



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MAY 1999

REINSPECTION AUGUST 2000

Kingsbury Training Centre Limited

SUMMARY

Kingsbury Training Centre in Birmingham offers good training in construction. Arrangements for the initial assessment of trainees are good. Support for trainees with learning difficulties is good and it is provided with sensitivity. Trainees' achievement rates are good. Off-the-job training and assessment are managed well. At the first inspection, there was little training or assessment in the workplace. Employers are now used for on-the-job training and tutors from Kingsbury Training Centre assess trainees in the workplace. In order to provide trainees with the opportunity to develop the requisite NVQ skills, trainees carry out projects which simulate work experience. Previously, equality of opportunity was poorly promoted through marketing. Equal opportunities are now ensured throughout the recruitment process, and advertising is targeted towards under-represented groups. All staff have undertaken equal opportunities staff training since the first inspection. Quality assurance arrangements cover the training and assessment processes more systematically since the first inspection and now lead to their improvement. However, data are still not used as the basis for making management decision, action planning or self-assessment purposes.

As a result of the reinspection of Kingsbury Training Centre Limited, the original published report text for equal opportunities and quality assurance has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings introduction have also been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the original published report which have not been subject to full reinspection have been left in their original form.

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REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good use of target setting for individual trainees to maintain motivation
- ◆ good NVQ achievement rates
- ◆ effective initial assessment of trainees' additional support needs and vocational skills
- ◆ good use of accreditation of trainees' prior learning and experience
- ◆ careful tailoring of individual training plans to reflect trainees' prior achievements
- ◆ effective formal and informal staff and management meetings
- ◆ good monitoring of the effectiveness of training



KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no monitoring of the effectiveness of subcontractors' equal opportunities arrangements
- ◆ no target setting beyond contractual requirements
- ◆ failure to make self-assessment an integrated feature of quality assurance
- ◆ poor use of data for continuous improvement purposes

INTRODUCTION

1. Kingsbury Training Centre (KTC) has been training young people with special learning needs for the construction and horticulture industries since 1981. KTC became a limited company in 1986 and it moved to its present premises in 1987. It introduced training leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in 1989 and the centre is now an approved assessment centre for the awarding body.

2. Since the first inspection KTC has, in partnership with Birmingham and Solihull Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), converted one of the prevocational training programmes known as the 'bridge programme' into a 'learning gateway' option. There are 14 trainees following this option and the individual training plan targets for these trainees include a one-off 30-hour work taster; an emergency first aid, manual handling and health and safety course; one unit of an NVQ at level 1 in an occupational area of their own choice and one unit of the basic skills qualification of wordpower or numberpower.

3. At the first inspection, KTC employed 17 members of staff, nine of whom were involved with TEC-funded training. KTC now employs 24 members of staff, 13 of whom work directly with TEC-funded trainees. The other members of staff provide training and administrative support for other projects outside the scope of this inspection. There were 45 trainees at the first inspection. There are now 83 trainees on work-based programmes for young people, including the 14 learning gateway trainees, working towards NVQs at level 1 or 2, or units of NVQs in the case of learning gateway trainees. Vocational courses are available in carpentry and joinery, brickwork, painting and decorating and amenities horticulture. Of the trainees taking complete NVQs, there are 15 carpenters and joiners of whom 12 are at level 1 and three at level 2, 19 bricklayers of whom 13 are at level 1 and six at level 2, 28 painters and decorators of whom 21 are at level 1 and seven at level 2, and 7 horticulture trainee all taking NVQs at level 1.

4. A recent survey of the Birmingham area estimated that there are as many as 20,000 people with mild or moderate learning difficulties. At the time of the first inspection, 33 per cent of trainees were assessed as requiring significant additional support to achieve an NVQ at level 2 and 40 per cent of trainees were assessed as having no real prospect of achieving an NVQ at level 2. Five per cent of trainees, because of having disabilities or disadvantages, required a period of preparatory training before entering vocational programmes. At the time of reinspection, KTC has no trainees in preparatory training and no trainees with a disability which would restrict the trainee working in their chosen occupational area. All 83 trainees have been assessed as requiring additional support to achieve an NVQ at level 1. KTC has training contracts with Birmingham and Solihull TEC for other youth training programmes, learning gateway and the full-time education and training option of New Deal (although there were no New Deal clients in training at the time of the reinspection). KTC has arrangements with 40 employers and

work-placement providers to enable trainees to obtain on-the-job training.

