



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JULY 2000

Doncaster Rotherham & District  
Motor Trades Group Training  
Association Limited

## SUMMARY

Doncaster Rotherham & District Motor Trades Group Training Association Limited provides satisfactory training in engineering and business administration. However, retention and achievement rates are low in both areas. The company's training centre has well-resourced workshops. Trainees are treated fairly and have access to an effective complaints procedure. Policies and procedures on equal opportunities are generally satisfactory, though the monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace is inadequate. Trainee support is less than satisfactory. The provider is effective in finding work placements for trainees but the review process is weak and trainees with additional needs receive inadequate support. Overall, the management of training is satisfactory, but on- and off-the-job training is not co-ordinated effectively and managers do not make effective use of data for planning purposes. Quality assurance is less than satisfactory.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	3
Business administration	3

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ comprehensive induction for trainees
- ◆ high level of effectiveness in finding suitable placements for trainees
- ◆ effective staff appraisal and staff development
- ◆ good, well-planned assessment and internal verification

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ failure to target under-represented groups
- ◆ poor reviews of trainees' progress
- ◆ no systematic initial assessment of key skills and basic skills
- ◆ poor support for trainees with additional needs
- ◆ failure to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training effectively
- ◆ insufficiently critical self-assessment
- ◆ inadequate use of data for planning

## INTRODUCTION

1. Doncaster Rotherham & District Motor Trades Group Training Association Limited is a private training provider and a registered charity. It was founded in 1972 by the Road Transport Industry Training Board and became a company limited by guarantee in 1985. The company specialises in training for the motor trade industry. It has a contract with Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to provide youth training in motor vehicle engineering, business administration, customer services, and distribution and warehousing. The organisation also undertakes commercial work for major motor vehicle manufacturers, which includes training for forklift truck drivers and heavy goods vehicle drivers. There are 164 trainees, 40 on modern apprenticeship programmes, 21 on national traineeships and 103 on other youth programmes. Trainees receive off-the-job training at the company's own premises and are placed with other local companies for on-the-job training and assessment.

2. The company occupies premises on the outskirts of Doncaster. It has a comprehensive range of workshops and classrooms for motor vehicle and business administration training. It employs 25 staff. At the 1991 census, minority ethnic groups formed 1.6 per cent of the population of Doncaster and 2 per cent of the population of Rotherham. In May 2000, the unemployment rate was 6 per cent in Doncaster and 6.9 per cent in Rotherham compared with a national average of 3.8 per cent. In 1999, 36.2 per cent of 16 year olds in the Doncaster area achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. The management team was responsible for producing a self-assessment report in preparation for the inspection. Staff were consulted, but not actively involved. The assessment was not sufficiently self-critical. Inspectors did not agree with many of the strengths and weaknesses which were identified in the report. In some areas of the report, no weaknesses were identified.

4. Four inspectors spent a total of 15 days with the organisation. They visited 25 employers, interviewed 27 trainees and 22 workplace supervisors, and held 18 meetings with the company's staff. Inspectors examined training and assessment records, trainees' portfolios, internal and external verifiers' reports and paperwork relating to the company's relationship with the TEC. They observed six training sessions and one assessment.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering	1	2	1			4
Business administration		2				2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering

### Grade 3

5. The association trains motor vehicle engineering trainees for employers in South Yorkshire. There are 140 trainees: 40 are on modern apprenticeship programmes, 21 on national traineeships and 79 on other youth training programmes. Programmes cover heavy and light vehicle engineering, vehicle body and paint operations, motorcycle repair and parts retailing. The company delivers its own training and assessment programmes. Nine staff are employed as motor vehicle trainers and assessors. All trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 and all are in work placements. Placement providers include large franchised main dealerships and small businesses. Not all trainees are employees of the company with which they are placed.

