



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MAY 2000

Bournville College of Further Education

SUMMARY

Bournville College of Further Education provides good training in care, with a high standard of on-the-job tuition. The work-based provision for care trainees is flexible, and allows them the opportunity to progress at their own pace and gain experience in a broad range of skills. Training in agriculture, management and professional, and business administration is satisfactory. Resources for off-the-job training, and the experience and qualifications of teaching staff in these areas are good. The college's efforts to ensure equality of opportunity are satisfactory, although trainees' understanding and awareness of equal opportunities issues is not checked on an ongoing basis. Trainees are not always supported well in the workplace. There are inconsistent approaches to initial assessment and induction in the workplace, as well as some poorly recorded reviews and action plans. Management of training and quality assurance are unsatisfactory, and managers have insufficient influence on the way subcontracted training is carried out. The quality of training in the workplace is not checked, and in some areas, good practice is not always shared. However, the college undertakes rigorous internal verification of assessments.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Agriculture	3
Management & professional	3
Business administration	3
Health, care & public services	2

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff appraisal and development programme
- ◆ strong commitment to continuous improvement
- ◆ good procedures in place for trainees' feedback
- ◆ robust and well-recorded internal verification
- ◆ good arrangements at college for additional support

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inaccurate self-assessment process
- ◆ inconsistent practices for recording trainees' progress
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training in some areas
- ◆ poor quality assurance of training in the workplace
- ◆ lack of control of subcontractors' activities
- ◆ no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace

INTRODUCTION

1. The Cadbury confectionery company established Bournville College in 1913 to provide continuing education for its young employees. In 1960 the college was taken over by Birmingham Local Education Authority (LEA), and was re-established as a further education college. The college became independent from the LEA in 1993, and is now a general further education college offering a wide range of vocational, academic and recreational courses. Bournville College operates from a single site approximately four miles from the centre of Birmingham, and competes with seven other further education colleges, and three sixth-form colleges. In addition to this, there are 15 sector colleges and several training providers within the Birmingham area. The college also runs courses for its local communities in 58 outreach centres. The college employs 270 full-time equivalent academic and support staff, as well as using agency staff when required. Three faculty heads manage government-funded work-based training. One of the faculty heads has overall responsibility, and the college has also recently employed a full-time administrator to support this role. The college has a business school, health and care centre, sixth-form centre, science and technology centre, and a wholly owned subsidiary company which generates funds for the college through additional business ventures. Staff from the appropriate faculties within the college carry out off-the-job training and assessment.

2. Approximately three-quarters of the college's work is funded through the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), and in the current academic year there have been over 17,500 enrolments onto full- and part-time courses. Around 92 per cent of these are enrolled onto part-time programmes. The work-based training has been funded under a contract with Birmingham and Solihull Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) since September 1999. Fifty-two trainees are on TEC-funded programmes, of whom 23 are modern apprentices and 22 are national trainees. Seven trainees are following other work-based training for young people. The college has 25 New Deal clients, from the Birmingham unit of delivery of the Employment Service, on the full-time education and training option. They are training in a range of occupational areas, not all of which are covered by this report.

3. Work-based training is available in a range of occupational areas. These areas include agriculture, management and professional, business administration, health, care and public services, and foundation for work. The foundation for work programme was not inspected due to the low number of trainees.

4. Bournville College has a catchment area which covers Birmingham and some of its outer wards. In May 2000, Birmingham had an unemployment rate of 9.1 per cent, compared with 4.2 per cent for the West Midlands. The national rate of unemployment at that time was 3.8 per cent. The college recruits over half of its students from disadvantaged areas. In the Birmingham labour market, professional and associate professional occupations are the most predominant, accounting for

approximately 20.5 per cent of all jobs. The local economy is generated primarily through manufacturing and construction, public administration, health and education, distribution, and hotels and catering. Within the college catchment area, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups ranges from 3 per cent in neighbouring Northfield, to 25.3 per cent in Moseley.

5. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 38.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In the same year, 6.2 per cent of school leavers achieved no GCSEs.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. The self-assessment process at Bournville College is well established. The college had prepared two self-assessment reports for its FEFC-funded provision prior to this inspection. As part of the self-assessment process, all teaching and support staff were consulted, and information was gathered from each programme area. Evidence was also gathered from external reports. The college's corporation standards committee is responsible for reviewing the college's self-assessment report prior to its submission to the corporation for approval. The report for the Training Standards Council (TSC) was prepared in February 2000 and updated in May. When the self-assessment report was initially written for the TSC, work-based training was relatively new to the college. Inspectors found that the self-assessment report did not accurately identify many of the strengths and weaknesses in the training programmes.

7. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 22 days at the college in May 2000. Inspectors visited 22 work placements, and interviewed 23 employers and workplace supervisors. They also interviewed 31 trainees and all the staff involved in work-based training. A wide range of documents was examined, including TEC contracts and audits, trainees' personal files and portfolios of evidence, internal and external verification reports, written policies and procedures, and trainees' reviews and assessments. Inspectors observed 12 training sessions and 2 trainees' reviews.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Agriculture		1	1			2
Management & professional	1	2				3
Business administration		2	3	1		6
Health, care & public services			1			1
Total	1	5	5	1		12

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Agriculture (floristry and horticulture)

Grade 3

8. Bournville College has 12 floristry and five horticulture trainees who are all working towards a national traineeship. The trainees on the horticulture programme are currently working toward national vocational qualifications

(NVQs) at level 1 in amenity horticulture and the decorative horticulture option at level 2. The floristry trainees are working towards level 2 NVQs in floristry. All the trainees started in September 1999. The college and Birmingham City Council parks department jointly provide training for the horticulture programme. Trainees attend off-the-job training at a training centre in the local park one day each week. On-the-job training is provided by local horticultural organisations and assessment takes place during the off-the-job training at the park. Floristry training is given at the college one day each week. Work-based training and assessment take place within floristry retailers. An assessor from the college carries out the assessments in the workplaces. There are no achievement data for the programmes yet. To date, 17 of the 20 trainees who started the programme in September 1999 are still on the programme after nine months, and all trainees have NVQ portfolios which show planned progress towards the achievement of their qualification. Most trainees join the programmes by direct referral from their employers. Some were referred to the college from the careers service. Trainees' induction includes an introduction to the assessment process and all aspects of the training programme. Health and safety issues such as risk assessment are covered at induction. Initial assessment is carried out by the occupational tutor and includes an assessment of prior achievement and learning. Reviews of trainees' progress take place both off the job and in the workplace, and include the setting of personal targets and work-related targets. The self-assessment report identified strengths in the quality of training and the resources with which inspectors agreed. In addition, inspectors identified the trainees' reviews in the floristry programme as a strength. Inspectors agreed with the weaknesses identified by the college, although an additional weakness was identified relating to the poor integration of key skills. The grade awarded was lower than that awarded in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-resourced training facilities
- ◆ rigorous and frequent reviews in floristry
- ◆ well-planned and -taught on- and off-the-job training

GOOD PRACTICE

Trainees in amenity horticulture are taught how to carry out risk assessments during their off-the-job training. They carry out a risk assessment on every new task which they undertake during both on- and off-the-job training, and this is recorded in their portfolios.

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor integration of key skills into the training programmes
- ◆ some missed opportunities for workplace assessment
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training in horticulture

9. Training is effectively planned and provided to meet the needs of individual trainees. Training sessions for off-the-job training are well organised and follow a structured programme. This programme is included in the trainees' files. Trainees receive help in cross-referencing the evidence of competence in their portfolios. Training in floristry is good, and the sessions taught at the college are related to commercial floristry practice. College tutors are well qualified and have close

links with the floristry industry. The assistant head of the programme area carries out effective internal verification, visiting each work placement at least twice a year to check on assessment and the quality of work undertaken. The quality of the trainees' floristry work is good and the trainees are well motivated by enthusiastic staff. Off-the-job training in horticulture is satisfactory and effectively planned to make use of the learning opportunities at the city council's park.

10. Work placements offer good on-the-job training. Employers are aware of the content and requirements of the qualifications. Trainees are given the opportunity to cover all the elements of their NVQ within their occupational area. An employment liaison officer provides the link between off-the-job training and on-the-job training and meets with all the trainees weekly.

11. There are good facilities for both on- and off-the-job training in horticulture and floristry. The floristry training rooms at the college are purpose built, providing excellent facilities which are supported by a small floristry shop in the college. Trainees have access to good information technology resources at the college. The city council provides a spacious and pleasant training room in the park, which enables close links between theory and practical teaching. There are insufficient books and periodicals in this training room, however.