5. Manufacturing, business services and retailing are key areas of commercial and industrial growth in the Birmingham area. In 1999, a TEC survey identified that the companies involved with these areas represented 9 per cent of all enterprises and created over 90 per cent of all new jobs. Seventy-four per cent of all new jobs are created from Birmingham companies which are less than 30 years old. Unemployment rates among young people decreased from 7.9 per cent in 1996 to 6.9 per cent in 1997, which was above the national average of 5.2 per cent. In August 2000, 6.7 per cent of the population in Birmingham were unemployed, and 27.9 per cent of those unemployed were between 18 and 24. This compares with a national unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent, 25.2 per cent of whom were aged between 18 and 24. The destination trends for year-11 school pupils over the last six years up to 1999 show that more young people are staying on in full-time education and fewer are entering youth training.

6. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above for Solihull and Birmingham was 52 per cent and 35 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. Ethnicity profiles for Birmingham indicate that 21.5 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups. The local wards of Sparkhill and Sparkbrook comprise a multicultural population, with Asian people forming the majority ethnic group (about 50 per cent). White ethnic groups comprise under 40 per cent of the local population.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

7. KTC's nominee completed the self-assessment report in August 1998 using the framework in *Raising The Standard*. Birmingham and Solihull TEC arranged a number of self-assessment training sessions. Strengths and weaknesses and evidence to support them were identified through the self-assessment process. All the staff at Kingsbury Training Centre were involved with the preparation of the self-assessment report. KTC produced a reinspection report in June 2000. The report was not detailed, it lacked any clear success indicators and did not clearly focus on the improvements made. The report had not been viewed by the TEC prior to the reinspection and did not include any reinspection grades.

8. Two inspectors spent six days at Kingsbury Training Centre in May 1999. During the first inspection 14 trainees, six tutors and six managers were interviewed. Five employers and work-placement providers were visited and four training sessions were observed and graded, with two being awarded a grade 2, and two a grade 3. Inspectors looked at trainees' portfolios, records of progress and on- and off-the-job training and visited on- and off-the-job training and learning sessions. They visited additional support sessions and interviewed trainees at the beginning, middle and end of their programmes. Representative samples of trainees, employers and work-placement providers were visited.

9. Reinspection was carried out by two inspectors for a total of six days in August 2000. They interviewed eight trainees and visited five training sites. They conducted nine interviews with KTC's staff and interviewed three employers and workplace supervisors. Inspectors also looked at new quality assurance and equal opportunities procedures and arrangements.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 2

10. Kingsbury Training Centre has 33 trainees in construction. It is the main focus of training within the centre with the majority of trainees working in three vocational areas. There are fourteen bricklaying trainees: eight at NVQ level 1 and six at level 2; ten painting and decorating trainees: six at NVQ level 1, three at level 2 and one at level 3; and nine bench joinery trainees; six at NVQ level 1 and three at level 2. All of the NVQ level 1 and 2 trainees have been assessed as capable of achieving an NVQ with additional support. The programmes are designed to encourage trainees to gain introductory qualifications and experience, which will help them improve their personal confidence and gain employment in the construction industry. All trainees attend the training centre on a full-time basis. When staff are confident that trainees are able to benefit from and cope with the workplace, they are encouraged to attend a work placement at a local company. KTC's employment officer, following discussions with the trainee and instructors,

arranges this. The officer makes site visits to check on trainees' progress and health and safety matters.

11. While trainees are on work placement, they return one day a week to the centre to receive training and assessment for their NVQ. Of the 33 trainees, seven are in work placements. With the improvement of the weather in the summer, more trainees are placed with companies. These are mainly small companies, owned by self-employed general builders employing fewer than six people. Apart from the one modern apprentice, none of the trainees is employed. The self-assessment report cited strengths, the evidence for which was largely derived from trainees' responses to questionnaires. Inspectors considered many of these strengths to be no more than normal practice. However, they identified additional strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ placing of high priority on trainees' safety and personal protection
- ◆ realistic targets for individual trainees
- ◆ highly motivated trainees
- ◆ good opportunities for trainees to develop skills
- ◆ high standard of most trainees' portfolios
- ◆ trainees' good NVQ achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no planned on-the-job training or assessment
- ◆ inadequate co-ordination of training for groups with trainees on different NVQ levels
- ◆ failure to develop some NVQ learning support materials sufficiently

12. Occupationally qualified and suitably experienced instructors provide all off-the-job training and assessment. They are also qualified trainers and assessors. The senior training instructor is the internal verifier and has 17 years' training experience. Instructors set out a clear route to the achievement of the qualification, which most trainees understand. Trainees are set individual targets, which they have to attain within realistic timescales. They are able to measure their progress towards reaching these targets in clear stages. Adjustments to targets are agreed on with trainees, and they display very good understanding of the whole NVQ process. Trainees value the practical work they undertake in the centre. They are reminded daily of their responsibility for observing and upholding health and safety regulations. Trainees' portfolios are of a high standard and are well maintained.