6. Trainees' induction takes place at the company's training centre. Subsequently, they attend the centre regularly on a day- or block-release basis for off-the-job training. Assessment is carried out in the workplace by the company's staff. All trainers and assessors hold assessor qualifications. Three are also qualified internal verifiers. Over the last three years, about half the trainees have left their programmes early, many with no qualifications. Less than 30 per cent have

achieved the qualifications which they were working towards. Inspectors found that many of the strengths cited in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ good opportunities to achieve additional skills and qualifications
- ◆ well-planned assessment

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate development of key skills
- ◆ some unreliable witness testimony

7. The training centre is well equipped. Some new vehicles and demonstration units have the latest high technology equipment, and staff have been trained in the use of this equipment. Many of the resources at the centre have been developed for the company's commercial courses. Some trainees complain that commercial courses take priority and that they are often confined to classrooms when commercial training takes place. Many cited it as a reason for not attending some of their off-the-job training sessions. However, the company's commercial work brings discernible benefits to trainees. They are able to use equipment to which they might not normally have access and they receive advice and guidance from instructors trained in the most up-to-date techniques. Their training includes demonstrations of the effect of a safety airbag being activated, and work on the latest high-pressure diesel and petrol-injection systems and vehicle air conditioning systems. Vehicle body repair and refinishing trainees have the opportunity to use the centre's new water-based paint spraying equipment, recently installed for manufacturers' own courses. Some of the training sessions are well planned and highly effective.

8. Trainees have the opportunity to acquire skills and qualifications which are additional to their main training. All vehicle retail parts trainees undertake a five-day intensive forklift truck operator's course. The course is also made available to other trainees and is particularly popular with heavy goods vehicle trainees. Other specialist courses include first aid, plastic welding, airbag operation, and air conditioning systems.

9. Trainees' portfolios are well presented and evidence within their portfolios is clearly referenced. Each portfolio has an assessment plan at the front which makes it easy for trainees to understand which tasks they need evidence for and when they have to acquire it. The trainees take their plan to the workplace, and their

workplace supervisor helps provide appropriate opportunities for assessment.

10. The number of motor vehicle trainees leaving their training programmes early, and without qualifications, is high. In the period 1997 to 1999, 49 per cent of apprentices, 50 per cent of national trainees and 63 per cent of other trainees left early without any qualifications. Most of those who remain achieve the qualifications for which they are aiming. However, the overall achievement rate is less than 30 per cent.

11. There is no assessment of key skills until late in trainees' programmes. Key skills are identified in training plans but there is little attempt to make them an integral part of workplace training. Trainees have little or no understanding of key skills and opportunities for collecting evidence for these skills are missed. Trainees end up with the additional task of gathering evidence of their competences in key skills during their final year. One trainee had completed all other components of his modern apprenticeship, including his level 3 NVQ, but had only just been introduced to key skills.

12. Much of the evidence accumulated by trainees is witness testimony in the form of job cards. Job cards, signed by the trainee's supervisor, record the work carried out by the trainee. Some job cards, however, describe work which the trainee has not carried out personally or to which they have only made a contribution. Too often, it was unclear, precisely, what the trainee had done. Some workplace supervisors are uncertain about the significance of signing a job card. They do not understand the purpose of the card in certifying competence. In some cases, for example, cards had been signed for trainees who had simply been present when the work had been done.

13. Internal verification is carried out throughout the programme and units are awarded after internal verification. The assessment procedure is detailed. Each trainee is provided with a personal work record book and a candidate assessment record book. Evidence relating to assessment is entered in the trainee's portfolio and cross-referenced to the personal work book and record book. All portfolios and assessment record books are internally verified.

## **Business administration**

## **Grade 3**

14. There are 22 trainees following training programmes in business administration. Two other trainees have recently completed their NVQs in business administration at level 2 and have begun to work for NVQs in customer service at level 2. Sixteen of the 22 are women. There are no modern apprentices or national trainees; all 24 trainees are on other work-based training for young people. The company employs one of the two trainees working for the NVQ in customer service at level 2. The other is in a work placement at the training centre and is likely to be offered employment there soon. The remaining 22 trainees are placed with local employers in various branches of the motor vehicle or transport

industry. The company employs two members of staff to provide training, assessment and verification in business administration. Both are qualified assessors and internal verifiers with substantial occupational experience. Subject to work requirements, trainees attend off-the-job training at the company's training centre. They also receive guidance in constructing portfolios and training in any aspects of work required for the NVQ which are not covered in the workplace. Placement providers deliver on-the-job training and visiting assessors from the company carry out assessments in the workplace. Evidence of trainees' competences includes the work they have produced, witness testimony from workplace supervisors, and assessors' observations of their performance in the workplace. Assessors also carry out progress reviews. Over the past three years, 40 per cent of trainees have left without any qualifications. In the period 1997 to 1999, 34 per cent of those who started training programmes achieved the qualifications for which they were aiming. The provider's self-assessment report combines this vocational area with motor vehicle engineering. The report identifies many strengths and two weaknesses for the combined vocational areas. Inspectors found most of the strengths to be no more than normal practice. They identified additional strengths and some significant weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ good opportunities to achieve additional qualifications
- ◆ good action planning and assessment