12. Reviews in floristry are good. They involve trainees, employers and the college's trainers. The employment liaison officer meets all the trainees in college each week. The assistant head of the programme area of floristry carries out a review with each trainee every two or three weeks. Progress is recorded, targets are set for future achievement and any personal issues are discussed. The employment liaison officer carries out a review in the workplace at least once every 12 weeks, which involves the employer. A well-structured form is used to gather information on progress towards achievement of each NVQ unit. The form enables progression towards achievement of units in the workplace to be linked with the off-the-job training. There are good links between college and workplace reviews. All employers, trainers and trainees understand what has been achieved, and are involved in setting targets for progression. In horticulture, reviews are satisfactory and are carried out in the workplace by the employment liaison officer. These reviews involve the employers.

13. The employment liaison officer is occupationally qualified in floristry and visits work placements at the request of trainees to carry out additional assessments. Employers provide statements to support evidence collected by trainees on some tasks. All of the floristry assessment is carried out in the workplace to meet the awarding body's standards. None of the employers are qualified assessors. Progress towards certification is slow, and there are missed opportunities for employers to carry out assessments. Trainees collect photographic evidence in the workplace, which is countersigned by employers. However, the assessor still has to visit the workplace in order to carry out assessment. In horticulture there is no work-based assessment undertaken, and all the assessments are carried out at the training centre. There are no links between the assessment carried out at the training centre and the work undertaken by

trainees in their workplace.

14. The work placements used in horticulture provide well-supported on-the-job training and a wide range of well-managed work experiences. The links between training given at the training centre and training provided in the workplace are poor. Some work-based assessors are being trained but have not yet conducted any assessment. In horticulture, some of the trainees have work placements at sports grounds such as a local football club. These trainees are following a level 2 NVQ in decorative horticulture and do not see the relevance of the qualification to their work. Approval is currently being sought to run the sports turf option at NVQ level 2.

15. The teaching and assessment of key skills is inadequate. There is no cross-referencing of key skills within the horticulture and floristry vocational qualifications. In floristry there are recent assignments which link key skills to floristry work. Trainees are currently undertaking assignments which involve floristry knowledge and key skills in information technology and communication. In horticulture the trainees have begun key skills sessions in communication. There is no access to information technology at the horticultural training centre. No arrangements have been made for the trainees to use computers elsewhere.

Management & professional

Grade 3

16. There are six modern apprentices working towards level 3 NVQs in supervisory management. Eighteen apprentices started the programme this year, and 12 have left before completing their training. All the apprentices are employed, and most were in their current employment when they started the course. There are three clients on the full-time education and training option of the New Deal. A subcontracted training company is training two of the apprentices. This contract began in January 2000. The college and the subcontractor use different initial assessment, induction and training processes. The college's initial assessment includes numeracy and literacy tests and a questionnaire to identify trainees' skills and aptitudes. Induction takes place either at the college or at the subcontractor's training centre. Training requirements are discussed with the employer during the initial visit to the workplace. College apprentices are trained in the workplace and visited by the college's assessors every three weeks. The two apprentices trained by the subcontractor attend short training sessions at the company's training centre. The faculty of professional and business development manages the apprentices as part of the management studies programme area. The course team for the NVQ in management plans and carries out most of the training for this course. The team reviews the course annually, producing an action plan to implement proposals for improvement. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report did not accurately reflect those found by the inspectors. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified. The inspection grade was the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strong commitment to training by most employers
- ◆ flexible training arrangements to meet trainees' needs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention rates
- ◆ poor communication among the subcontractor, employers and college

17. The college's apprentices are employed at a local hospital. Their line managers have good knowledge of the NVQ programme. Assessors visit each apprentice in the workplace every three weeks, and reviews are conducted quarterly. Visits are made to suit the needs of the employer and individual apprentices, including visits out of normal working hours to those apprentices on shift work. Assessments are well planned and thorough. NVQ portfolios and action plans are regularly reviewed and well recorded. Realistic short-term targets are set for apprentices. The assessors are well-qualified full-time teaching staff of the college. Tutors give well-structured training to trainees on a one-to-one basis. Communication between the assessors and the employers is effective and takes into account the specific work requirements of each trainee.

18. Training carried out by the college's subcontractor is undertaken in a bar-restaurant and a nightclub. Both employers expressed strong support for their trainees. Several staff in one establishment are working towards or have achieved NVQs. Both apprentices and their managers were unhappy with the lack of contact from the subcontractor, and the slow progress in completing NVQ units or elements towards these. In both cases the subcontractor had started with a briefing visit to the apprentices and the employer although no contact with the employer has been made since. Apprentices have been required to attend off-the-job training days at the subcontractor's training centre at short notice. This caused difficulties for both the employers and apprentices.