13. All trainees join the youth programme at the age of 16 or 17. Additional learning support is readily available to trainees and they can, through extensions to contracts, remain on the programme until they are 25. Target dates for NVQ

achievement are based on each trainee's potential for completion. Most trainees complete NVQ level 2 before the age of 19. Eighty-five per cent of those trainees on the NVQ 2 level programmes have progressed to the programme following achievement of the NVQ level 1. Retention rates on all programmes over the last three years have averaged 60 per cent. Most trainees who complete their programme achieve their qualification at level 1, with over 50 per cent of them progressing to the next level. There has been a 20 per cent decline in recruitment to brickwork and painting & decorating programmes during the last three years. At the same time, recruitment to bench joinery programmes has increased by 50 per cent in the same period.

14. Staff aim to build up the skill level of each trainee, through a wide variety of practical tasks. Trainees develop their competencies by working on set training tasks and realistic assignments. They build up their confidence to work on larger scale work where possible. More than ten different external building projects have been carried out with trainees over the last three years. Trainees have undertaken a wide range of building renovation work in two inner-city schools. The good standard of project work has, to some extent, compensated for the lack of suitable work-placement provision. In the last three years, trainees' achievement rates for NVQ levels 1 and 2 combined, have been 66 per cent in painting and decorating, 52 per cent in brickwork and 61 per cent in bench joinery.

15. Recently, training instructors have been encouraged to monitor training in the workplace more closely when they visit trainees on site. For example, they are now checking how the trainees' work-based experience meets the requirements of the target qualification. In general, however, the evidence of trainees' acquisition of the requisite NVQ competencies is derived from tasks carried out in off-the-job training and tasks which simulate those of the workplace. There are no plans for work-based training and assessment on site. There is little routine co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Some employers are not aware of the NVQ skills trainees have to acquire, NVQ assessment procedures, and the work trainees carry out at the training centre. All groups have trainees working for NVQs at different levels, from 1 to 3. Tutors devote a lot of their time to NVQ level 1 trainees and trainees with learning difficulties. There are insufficient training materials for trainees who are capable of working on their own. Some of the learning support materials are not used to best effect. The provision of training for trainees in the same group who are working at different NVQ levels, is not properly planned or co-ordinated to ensure that all trainees' progress at a good pace and are provided with learning support materials which meet their needs.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

16. Since the first inspection, KTC has updated its equal opportunities policy. The new policy complies with current legislation, meets the TEC's contractual requirements and now includes procedures to deal with bullying. Trainees are

provided with a copy of the policy at induction, during which trainees and tutors discuss the policy. They also have general discussions about equal opportunities issues during trainees' pastoral reviews. KTC's staff are provided with a handbook at their induction. The handbook contains a copy of the policy. The practice at the time of the first inspection was also to brief employees and trainees about equal opportunities and give them a copy of the policy during their induction. Employers who provide work-placement opportunities sign an amended version of the 'placement host agreement', which now includes mention of equal opportunities. Those employers with no equal opportunities policy are encouraged to develop their own policies or are asked to adopt KTC's policy. They are also given information outlining their responsibilities regarding equality of opportunity in the workplace. Grievance and harassment procedures are established and the general manager keeps a record of all complaints. Of the 83 trainees in training at the time of reinspection, one is a woman, and 18 trainees are from minority ethnic groups. KTC has increased the proportion of trainees from minority ethnic groups since the first inspection, when there was only one. The 14 of KTC's staff employed to provide work-based training include four women and one member of staff from a minority ethnic group.