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ low retention and achievement rates
- ◆ missed opportunities for accreditation of prior learning and achievement
- ◆ delays in starting NVQ level 2 in information technology

15. Off-the-job training is effective in all its aspects. The standard of training at the company's training centre is high. Trainees attend the centre on day release one day a week, subject to the requirements of their work. The training in business administration is provided by two well-qualified and experienced staff. One manages the department; the other has only recently taken up post. Trainees receive a great deal of personal attention, frequently on an individual basis. Training at the centre covers theory and practical work required for the qualification which may not be covered in the workplace, such as constructing spreadsheets. Trainees are also given help and guidance on building portfolios. Training sessions are well planned. Session workbooks, geared to NVQ elements, provide a framework for learning and evidence for portfolios. The two trainers are not qualified to teach trainees who have learning disabilities but they know where to turn for help. The accommodation, equipment and facilities for business administration training are good. The training rooms are pleasant, airy and well

equipped. Hardware and software reflect current standards in business.

16. There are many opportunities for the achievement of additional qualifications. Some trainees who complete their level 2 in business administration go on to work towards the level 2 in information technology. Others take their level 2 in customer service. Courses in text processing and computer literacy are also provided.

17. Some assessment is carried out at the training centre, but most assessment occurs in the workplace. The two business administration trainers make regular visits to the workplace to conduct assessments. They both hold the assessors and verifiers' awards and carry out internal verification of each other's assessments. Preparation and planning for assessment is detailed and rigorous. Trainees confirm that they know what is expected of them for each assessment, and when and how assessment is to take place. The assessors also carry out formal reviews in the workplace.

18. Retention and achievement rates are low. The retention rate has improved over the last three years but was still only 50 per cent in 1998-99. Eighty per cent of those who started in the last year are still on the programme. Only 50 per cent of women trainees leaving in the current year have achieved their NVQ, but this is an improvement on previous years. No male leavers have achieved an NVQ or gained a job in the last three years.

19. Trainees come to their training with widely varying previous experience and qualifications. Previous NVQs are taken into account in some cases, such as where units which are common to both the business administration and customer service qualification frameworks. However, there is little recognition of other forms of prior achievement. Neither of the two trainers in business administration are qualified to accredit prior learning and achievement and the trainers in motor vehicle engineering who have the qualification do not provide any help in accrediting prior achievement in business administration.

20. This year, a few trainees experienced significant delays in being able to start their NVQ in information technology at level 2, after the completion of their business administration NVQ. The delay was caused by a member of staff leaving for another job and having to be replaced. In the interim, staff effort was devoted to trainees already working towards their NVQ.

21. Individual training plans are sketchy. However, appropriate targets are set for individual trainees' performance and progress as part of the regular process of assessment and action planning. At the centre, trainees work purposefully and without supervision while individual trainees are receiving tuition. Trainees' work is of an appropriate standard.



## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

**Grade 3**

22. The provider has a policy, which is updated regularly, and procedures which cover all aspects of equal opportunities. There are procedures in place for monitoring the ethnic origin and gender of trainees and for preventing discriminatory behaviour such as sexual harassment. The company's complaints procedure is clear and well publicised, and it applies to both staff and trainees. Equal opportunities data are collected and analysed annually. Workshops and most classrooms at the centre are accessible to people with disabilities. In engineering, 1.3 per cent of trainees are women. In business and administration 18 per cent of trainees are men. Three trainees are from minority ethnic groups, representing less than 2 per cent of all trainees. Inspectors found some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice. Additional weaknesses were found but the grade awarded was the same as that presented in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive policies and procedures for equal opportunities
- ◆ trainees' thorough understanding of the company's complaints procedure

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities issues in the workplace
- ◆ trainees' low awareness of equal opportunities issues
- ◆ no attempt to target under-represented groups in publicity materials

23. The provider has a clearly written, comprehensive equal opportunities policy and procedures document. The management group reviews it annually. Copies of the policy are contained in the induction material produced for staff and trainees. Staff and trainee handbooks also contain a statement declaring the company's commitment to equality of opportunity. Responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the group-training director who leads the equal opportunities management team. One of the business administration trainers is a man. There are no women on the engineering staff team.