19. Retention of apprentices on the supervisory management programme has been poor. Over 60 per cent of the apprentices who started the course have left early, and had not completed any units of their NVQ.

20. One of the two apprentices being trained by the subcontractor had only been assessed once in the past four months. The subcontractor has procedures in place to undertake regular visits and assessments. These procedures are not being carried out. Communication between the subcontractor, the employers and the college is poor.

Business administration (accounts and administration)

Grade 3

21. The college has 12 young people following training in either accounts or administration. There are three modern apprentices in accounting who are working towards a level 3 NVQ and one working towards a level 2 NVQ. There are three modern apprentices in administration working towards NVQs at level 3; a subcontractor is training two of these apprentices. Five national trainees are working towards NVQs at level 2 in administration. These training programmes have only been running for eight months. There were originally 20 young people following accounts and administration programmes. No one has yet achieved a full NVQ award. All trainees are employed, and complete a vocational skills check as an initial assessment. Induction is given in the workplace. The accounting trainees work in accounting departments of large industrial companies. All of the placements provide a range of learning opportunities. The accounting trainees attend off-the-job training for seven hours a week. The administration trainees do not attend any off-the-job training, although there is a workshop available one evening each week. Four trainer-assessors are involved in accounting training, and one has responsibility for key skills. Five trainer-assessors provide administration training; the subcontractor employs two of them. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify any of the strengths and weaknesses, and inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade awarded in the college self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective links between employers and college
- ◆ good use of work-based evidence for key skills
- ◆ well-planned and effective off-the-job training in accounts

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poorly structured training in administration
- ◆ slow progress by trainees in administration
- ◆ some poor recording of reviews

22. Staff on the accounting programme are well qualified. The apprentices on the NVQ level 3 programme in accounting all gained their NVQ level 2 last year as fee-paying students of the college. The apprentices are integrated within groups of other students. The training is well planned over the year and given in an effective manner. The training is structured to allow flexibility for individual needs. The training observed included the revision and reinforcement of learning on topics which have been previously identified by the course tutor. Each apprentice has three one-to-one college-based tutorials and portfolio-building sessions each term to discuss progress. Portfolios contain a good range of work-based evidence,

awarding body-designed simulations and college-designed assignments, which check apprentices' theoretical knowledge.

23. Key skills are an integral part of the training programme. All trainees and apprentices are actively encouraged to produce work-based evidence linked to their NVQ portfolios. Administration trainees have a weekly visit by their trainer in the workplace where work-based evidence relevant to key skills is identified. Each accounting apprentice currently has a weekly tutorial on key skills. The trainees and apprentices understand the transferability of skills and are encouraged to identify links between the workplace and their training through key skills. Workplace evidence forms the basis of their portfolios and is clearly cross-referenced to both the NVQ and the key skills award.

24. Employers and workplace supervisors are very supportive of the trainees and apprentices. Many young people have attended external courses provided by their employers. Some of the workplace supervisors have completed the same qualifications and understand the NVQ requirements. They discuss the NVQ with the trainees and check on their progress, giving them the necessary work-related tasks to reinforce their learning. One workplace supervisor who had no knowledge of the requirements of the administration NVQ attended the weekly workshop session at the college to gain a better understanding of the course so that she could provide better support for young people in the workplace. However, provision is not always made for study or portfolio-building during the working day.

25. Apprentices in accounts receive inadequate assessment. They have been in training for eight months and, apart from an initial visit, have not been visited by the college in the workplace. As a result, assessment opportunities have been missed. Some administration trainees have had reviews which clearly identify progress and include the workplace supervisor as part of the process. However many of the trainees only receive a tutorial, and not a review. These are not always recorded in any detail, and the college does not always keep a record in the trainee's file. Some of the trainees have no records of these visits.

26. The progress of some business administration trainees through their NVQ is very slow. Some trainees and apprentices have been in training for eight months and have collected a lot of evidence. They have not completed any units or elements of the NVQ. Some trainees are bored, and they cannot see what progress they have made.

27. Some administration trainees are not aware of their NVQ programme's requirements. While they fully understand the key skills programme, they are unaware of the optional NVQ units which are required to complete their national traineeship.