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

- ◆ no monitoring of subcontractors' understanding of KTC's equal opportunities policy
- ◆ failure to analyse equal opportunities data for target-setting and planning purposes
- ◆ insufficient staff training on equal opportunities
- ◆ no specific initiatives to promote equal opportunities through marketing and recruitment

17. KTC's action plan and the subsequent self-assessment report after the first inspection outlined measures to improve equal opportunities arrangements. Most of these changes have been implemented. There has been a successful uptake of employers adopting KTC's equal opportunities policy, procedures and guidance about their duties and responsibilities as work-placement providers. KTC's promotional material has been changed to attract more interest in training from women. On average, KTC invites three local schools into the training centre each year so pupils can experience different construction trades. This activity has regularly encouraged pupils to start training with KTC. The one woman currently in training began training with KTC through this route. KTC now analyses equal opportunities data to report findings to the TEC and to identify future promotional and recruitment opportunities. There is still little use of equal opportunities data to identify recruitment trends by occupational area. There has been staff training aimed at raising awareness of disability discrimination issues. Teaching areas have been moved to the ground floor to improve access for people with mobility difficulties. Further advice and guidance has been sought from an external agency about making further improvements for access for those with mobility difficulties to workshops and lavatories. Inspectors agreed with the grade awarded verbally by KTC.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good use of promotional events to market training to under-represented groups
- ◆ high level of staff and trainees' awareness of new equal opportunities policies
- ◆ swift action to protect trainees against discrimination and harassment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no monitoring of the effectiveness of employers' equal opportunities arrangements

18. KTC has maintained its open recruitment policy for all applicants to training. Since the first inspection, KTC has directed much of its promotional activity to attract more women into construction training. The benefit of this work is seen to be a medium- to long-term prospect, as most of the activities are directed at school children in years 10 and 11. The increased emphasis on promoting training and construction in schools has encouraged one woman to join KTC as a trainee joiner. Increased recruitment of women is slow. However, recruitment from minority ethnic groups has improved significantly since the first inspection.

19. KTC's staff are now more aware of the importance of effective selection and recruitment policies which place due regard on equal opportunities. Since the first inspection, three training sessions have been held to raise awareness among KTC's staff of disability discrimination and dyslexia. Trainees understand the complaints procedure, the newly introduced bullying policy and the key features of KTC's equal opportunities policy. Since the time of the first inspection, the review process now includes a pastoral review conducted by the employment officer and a review relating to NVQ progress which is carried out by the training instructors. The new review arrangements have brought to light instances of employers denying trainees access to effective training and learning opportunities and some racial prejudice in the choice of trainees by employers. In these cases, trainees have been withdrawn and found alternative work placements, the matters have been reported to the TEC and the employers are no longer used by KTC.

20. At the time of the first inspection, work-placement providers were encouraged to adopt KTC's policies, but were being given little further guidance in relation to understanding or implementing the policies. Since then, a checklist has been produced bringing work-placement provider's attention to their responsibilities and obligations. Although work-placement providers have signed a commitment to these policies, KTC does not formally monitor the effectiveness or implementation of these new arrangements, and is unable to guarantee equality of opportunity in the workplace.

Trainee support

Grade 2

21. KTC recruits trainees through careers service referrals, direct marketing and word of mouth from employers, current and past trainees. Most trainees require

significant additional support to achieve an NVQ at level 2. KTC is a well-established training provider catering for trainees with disabilities and support needs. Trainees' support needs are identified during an induction period during which basic literacy and numeracy tests are administered to all trainees. Additionally, tests are given to all trainees to establish their vocational aptitude. Test results are used to establish which level of qualification the trainees should work towards and also as a means of identifying trainees' needs for learning support with literacy and numeracy. Trainees can receive this support by working for the wordpower and numberpower qualifications.

22. Most trainees take, on average, one extra year to achieve their NVQ. General reviews of trainees' progress occur every three months and the placement officer visits all trainees in the workplace every month. Trainees receive pastoral support throughout their programme. Trainees now carry out action-planning as part of their progress review. All trainees are given specific job-search training during their programme. Induction covers comprehensive information about the organisation and includes a strong emphasis on health and safety and trainees' rights and responsibilities. Trainees also receive induction to the training centre workshops and the qualification requirements. When they are placed with an employer, they also receive an induction to the workplace. Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report that the organisation places emphasis on the importance of initial assessment and the identification of trainees' support needs and that trainees' progress reviews do not always take place on time. Inspectors found some strengths which the organisation had not identified. They awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive induction for trainees
- ◆ systematic initial assessment of trainees' additional support needs and vocational skills
- ◆ trainees encouraged to progress through NVQ levels
- ◆ careful devising of individual training plans to reflect trainees' initial assessment and accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ effective support to enable trainees to progress and succeed

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to complete some reviews of trainees' progress on time
- ◆ no evaluation of the effectiveness of the new review procedures
- ◆ new qualification progress review arrangements not fully established

23. Where appropriate, trainees receive accreditation of their prior learning and experience through their initial assessment and this is taken into account in their individual training plans. Many trainees require additional learning support. A recently appointed support officer is providing a comprehensive assessment and individualised training package to enable trainees to improve their basic skills and

achieve their qualification.