24. A copy of the complaints procedure is issued to all trainees together with instructions on how to use of it. Trainees are well aware of the procedure and express confidence about using it should the need arise. The company has received few complaints, and those that have been received have been dealt with satisfactorily, in accordance with the procedures. Trainees are less certain about their rights in respect of matters other than the grievance procedure. Most have little understanding of equal opportunities issues.

25. Applicants for training are invited to attend the training centre for interview and assessment. No filtering takes place before the interview and the company conducts over 300 interviews a year. All trainees with the potential to succeed are offered a place on one of the training programmes and a lot of effort is devoted to finding an appropriate work placement for each trainee. Trainees without work placements undertake training in the training centre until a suitable placement is found.

26. The company does not monitor employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures. Equality of opportunity is discussed with employers before they take a trainee, but there is no follow up to this. Some employers do not have an equal opportunities policy. It is expected that equality of opportunity will be discussed during trainees' reviews, but there is no means of ensuring that this happens and few trainees or employers can recall talking about equal opportunities issues. Despite the lack of formal monitoring, trainees are fairly treated by staff, employers and other trainees.

27. The company recruits within the Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham area and advertises within local newspapers. Promotional material sent out to local schools, career centres and other training organisations makes little reference to equal opportunities and relies on images which do little to dispel inaccurate perceptions of training and employment in relation to gender, ethnic origin and disability. The company makes no use of information obtained from the analysis of data on ethnic origin, gender and disability to determine its policy on advertising and recruitment. No attempt is made to target under-represented groups.

## **Trainee support**

## **Grade 4**

28. All those who contact the provider to enquire about opportunities for training are sent an application form and all who return the application form are offered an interview. The selection process consists of an interview and selection tests. Engineering candidates sit a basic mechanical comprehension test and a short numerical and English test. Business administration candidates only sit the numeracy and English test. Most trainees begin their training programme in July when they leave school, although trainees may start at any time during the year. Information from the interview and tests is recorded but not used in drawing up the individual training plan. The choice of training programme is driven primarily by the trainee's preferences and interests. Most trainees attend a two-day induction at the company's training centre as soon as they start. Subsequently, they also receive an induction to the workplace. Trainees who do not attend the two-day induction at the training centre receive an extended induction to the workplace with a member of the company's staff. If trainees require additional learning support this is provided at the end of the weekly off-the-job training day. No staff have specific qualifications relating to additional support or counselling. The self-assessment report did not identify any weaknesses. Inspectors did not agree with many of the

strengths cited. They identified a number of weaknesses and strengths and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive induction
- ◆ good drive to find suitable placements
- ◆ good links with the community

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor review process
- ◆ no systematic initial assessment of basic or key skills
- ◆ poor support for trainees with additional needs
- ◆ lack of clear responsibility for trainee support

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*The company helps trainees to attend off-the-job training by providing transport and paying expenses. Off-the-job training is arranged so that trainees from a particular area attend on the same day. The company then collects them by minibus. Those trainees who do not have access to the free minibus service have their travel expenses reimbursed.*

29. The two-day induction with the provider at the beginning of their programme comprises an introduction to the company, information on health and safety and equal opportunities and descriptions of the industry they are training to enter, the training programme and the NVQ. Engineering trainees and business administration trainees attend separate induction programmes with the same core content. Health and safety induction for engineers covers general health and safety followed by information specific to the motor trade, whereas health and safety training for business administration trainees is specific to the office environment. At the end of the first phase of induction, trainees are given a test on health and safety. Trainees begin to build their portfolios as soon as the induction programme starts. The second part of induction is held in the workplace. Employers are required to give induction using a standard checklist which the company provides. The company monitors the employers' induction process.

30. The company puts a lot of effort into finding suitable placements and employment for trainees. It keeps a list of training placements and trainees are matched to vacancies as they occur. However, recruitment is not restricted to the number of vacancies available as the provider attempts to find a placement for all trainees with the potential to succeed. If a trainee loses a placement every effort is made to find another placement. Trainees waiting for a placement attend the company's training workshops. In one case, a trainee dismissed successively by two employers was found a third placement and is now progressing towards his NVQ.