28. There is no structured or planned training in administration. There are no training plans which match the job requirements to the NVQ. The need for teaching support for off-the-job training has now been recognised and an evening workshop has started. The training is tailored to the requirements of the job and

not to the individual trainee's learning requirements. There are no formal training sessions for theory. Employers give trainees time off to study. Attendance at the college for the workshop is in the trainees' own time.

Health, care & public services

Grade 2

29. The college has 10 modern apprentices who are following NVQ level 2 in care and early years care and education. This programme began in September 1999 with five of the apprentices starting in January 2000. There are seven clients on the full-time education and training option of the New Deal working towards NVQ qualifications in care. All apprentices and clients are employed, and work in a variety of establishments such as local authority, and private, residential or nursing homes and day nurseries. Before an apprentice or client starts a programme the college's business liaison officer checks that the employer's arrangements are suitable. Apprentices and clients work a variety of shifts up to 38 hours each week including evening and night duties. Apprentices and clients are supervised by a senior member of staff while on duty. The college's self-assessment report recorded some strengths which inspectors considered to be no more than normal practice. The self-assessment failed to identify weaknesses both in the review process and the insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors in the programme. The inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a grade higher than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ additional learning opportunities to improve employability
- ◆ high standard of portfolio evidence
- ◆ good progress by well-motivated trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor communication with workplace supervisors by the college
- ◆ no formal review and action planning

30. Either their work-based assessor or supervisor supports all apprentices and clients. Many supervisory staff have professional and occupational qualifications relevant to the vocational area. Apprentices and clients are able to work on the same shifts as their supervisor-assessor so that learning and assessment opportunities are not missed. Each of the placements visited has its own programme of in-house training for staff. This included both the mandatory training requirements of health and safety and first aid, as well as manual handling, basic food hygiene and fire safety. Additional training specific to the requirements of each placement is also provided. These additional learning opportunities add to the apprentices and clients ability to work effectively and improve their employability. Evidence of training undertaken is recorded in the trainees'

portfolios of evidence. The additional workplace training provided is also discussed during off-the-job training.

31. The standard of NVQ portfolios is good. Apprentices and clients have clearly referenced, well-organised portfolios of evidence. The portfolios contain detailed evidence of assessment planning, records of observation, witness testimonies, outcomes of assessment and records of feedback. Guidance on portfolio building is provided both by the assessors and by the college's teaching staff.

32. Apprentices are progressing well. The five apprentices who started the programme in September 1999 have almost completed their NVQ level 2. Apprentices and clients have a clear understanding of key skills and the programme that they are following. Key skills are effectively integrated into the training programme. During the initial stages of their programme apprentices and clients attend college one day each week for off-the-job training. This is to enable them to acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge. At the start of each off-the-job training session time is allowed for group discussion to enable apprentices and clients to raise any concerns about their training programme. Tutorial staff and work-based assessors have, or are working towards, the achievement of trainers and assessors' qualifications. All assessment of apprentices and clients' competence is conducted in the workplace. College staff conduct assessments if work-based assessors are not available for any reason.

33. There is no formal review of progress for apprentices and clients following care programmes. Apprentices and clients can attend reviews with their college tutor during off-the-job training but these are not individually timetabled at regular intervals. The records of these reviews are poor. They do not show the progress an individual has made, or set out targets for achievement. For some apprentices and clients there is no written evidence that reviews have taken place. There is no involvement of the workplace supervisor or assessor. Some workplace supervisors are unaware of the training programme which their apprentices are following.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

34. There are 52 trainees currently undergoing training within Bournville College. Of these 40 are women. Twelve are from minority ethnic groups and no trainees are recognised as having a disability or endorsed as having any special training needs. The college catchment area covers a diverse range of wards within Birmingham. The college has an equal opportunities policy and a code of practice which is reviewed annually. There is also a complaints and grievance procedure, which is contained in both the staff handbook and the handbook which all trainees and clients receive at induction. The policy and procedures apply across the college and do not differentiate between students, trainees and clients. There is an equal opportunities committee led by the college's director of human resources. It

monitors, reviews and updates the policy and procedures as necessary. There is an ongoing action plan for improving equality of opportunity with measurable targets and dates set for the completion of actions. The senior management team endorses the action plan and any proposed changes to policy and procedures. The equal opportunities policy reflects current legislation and meets TEC contractual requirements. The policy has been reviewed to ensure that it is written in a clear manner with specific aims, so that it is understandable to all who are covered by it. There is no specific anti-bullying or anti-harassment policy. An abridged version of the policy, along with the complaints procedure, is outlined in the student handbook. The college monitors the numbers of trainees and clients starting and leaving training and their achievement patterns, by disability, gender and ethnicity. As the training programme is new there is no evidence yet of analysis and any action planning arising from this. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify all the strengths and weaknesses, and the inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade awarded in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff training in equal opportunities
- ◆ good range of marketing and promotional material
- ◆ good facilities and resources for minority groups at the college site