24. The organisation is sensitive to trainees' pastoral needs as well as trainees' support needs and it meets these effectively. Trainees are encouraged to progress through the NVQ levels. More than half of all trainees who obtain NVQ level 1 continue with NVQ level 2 programmes.

25. Some progress reviews have not been carried out on time and some trainees have insufficient information about their learning aims and targets. The organisation has recognised that it needs to improve the monitoring of trainees' progress, the setting of targets for trainees, and the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. A new progress-review procedure was introduced four months ago. The effectiveness of the new procedure has not been evaluated.

Management of training

Grade 3

26. KTC has a clear management structure with agreed policies for the main aspects of its work. All staff undertake a yearly appraisal which links to a personal and organisational development plan. All staff have job descriptions and are effectively deployed. Staff responsibilities are shown on an organisation chart and roles and responsibilities are clear. KTC has made effective use of projects and simulated work experience as a means of providing trainees with training and assessment in a realistic environment off the job. Opportunities for trainees to receive training and assessment on the job have declined and the organisation is now associated with fewer than 10 employers. The self-assessment report identified strengths related to staff induction and appraisal and strong internal communications. It did not recognise the improvements needed in data analysis, target-setting and management of workplace training. Inspectors agreed with the grade in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ staff job descriptions effectively clarify individual roles and responsibilities
- ◆ well-managed off-the-job training programmes
- ◆ regular formal and informal staff and management meetings
- ◆ effective training for staff
- ◆ well-documented procedures for staff induction and appraisal

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no target-setting beyond TEC contractual requirements
- ◆ no systematic analysis of data
- ◆ weak management of workplace training
- ◆ workplace providers' lack of full understanding of KTC's policies

27. Internal communications are very effective and enable staff at all levels to

raise issues. Regular team meetings are held on a monthly basis to discuss training programmes and strategic issues. The training manager organises a daily meeting involving all staff. This meeting has no fixed agenda and may cover all aspects of training, support, assessment and issues relating to individual trainees. These meetings are particularly effective and involve all the tutors, the member of staff providing additional support and the employment/work placement officer. Issues relating to individual trainee's support needs and work are discussed at meetings effectively and managers and staff take prompt action to resolve problems.

28. Off-the-job training and assessment are well managed. There are clear training programmes and assessment schedules. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Arrangements for the training, appraisal and induction of staff are effective. Off-the-job training is well managed. The management and assessment of on-the-job training, however, are managed less well. KTC has begun to take action to improve work-based training and the practice whereby tutors go to the workplace and discuss training with employers is proving successful. Nevertheless, most employers are insufficiently involved in training and assessment and have little understanding of NVQ requirements.

29. Data are not systematically analysed to produce staff action plans or influence management decisions. Data are primarily collected and used to satisfy the TEC contractual requirements. Further analyses of data by occupational area are rare.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

30. KTC has a range of procedures for dealing with the day-to-day requirements of assessment, monitoring progress and financial control, which meets all the TEC and awarding body's requirements. At the time of the first inspection, many of the systems for reviewing trainees' progress and the quality of on-the-job training were new, and some were not fully established. These arrangements are now established and are ready for a full first-year review. Action planning is a more routine process and no longer occurs for TEC audit and non-compliance purposes only. At the time of the first inspection, internal verification arrangements were satisfactory and under review after discussion with the awarding body's external verifier. Internal verification arrangements have now improved and there are more robust arrangements for planning assessments and verification activities. A process for obtaining feedback from trainees and staff was introduced prior to the first inspection. These arrangements failed to include employers fully. This has not significantly changed. Employers are now included in the feedback process, but no detailed analysis of this feedback has occurred. Employers sign an agreement with KTC outlining their role as workplace providers. When new documents are introduced or procedures are modified, staff are made aware of changes through discussion with the training manager. The first self-assessment report failed to identify that there was no formal assessment of the quality of either work-based training or off-the-job training, and that quality assurance procedures were neither understood by employers nor regularly reviewed.