31. The company maintains good links with the community. Staff visit schools and careers events to promote the industry and encourage people to apply for training. Students from a local school for deaf people undertake work experience at the company's training centre and enjoy the opportunity to carry out practical work on motor vehicles. Each year, the company holds an open day to which

**POOR PRACTICE**

*One trainee with dyslexia is not receiving any support. His dyslexia was reported to the provider when he was interviewed and is recorded on his application form. Tutors allow him extra time to copy notes from the board, but due to his dyslexia he is unable to understand what he has written. His employer was not informed about the dyslexia, but the trainee had the sense to tell him. The employer is attempting to help but does not understand the appropriate way to support someone with dyslexia.*

employers, staff and students from local schools, and parents are invited. They visit the training centre and see a range of exhibitions and demonstrations. During the open day, a local dignitary presents certificates to trainees who have successfully completed their training.

32. The review process for trainees is poor. Over the last 12 months, some trainees have had only one or two reviews while others have had regular review meetings, once a fortnight. Until recently, the review process did not include setting targets for trainees' progress. Reviews were not comprehensive enough and were poorly recorded. The company has now introduced a new form for recording the outcomes of reviews. There are carbon copies for the employer and trainee, and forms already completed include clear targets for trainees. The form is not yet in full use. Some trainees have had a recent review using the new approach; others have not. Some employers continue to play no part in the review process. Reviews do not identify trainees' overall progress towards their NVQ and they are not used to reinforce key messages about appeals procedures, equal opportunities, and trainees' responsibilities, or to identify additional needs.

33. The company does not carry out a systematic initial assessment of basic skills or key skills. As a consequence, individual training plans are not always realistic.

34. Trainees with additional learning needs are not being identified because of the lack of initial assessment and there is little available support. Those who ask for support and stay behind for an hour after completing their day-release training receive some help from trainers. However, this is not recorded and the provider is unable to describe the level of support, or to whom it is being given. Trainees who do not attend the day-release programmes have no access to this facility. The company has no provision for additional numeracy or literacy support. No one in the organisation is qualified to carry out such work and there are no arrangements with outside agencies to provide it. Some trainees who suffer from dyslexia are getting insufficient additional support.

35. It is not clear who within the company is responsible for trainee support. Staff visiting trainees in the workplace provide some pastoral support, and personal support is also provided at the training centre. However, no one in the organisation could provide inspectors with a list of trainees with additional needs, or a list of those with dyslexia. The administration department suggested that the responsibility lay with the tutors; the tutors thought it was being recorded by administrative officers. No one in the organisation is ensuring that needs are being identified and met, that checks are being made on this, and that records are being kept.

**Management of training****Grade 3**

36. The Doncaster Rotherham & District Motor Trade Group Training Association has 35 member employers, a chairman and nine directors. A training

director manages the day-to-day operation of the company, which employs 25 staff. All members of staff have written job descriptions. Their performance is appraised annually and each has an annual training plan. The company has been recognised as an Investor in People since 1994. Training is managed in accordance with a quality system which is subject to regular reviews. The company does not use any subcontractors for training. All off-the-job training is carried out in the company's own purpose-built training centre and most assessments are conducted in the workplace by the company's staff. Internal communications are good. There are regular, minuted staff meetings and daily discussions among staff. Information obtained from the management information systems is used to set targets and plan future developments in relation to the company's contracts. Inspectors regarded some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report as no more than normal practice and identified additional strengths and weaknesses. They awarded a lower grade than that cited in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective staff appraisal and staff development
- ◆ good internal communications
- ◆ good induction for staff

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ employers' lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- ◆ ineffective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

37. The provider has good staff appraisal procedures and demonstrates a strong commitment to staff development. The workshop manager or the training director appraises every member of staff; the chairman of the company appraises the training director. Appraisals take place annually. They cover performance, personal qualities, and attitudes towards trainees and fellow staff. The appraiser observes training sessions. The company also uses the independent services of an external organisation to report on the quality of teaching and learning. Discussions at the appraisal meetings lead to action plans. Each employee has an agreed annual training plan. All staff have received a substantial amount of training directly related to work-based training over the last few years.

38. Communication within the company is good. Regular minuted meetings of staff take place once a month: one month there is a full staff meeting; the following month there is a meeting of management staff. Minutes of the management meetings are circulated to all staff. Staff work as a team. They communicate effectively and often hold informal meetings. They understand their roles and carry out their work in accordance with their job descriptions.