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ poor understanding of equal opportunities issues by most trainees and clients

35. All new staff who work with trainees and clients have an induction which includes training on equal opportunities, with emphasis on the issue of harassment. There are monthly equal opportunities training sessions for staff and everyone who attends the college. These are run by equal opportunities co-ordinators who are specialists in issues of race, gender and disability. They have all received specialist training in such areas as gender issues and government legislation. The surgeries are advertised throughout the college. The equal opportunities committee has monitored their use and an analysis of this has indicated that the surgeries are not used very often. The trainees who do not attend the college for off-the-job training are not informed of the dates and times of these surgeries. There are regular staff development days on equal opportunities issues. These occur during the annual staff development week. The last one was based around the issues of gender diversity. These are open to all staff including part-time and agency workers. They focus on issues which have arisen during the past year in the college and have been highlighted as needing attention by the equal opportunities committee. The committee undertakes a process to identify where staff training is needed in equality issues.

36. The college encourages participation by minority ethnic groups. The reception staff are able to converse in a range of community languages. The language department provides facilities for trainees and clients to discuss their needs and requirements in their own language if required. Training in English for speakers of other languages is offered when necessary. There is a multi-cultural faith centre. The college has ramps for disabled access, lowered telephones and toilet facilities with hoists and alarm pulls specifically for those with limited mobility.

37. The college encourages equality of opportunity with a good range of marketing and promotional activities. All of the marketing materials used display positive images with regard to gender and ethnic origin. The marketing materials provide help in four commonly used languages of the local area: English, Punjabi, Urdu, and Gujarati. At schools' careers events trainees are used as positive role models. All posters and display materials show positive equal opportunities messages. The "welcome" signs in the college and information signs in the guidance centres are written in a range of languages spoken in the local community. Publicity material is available in Braille and on cassette tape.

38. There is no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace by the college. All the organisations offering work placements sign up to the college's equal opportunities policy. Equal opportunities are not discussed at the review process or during tutorials, unless the trainee or client raises issues. The college does not check how the subcontractor who has responsibility for some trainees monitors equal opportunities. There is no reinforcement of roles and responsibilities with employers or subcontractors, and no checks are made of employers relating to equality of opportunities.

39. Most trainees and clients have a poor understanding of equal opportunities issues, including bullying and harassment. The trainees and clients have little recollection of equal opportunities being discussed at induction. For most trainees and clients, few efforts are made to deepen their understanding of their rights and responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities in the workplace. Trainees and clients' understanding of equal opportunities is not regularly checked.

Trainee support

Grade 4

40. Prospective trainees obtain advice and information from open events at the college for school leavers, visits to schools by the college's staff, talks to community groups and contact with employers. The college has its own advice and information centre and a full-time careers advisor. Two mobile information centres operate in the southern and central parts of Birmingham. Where appropriate, referral is made to the college's careers advisor. Vocational specialists interview potential trainees and clients. Specialist staff assess the specific learning support needs of candidates. Initial assessment includes an assessment of basic skills and an assessment of prior learning. Modern apprentices' initial assessment is completed during the first five weeks of training. A handbook is given to trainees

and clients at induction and contains information such as the range of support services available and the individual's rights and responsibilities. All trainees and clients are allocated a personal tutor. Tutors complete an individual training plan, which is signed by the tutor and the trainee or client. Tutorials and reviews take place and progress towards meeting targets as set out in the individual training plan is assessed. Personal tutors or employment liaison workers undertake tutorials. Trainees and clients can be referred for additional learning support at any time. All information technology resources, the library, careers and central college services are accessible to trainees and clients with restricted mobility. The counselling service includes welfare advice and support for anyone with personal problems. The New Deal clients receive assistance in looking for jobs. The self-assessment report gives a clear picture of the arrangements and range of provision for trainee support. There are inconsistencies in the support provision in different programme areas which are mentioned in the report but are not highlighted as weaknesses. Strengths in counselling and the notification of job vacancies were regarded as normal practice and were not always accessible to work-based trainees or clients who did not attend the college. Additional weaknesses were identified by inspectors in the initial assessment process, use of individual training plans and workplace induction. The grade awarded by inspectors was lower than that in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive guidance for trainees and clients before starting training
- ◆ good arrangements for additional support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no monitoring of induction in the workplace
- ◆ inconsistent approach to initial assessment
- ◆ ineffective use of individual training plans
- ◆ poor recording of learning support