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

- ◆ no rigorous monitoring of the effectiveness of training
- ◆ failure of quality assurance to lead to the continuous improvement of provision
- ◆ workplace providers' lack of understanding of the organisation's quality assurance procedures
- ◆ inadequate analysis of feedback from trainees, staff and employers
- ◆ no formal review and evaluation of quality assurance procedures
- ◆ failure to make self-assessment an integral part of quality assurance arrangements

31. In its reinspection report, KTC identified the range of improvements that it planned to make as a result of the first inspection for equal opportunities and quality assurance. The original action plan set the agenda for change across all the organisation's activities. KTC has made good progress on many of the key action points and accept that much work is still required to establish new procedures fully, evaluate existing practices and develop self-assessment and the use of data in a more structured and systematic way to ensure continuous improvements. In quality assurance, KTC has improved its communication of quality assurance arrangements to employers and improved the trainees' review process by including employers. Work-based assessments by KTC's tutors are now a normal feature of the assessment regime. Data are not drawn together and analysed in a coherent way and still fail to provide managers and staff with the detailed building blocks on which to base self-assessment and continuous improvement. Inspectors agreed with the grade given verbally by KTC.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-recorded quality assurance procedures
- ◆ good understanding and implementation of quality assurance arrangements by staff
- ◆ good monitoring of the effectiveness of training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor use of data for continuous improvement purposes
- ◆ failure to integrate self-assessment process into quality assurance arrangements

32. There are well-recorded quality assurance procedures for key aspects of the company's business such as staff appraisal, recruitment, initial assessment and the review and assessment of trainees. These arrangements are implemented routinely and are well understood by staff. The effectiveness of these quality assurance procedures are now considered as a regular agenda item in staff meetings, and changes to the quality assurance arrangements are now made within a more planned review of the quality assurance process. Problems are dealt with quickly as they arise, and in some instances new quality assurance documents are developed in order to deal with them.

33. Quality assurance arrangements covering the training and assessment process have been improved. KTC has applied a more systematic approach to many areas of training, reviews and assessment. KTC reviewed the effectiveness of the initial assessment process. It now conducts initial assessment during trainees' induction to the company rather than allowing some testing to be done in the occupational area's induction. This improvement allows for individual testing to be conducted in a more relaxed and supportive environment. Trainees' progress monitoring is now split to include a pastoral review and a qualification progress review. The qualification review is conducted by the trainees' tutor and includes the employer or workplace supervisor. Some trainees have changed their off-the-job training attendance pattern from a day-release basis to block release. This has allowed trainees more time to demonstrate competencies and practise new skills for both skills development and assessment purposes. Tutors now plan for assessments in a more coherent way, ensuring that assessment materials and equipment are available for trainees' assessments. Tutors now routinely communicate with employers to arrange to assess trainees in the workplace. These communications alongside the improved arrangements for trainees' reviews have been effective at developing employers' understanding of the qualification requirements, KTC's quality assurance procedures and KTC's general policies.

34. Off-the-job training is subject to informal quality assurance monitoring by KTC's general manager and training manager. Trainees' achievement and retention rates remain good, with most trainees still successfully completing their individual training plans. As a result of better planned workplace training and assessment, improved understanding by employers of qualifications and assessment and employers' inclusion in the review process, KTC is in a better position to exert control and influence over the quality of on- and off-the-job work-based training and assessment.

35. Feedback on the quality of training from employers and trainees is collected, but it is not analysed effectively. For example, feedback from early leavers is collected during informal discussions before they leave, and feedback from employers is collected using a questionnaire each year. Neither this data nor data about the performance of each trade area on a year-to-year basis are not systematically analysed or considered when planning or developing quality assurance improvements. Some feedback from trainees has been formally collected and there has been some analysis. The organisation's main criteria for the effectiveness of training remain the trainees' success in obtaining NVQs and compliance with the TEC contract.

36. KTC carried out self-assessment in August 1998 in preparation for the first inspection and again in August 1999. No self-assessment reports have been produced other than these. KTC's specially prepared reinspection report is poor. It lacks detail, grades and a clear reference to any evidence to support the improvements against the action plan for equal opportunities and quality assurance. The original self-assessment report was sufficiently detailed, but was over reliant upon the evidence derived from trainees' responses to questionnaires. Important improvements have been made in response to the first inspection report



and subsequent action plan. However, self-assessment is not the driving force behind change and it is not an integral part of the quality assurance arrangements. Quality assurance at KTC still lacks a systematic and routine analysis of available data. Effective self-assessment is not the basis for continuous improvement.