39. The company has a comprehensive induction programme for employees. New employees are welcomed into the company, and provided with information on the

work of the company and the job they will be doing. They receive copies of their job description, the company's employment terms and conditions, the staff handbook and company rules and regulations. They are also given a tour of the premises and a personal introduction to other members of staff. Two employees who recently joined the company said that they immediately felt part of the team, and the name of another person shortly to take up post has already been added to the organisational plan displayed in the company's information literature.

40. Many employers do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities in providing training and support for trainees. The company has a formal agreement with employers and supplements this with a handbook for employers. Employers also receive a copy of the course information booklet when a trainee first starts the programme. However, many employers do not understand the NVQ process or the requirements of the training programme, particularly in respect of NVQ assessment and key skills. As a result, opportunities for learning, gathering evidence and assessment are being missed.

41. On- and off-the-job training are not co-ordinated effectively, especially in engineering. Employers do not plan their training and many of them do not know what training is being delivered at the company's training centre. Employers, therefore, are unable to support trainees effectively by selecting appropriate tasks related to the work they are doing off the job. Although procedures for assessment and action planning in business administration ensure that trainees and trainers relate activities on the job to the work being carried out at the centre, workplace supervisors are not necessarily involved in this. The new review process is intended to address these issues.

## Quality assurance

## Grade 4

42. The company has a set of written quality assurance procedures, which meet the requirements of the TEC, although the most recent financial appraisal and monitoring audit conducted by the TEC pointed to the need for action in some areas. The company gained the Investors in People award in 1994, and was re-accredited in 1997 for a further three years. The training director is the quality assurance manager, responsible for all quality assurance matters. The company's quality assurance manuals are readily accessible to all staff. Team meetings are held on a monthly basis, they are minuted and action plans developed from them. Some feedback from trainees is collected but the level of response to questionnaires has been low. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths and no weaknesses. Inspectors found the strengths were no more than normal practice. They identified additional strengths and a number of weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive and detailed quality assurance procedures



- ◆ good internal verification process

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ inadequate use of data for planning improvements and addressing weaknesses
- ◆ insufficiently rigorous self-assessment
- ◆ no formal feedback from employers
- ◆ failure to complete or update required paperwork

43. The company has a quality assurance policy and clear procedures for its implementation which cover recruitment, progress reviews, induction, work placements, audits of the quality training, complaints, and the rights and responsibilities of employers and trainees. A management committee, chaired by the training director, is responsible for the implementation of the policy and quality assurance issues are discussed at the bi-monthly management meetings. Policy reviews are carried out annually and the company has been audited by the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC. Action plans are drawn up from these policy review meetings and all staff receive minutes.

44. There are 11 full-time trainers and one part-time trainer. All of them are qualified assessors. Seven are also qualified internal verifiers, and three are qualified to accredit prior learning. The company's internal verification procedures are thorough and effective. All trainees' portfolios and assessment record books are examined by internal verifiers and all aspects of assessment are internally verified during the training period. The internal verification process meets the requirements of the awarding bodies and most external verifiers' reports comment on the high standards of assessment and verification.

45. The company collects data on many aspects of its provision, but these are used mainly to ensure that the company is complying with the terms of its contracts, not to support or promote continuous improvement in the quality of its training. No targets are set as part of the process of assuring the quality of training.

46. The company seeks trainees' views on their training through questionnaires sent out at six-monthly intervals. Under the company's quality assurance procedures, employers are also supposed to be consulted about the quality of training every six months. Some employers, however, felt that the process was not rigorous enough and some had not received an invitation to express their views.

47. There are many examples of incomplete or outdated paperwork. Progress report sheets and attendance records in trainees' personal files were not completed. Documents relating to the identification of additional support for trainees had not been completed. Some health questionnaire forms were not completed. Induction pack handouts on current health and safety legislation referred to regulations which are now obsolete and failed to include the latest legislation on disability discrimination. Individual training plans had not been updated to show interim



achievement or any additional training programmes.

48. The management team compiled the self-assessment report. Although staff were consulted on its content and accuracy, they had little involvement in drawing up the report. The process of self-assessment is well established within the company. However, the report produced for the inspection is not rigorous enough. Inspectors found a number of weaknesses in occupational and generic areas where the report identified none. They also identified additional strengths. Many of the strengths recorded in the report were no more than normal practice.