41. Trainees and clients are on appropriate programmes, and working towards levels of qualifications which match their abilities and career aspirations. Good guidance prior to entry to the programmes is given to all candidates. Occupational specialists give advice to trainees and clients by visiting employers' premises or by interview at the college. The advice centre at the college is open on weekday evenings as well as during the day, and at weekends. Prospective trainees and clients can book an appointment with the specialist careers advisor. Advice is available on welfare and finance issues. Trainees and clients state their satisfaction with the guidance they receive before they start their programmes.

42. Initial assessment varies according to the occupational area of the trainee or client and sometimes within the same occupational area. The basic skills

assessment is sometimes designed by the staff who co-ordinate key skills and sometimes is in the form of a literacy and numeracy assessment devised and set within the programme area. The feedback to the trainees and clients on the results of their assessment is poor. Few trainees or clients understood how their needs were being assessed. As part of the initial assessment there is also an assessment of prior learning and achievement. There is no accreditation of prior learning for vocational skills or key skills. Some trainees are assessed using a vocational skill check which involves a self-assessment of vocational skills but the results of this are not used to develop the individual training plan.

43. The induction at the college covers health and safety, equal opportunities and the requirements of the learning programme. Induction is supported by the use of a student handbook. A checklist is completed to reinforce the key points. The trainee or client works through a checklist of health and safety issues in the workplace. Employers are expected to provide an effective induction in the workplace but there are no checks to see that this is carried out. Individual training plans are not used effectively. They are written at the start of training and signed by the tutor and trainee, but are not subsequently used as working documents. In many cases the individual training plans contain the same information for groups of trainees and clients and lack individuality. The plans do not always contain target dates for achievement of NVQ units. Changes to training arrangements are not always recorded in the individual training plans.

44. The systems to monitor the provision of learning support are inadequate. The trainee or client informs the course tutor that they are attending basic skills support sessions in the drop-in centre at the sixth-form centre in the college but there are no records available to course tutors to check on progress or attendance. The basic skills support sessions are not available to trainees and clients who do not attend the main college site.

Management of training

Grade 4

45. Bournville College updates its strategic plan annually. It also produces a statement of its core social aims, purpose and values as well as its financial and quality-related aims. The management of training is the responsibility of the three heads of faculty. Each of the three faculties produces its own annual business plan. The plans reviews the previous year's actual performance against the projected performance and set new targets. Targets for each faculty's income and expenditure, as well as for enrolment and early leavers, are within the plan. These targets are linked directly to the overall strategic plan. Each course management team reviews all aspects of course design and teaching six times a year and this information contributes to the planning process. Some TEC-funded training is subcontracted to other organisations. All trainees are in full-time employment. The college identified two strengths and one weakness in its self-assessment report. Inspectors identified different strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given in the college report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective staff development linked to appraisal

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of control of subcontractors' activities
- ◆ ineffective management of progress monitoring
- ◆ lack of clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by some staff

46. College procedures for staff recruitment, induction, appraisal and development are clearly set out. A new staff appraisal system has been introduced in stages over the past year to include all staff. Training and development needs are assessed in relation to each course area, the needs of the course as a whole and the individual's needs. A corporate staff development plan is produced annually and is updated throughout the year. The qualification levels of the college's staff vary in the extent to which they match the requirements of their individual roles, and staff development relies largely upon attendance at courses offered by the college. This limitation on the choice of areas and methods of personal development is being improved by including more external courses. Staff development weeks are used to promote specific college aims and values. The annual budget for staff training has doubled in the past two years.

47. There are wide variations in the way in which work-based training is managed and given for trainees and clients in different occupational areas. Communication is promoted through frequent meetings and discussions. The relevant course team which makes changes when necessary manages each course. There is no effective co-ordination within the college of the training given by different course teams and by subcontracted organisations. There are examples of both good and bad practice within the same programme area. Specific examples of poor practice include reviews which are poorly recorded, or are not taking place at all. These problems of management and organisation are recognised by the college and changes are being made. Some staff did not have a clear understanding of the requirements of work-based training. They did not all know the requirement for 12-weekly reviews and action planning, and some did not understand the NVQ units which trainees and clients were completing.

