spread of best practice among groups of staff, and they provide an important source of evidence for the self-assessment process.

79. The college employs a rigorous system to internally validate the self-assessment process. A cross-college validation team of eight middle managers led by the 'quality co-ordinator' has been established and trained. The team validates self-assessment reports and systems, practice and documents. The outcomes of the validation process are used to produce local action plans, and validation reports are presented to the college's academic board. The college's annual 'good practice' report is produced and distributed to schools to share good practice.

80. The college uses a variety of methods to gain feedback from trainees, whose views are surveyed three times a year. The survey results, questionnaire distribution and return rates are analysed and reported to the college's academic board. Schools receive a survey report, which is summarised for students and trainees and placed on all schools' quality assurance notice boards. The results of these student surveys are a regular item at the meeting of the 'quality co-ordinator' and deputy heads of schools. The training schemes unit collects the views of employers annually, using a questionnaire. These findings are analysed and distributed to heads of school for action. The schools' industrial liaison committees, which meet twice a year, also provide feedback from employers. The quality assurance manual contains service level agreements for each of the support sections. Views of all staff are sought annually on the performance of support sections and results are sent to the appropriate manager for action.

81. There are few people responsible for the continuous improvement of work-based training processes. Few quality assurance standards or improvement targets are set for such issues as induction, initial assessment, key skills integration, work-based assessment and work-based reviews.

82. The self-assessment report identified inconsistency in the application of internal verification procedures. Since then, the college has established an internal verification group to oversee the management and implementation of internal verification and to implement good practice. New systems and procedures have been developed but they are not yet fully implemented. Not all groups of staff are able to use data to influence the self-assessment process or to analyse the





information which is produced by the process.

83. Although the underlying quality system is good, it is mainly underpinned by the FEFC's inspection framework. The college produced a document to illustrate application of the FEFC's framework and *Raising the Standard's* quality statements but this has not been used significantly in the quality assurance manual and the TSC's quality standards have not significantly affected the production of the self-assessment report.