48. The college experienced difficulties in producing accurate reports on the numbers and progress of TEC-funded trainees from their computerised management information system. It was difficult for the college to monitor the progress of trainees and clients effectively. Some programme areas had their own manual system in place, although some of the information these systems produced was difficult to verify.

49. Subcontracted training was poorly managed and contact between the college

and the subcontractors was perfunctory. Subcontractors were not always recording contact with trainees or clients and workplace reviews and action planning were often poorly done. Trainees and clients trained and assessed by subcontractors often showed poorer progress and achievement levels than those trained and assessed directly by the college.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

50. Bournville College has a clearly written quality assurance policy and procedures for all programme and business support areas within the college. There is an annual review of the quality of all teaching within the college, the outcomes of which contribute to the strategic and operational planning processes. Clearly defined reporting systems are in place to aid this review. The quality review group is responsible for the co-ordination and development of the college's quality assurance system. A number of focus groups looking at specific areas of development report to the quality review group. This group in turn reports to the management team and the corporation standards committee. Staff contribute to the production of the programme area reviews, which are a central part of the quality assurance system. They also form the basis for the self-assessment of the training provision. There are standard course handbooks and core agenda items for course team meetings. Because the work-based training provision is new to the college, there is no evidence to indicate the monitoring of retention and achievement will be extended to TEC-funded training. The college has been an Investor in People since 1997.

51. In relation to quality assurance the self-assessment report failed to identify the key strengths and weaknesses in TEC-funded provision. Most of the strengths for quality assurance were considered by inspectors to be normal practice. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified and a grade lower than that given in the college report was awarded.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ thorough and well-recorded internal verification
- ◆ good systems in place for trainees and clients' feedback at the college

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor quality assurance of training in the workplace
- ◆ ineffective sharing of good practice

52. Internal verification processes within the college are well co-ordinated. There is a clearly recorded internal verification procedure which is understood by all staff. Staff involved in verification have attained or are working towards attainment of the internal verifiers' award. Those who do not yet have this award are supported and monitored by experienced verifiers. Written guidance is given to help staff understand the verification process. Outcomes of internal verification are recorded in detail but the paperwork used for this purpose varies between

programme areas according to awarding body requirements. All the assessment outcomes for the care programme are examined. A cross-college internal verification group, which includes lead internal verifiers representing each programme area and key skills, meets at regular intervals to monitor verification practices and to share good practice. The curriculum quality manager receives all external verifiers' reports. These are commented upon and a request for an action plan is made if there are problems to be addressed.

53. Several recent initiatives have been implemented such as the establishment of the cross-college internal verification group and the introduction of a policy of taking action when courses do not meet performance targets and standards. The college has an internal audit process in place. As part of the quality assurance process there is an effective system of classroom observations. However, there is no formal observation of training in the workplace by tutorial staff responsible for teaching the programmes. No monitoring arrangements are in place to determine the quality and effectiveness of work-based training given by workplace supervisors.

54. The views of trainees and clients concerning the quality of their training programmes are sought twice during the year. The first survey is conducted following induction when information on such aspects as the enrolment process and the introduction to training programmes is sought. The second survey seeks information on the quality of the teaching and learning experienced by the student, trainee or client. An external consultant collates and analyses the data. All programme areas are covered and representative groups of trainees and clients are targeted to ensure a good response. The outcomes of these surveys contribute to course reviews. Trainees and clients find out about the outcomes of these surveys from college newsletters. Trainees and clients are included in this survey process only if they attend college, and it is not extended to those who are trained solely in the workplace.

55. A group with responsibility for designing and implementing quality assurance processes has been formed. Monitoring and review of the work-based training programmes is incorporated into the existing college course review procedures. But no arrangements are made for separate course reviews for work-based training to be undertaken to inform both the college and the TEC about the effectiveness of teaching or trainees' and clients' progress, retention and achievement rates.

56. Opportunities are missed to share good practice. A well-designed review document was being used in one occupational area. This comprehensively covered all aspects of a trainee's or client's review and allowed all parties to the review to comment and agree on future targets. This document was not used in all occupational areas and examples of poor recording of reviews and assessments were noted.

57. Course reviews form the basis of self-assessment and the information gained from this process contributed to the development of the college's self-assessment report.



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